





stating the lack of security after the locals vandalized the offices demanding compensation for the lands the government acquired in late 1950s for the university.

Laborers working at restaurants, hotels, tourist-bus services and travel agencies in Pokhara have been on shrike for the past three days demanding the minimum wage. Hundreds of tourists have been returning back to Kathmandu and others have canceled their trip to Pokhara.

The Parliamentary Hearing Special Committee started its work on hearing the recommendations made by the Judicial Council for the appointment of two permanent judges and eight temporary judges. It called for any complaints against the recommended judges to register at its office by January 13, 2009. These judges recommended for appointment need to face the parliamentary hearings before they are appointed.

Finance Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai said that the Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme (VDIS) is to correct the tax evasion practiced by the corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen in the past.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon reported to the Security Council that the peace process in Nepal is still fragile and the UN presence is necessary and proposed for the extension of the UNMIN at the half of the current size.

Twelve members of the Former Kamlaris (under-aged household laborers) met with the President at his official residence Dhapasi in Kathmandu. They submitted a memorandum to the President appealing him for ending Kamlari system and for rehabilitating the freed Kamlaris.

**Dispute over Appointment of Priests at Pashupati**  
By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On January 04, 2009, a group of reporters gathered at the Pashupati shrine to cover a press conference to be held by caretakers of the Pashupati shrine protesting the appointment of Nepalese priests in the vacant positions caused by the resignations of former Priests on the ground of health two months ago. Another group of youths allegedly Young Communist League (YCL) members came to disrupt the press conference chasing the caretakers and reporters from the scene.

Forty-two members of the Constituent Assembly belonging to the Nepali Congress signed off a protest note demanding reinstatement of the former priests. Similarly, other organizations affiliated to the Nepali Congress have been protesting the appointment of

not interfere in any religion or cultural tradition, the government has intervened in the autonomy of religious places; NC seriously objects to, and condemns, the incident as a direct attack on religious freedom." [4]

The Nepali Congress has taken up this movement, too; even though most of the Nepalis having nationalistic feelings have welcomed the appointment of Nepalese priests at the Pashupati shrine. The State-run Nepal Radio in its morning news stated that the cash offerings made to Lord Pashupati amounted to one hundred thousand rupees within a few days. It makes sense why the Nepali Congress leaders have been staging a movement against the appointment of Nepalese priests in the vacant positions left by the South Indian priests.

On Sunday, January 04, 2009, the caretakers of the Pashupati temple called 'Bhandaris', responsible for providing prayer materials and taking care of the temple assets for centuries said that they would launch a movement called "save the temple from Maoist intrusion". They set up a 32-member movement committee refusing to sit for talks with the government unless the government allowed the Indian priests to resume their duties at the temple and ensured the protection of the assets in the main storehouse of which the doors were broken. The South Indian head priest had tendered his resignation on September 25, 2008, and the Prime Minister as the patron of the Pashupati Area Development Trust accepted the resignation on December 28, 2008 after the head priest refused to take back his resignation. The caretakers of the Pashupati shrine charged the Maoists of forcing the priests to resign. [5]

It is clear that the Nepalese caretakers of the Pashupati temple have developed an age-old bond with the South Indian priests as the temple has been the source of lucrative incomes generated by the cash offerings made by the devotees. The priests have never disclosed the cash amount offered to the Pashupati. So, it makes sense why the caretakers are so much interested in launching a movement with the support of the Nepali Congress leaders.

On January 05, 2009, quoting IANS the website Mangalorean.com reported from Udupi, India that Chief Priest Mahabaleshwara Bairy at Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal, confirmed that three priests including him had quit their jobs there. Speaking to “The Hindu” over telephone from Kathmandu on Saturday, January 03, Mr. Bairy said that he resigned from the job on September 25, 2008, as he was "suffering from acute backache" and the doctor had advised him to take it easy. His resignation was accepted on December 28. Mr. Bairy served the temple for 16 years. He said, "I hail from Belve village in Kundapura taluk of Udupi district. My parents are getting old; I have to look after them." Mr. Bairy along with two other priests from coastal Karnataka: one is Krishna Bhat from Gokarna in Uttara Kannada district and another is K.P. Ramachandra Bhat from Hebri village in Udupi district resigned from the priests but it could not be confirmed if both had resigned. "They too are getting old. Mr. Krishna Bhat has served here for 15 years, while the priest has put in nearly three decades," he told “The Hindu”. Later, Mr. Krishna Bhat confirmed that he had also resigned stating he was diabetic. Mr. Bairy said that priests from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had been serving the temple for the last 250 years. "We have no records to say exactly when priests started coming from India to Kathmandu. The kings (of Nepal) had given full powers to the chief priest, who used to recruit priests from India." Mr. Bairy said: "The local priests have their own tradition; we have our own. There is bound to be some differences. We were working as a team here. It is my opinion that we should leave when people still desire our presence and have a good opinion about us." [6]

Nepali Congress lawmakers have supported the ongoing protests against the appointment of new priests at the Pashupati temple. NC lawmakers including senior party stalwarts such as Ram Chandra Poudel, Gopalman Shrestha and Dr Ram Saran Mahat marched from the CA building at Naya Baneshwor to the Pashupati area in a show of solidarity with the protestors against the government decision on appointing new priests. They told the protesting caretakers of the temple to continue their movement until the government corrects its decision. The caretakers have been staging protest rallies at Gaushala and Purano Baneshwor areas shutting down the vehicular traffic. [7]

On Tuesday, January 06, 2009, leader of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Lal Krishna Advani made a statement in the Indian Parliament stating he was deeply distressed by the ongoing controversy over the appointment of Nepali priests at the Pashupati Temple. Advani's statement came just a day after Samajbadi Party leaders Mulayam Singh Yadav and Amar Singh in Kathmandu while in the Nepal-visit at the invitation of the President of Nepal regretted the politicization of a time-honored tradition by the CPN-Maoist sacking the South Indian priests at Pashupati. According to the statement, Advani spoke on the phone with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Tuesday morning and expressed concern over it. During the conversation, “Prime Minister Dahal assured Advani of making an announcement in the parliament soon concerning the restoration of the status quo ante,” the statement quoted Advani as saying. [8]

On Tuesday, January 06, 2009, speaking at a press meet held in Dang district, Minister for Information and Communications Krishna Bahadur Mahara said that Nepali priests were appointed at the Pashupati temple to make the cash offerings called ‘Bheti’ more transparent and use the money for social welfare. Minister Mahara charged some status quoits

private and public property within three months and would pay compensation for the property not returned within this period. So, this is not the first-time commitment the Prime Minister has made to return the property grabbed by the Maoists during the insurgency and to enforce the nine-point agreement the government had reached with the Nepali Congress.

Concerning the scholarships, explaining to the CA members belonging to the dalit community that also have been obstructing the CA sessions demanding the rightful scholarships to the dalit students, the Prime Minister said that he found the scholarships allocated to the dalit students on the Bill submitted at the CA was based on the Civil Service Act so the percentage of scholarship had reduced to nine percent from the fifteen percent previously allocated to the dalit students. He assured the dalit members of the CA of making it fifteen percent again and also explained to them if the Bill on Scholarship was not passed on time then the students would suffer from it as the date of admission of students at the educational institutions would soon expired.

Regarding the assault on the Himail Media House, the Prime Minister assured the CA members of taking strong actions against the culprits and not allowing repeating such actions in the future.

Political analysts said that the Nepalese political parties are self-centered and have been always looking out how to benefit their political cadres. So, the political parties have been obstructing the smooth functioning of the CA putting their demands above the national interest and thus hindering the main task of crafting a new constitution. In fact, the Nepali Congress had set the tradition of benefiting the political cadres in the late 1950s ignoring the interest of and benefit to the nation. The boycotting of the CA session by the NC leaders demanding the return of the property seized by the Maoists is the good example of the self-centered nature of the Nepali Congress, the political analysts said.

Because of the self-centered nature of the political parties, they never stress the need for following the rule of law rather they often deviate from the rule of law to achieve their objectives, political analysts said.

**UN urges end to Nepalese practice of using young girls as domestic workers**  
UN News Center

7 January 2009 –The United Nations has urged Nepal to end the practice of sending young girls from indigenous families to work in private homes, where they risk being exploited, and to ensure justice for those who have



Nepalese priests in the vacant positions of priests at Pashupati.

Referring to the reactions of the leader of Bharatiya Janata Party of India to the appointment of the Nepalese priests at Pashupati and the telephone calls made by the leader to the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal, Nepalese political analysts said that it was natural to the reactions of the political party set up on the religious platform and it needed not be taken as an interference in the internal affairs of Nepal. Similarly, many people of the world had protested the actions of Hindus on demolishing the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya and killing of Christians by Hindu fanatics in Orissa in India.

Replying to the question of the reporters on the comment made by former king Gyanendra Shah on the appointment of the priests at the Pashupati shrine and his call-on not politicizing the holy shrine, the concerned Minister said that as a citizen Gyanendra Shah has rights to make such a comment.

Prime Minister Prachanda said that some political parties have been attempting to give political color to the appointment of Nepalese priests to the vacant positions created by the resignations of former priests two months ago.

**Maoists’ Plea to CPN-UML Leaders**  
By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

Leaders of the CPN-Maoist decided to request the leaders of the CPN-UML to behave as partners in governance. They said that the leaders of CPN-UML have been behaving as the opposition members speaking against the government at the legislature, and on the streets, too. The Maoist leaders also said that the CPN-UML leaders have failed in cooperating with the Maoists in setting up various commissions and in setting up local governments.

The government has been unable to send budgets to the local governments in absence of elected or appointed local governments. Similarly, the government has been unable to take up various activities the Maoists have promised to the Nepalis because of not being able to set up commissions on various subject matters such as enforced disappearances and so on.

So, the Maoist leaders have decided to call on the leaders of the CPN-UML to behave as partners in governance and work together for making the commitments of various development activities come true according to the State-run media.

On January 5, 2009, the CPN-Maoist and CPN-UML agreed to appoint local governments and to set up various commissions within a month.

of making the appointment of Nepali priests at the Pashupati Temple a great issue. [9]

On Wednesday, January 07, 2009, addressing the Legislature-House, and bowing down to the intense pressure put on him by the national and international communities, Prime Minister Prachanda said that he revoked the decision made on the appointment of two new Nepali priests at the Pashupati temple and asked the South Indian priest to hold regular offerings to Lord Pashupati. As the patron of the Pashupati Area Development Trust (PADT), the Prime Minister also accepted the resignations tendered by the South Indian priests. [10]

An inclusive great fire-worship called Mahayagya was started on the premises of Shiva Panchayan Temple at Chandragadhi-3 in Jhapa, Eastern Nepal on January 04, 2009 for a religious ceremony. Inclusive in the sense that priests other than so-called high caste Hindu priests were performing the worship. Ten priests from different creeds and castes including the Dalit caste were presiding over the Mahayagya. The chief priest read out the Shiva Purana: Holy Scripture in Nepali, and other priests translate the meanings of the Holy Scripture in their languages for the benefit of the respective audiences. "The ritual was performed to encourage religious tolerance and end the caste-based discrimination," said Durga Prasad Bhattarai, the Mahayagya-Organizing Committee Chairman. Priest Arjun Sashankar of the Dalit community, Priest Rupa Ganguli of the Rajbanshi community, Priest Atmananda Lingden of the Kirant community and Lama Sonam of the Buddhist community performed the religious offerings to the fire God at the Mahahyagya. Organizers of Mahayagya said that they were making efforts on bringing Muslim and Christian priests on board the Mahayagya. The Mahayagya ends on Jan. 9. Lama Sonam said that he preached Buddhabani (teachings of Buddha) instead of Purana. "I think this yagya is one of the most important religious events," he said. "In the past, only Brahmin and Chhetri people used to flock to religious ceremonies. This time, however, hundreds of people from different castes and creeds are pouring in every day," said Ganguli, a female priest. The devotees are excited very much listening to hymns of diverse communities and seeing members of different communities dance. "This Mahayagya will motivate Constituent Assembly members to draft an inclusive constitution," Committee Chairman Bhattarai said. The inclusive Mahayagya is the first of its kind in the country according to the Mahayagya-organizing Committee members. [11]

This is another positive religious movement to bring all the people of different faiths under a single umbrella and make religious harmony real in Nepal.

Speaking at an interaction program held by Reporters Club in Butwal, Head of the most powerful Organization Department of CPN-Maoist Mohan Baidya said, "the captured houses and properties of feudalists will not be returned; his party will not compromise on this matter as the party had chiefly waged the people's war to end feudalism." While Prime Minister and Chairman of CPN-Maoist Prachanda assured the Nepali Congress of returning the properties seized by the Maoists during the insurgency within the next 90 days. Baidya also said, "properties belonging to feudalists will be distributed among the poor formulating appropriate laws. He said that his party would hold the people above everything else including the government, and in order to ensure the rights of the people the party would even walk out of the government and go to the people any time. [12]

On Friday, January 02, 2009, speaking at a press conference held in Birgunj of Parsa district, CPN-Maoist hard-liner Matrika Prasad Yadav said that the properties grabbed by the Maoists were previously under the control of the royalists and so would not be returned to them rather automatically come under the ownership of commoners. "In the past, the royalists took over the people's land by forging royal-friendly laws and there is no way such lands can now be returned to the people legally. However, those lands have now gone back to the commoners," he said, "Forcible occupation of such land holdings is the only way the people will receive their land." Yadav's remarks have come just a day after the Maoist Prime Minister announced that all Maoist-seized properties would be returned to the former owners within three months. Former Minister for Forests and Land Reforms Matrika Prasad Yadav also challenged the government's intention of forbidding the highway blockades saying, "If the government continues to curtail people's rights, then the day will come when the people will once again pick up arms to regain their rights." [13]

On Saturday, January 03, 2009, speaking at the Reporter's Club in Kathmandu, Nepali Congress Vice-president Ram Chandra Poudel warned of a protest movement if the government would remove Chief of Army Staffs (COAS) Rukmangad Katuwal appointed by the NC-led coalition government. Vice-president Poudel also protested any change in the leadership of the army integration special committee, replacing Home Minister Bamdev Gautam by Prime Minister Prachanda. He said leadership change in the panel could delay the integration process. [14]

On Sunday, January 04, 2009, students of the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, padlocked the Kathmandu District Education Office and teachers' personal record office at Tahachal as a protest movement. In a press statement, the student leaders said that their demands for an open competition for recruiting schoolteachers and the provision for mandatory teaching licenses for teachers were ignored.

been abused as well as search for those who have gone missing.

The practice – known as Kamalari – is outlawed in Nepal, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR-Nepal) noted in a news release issued in the capital, Kathmandu.

However, despite a September 2006 Supreme Court order on the implementation of an existing law that prohibits child exploitation, including the Kamalari system, no concrete steps have been taken to end the practice and adolescent girls from poor Tharu families continue to be subjected to it, the Office added.

“It is clear that parents send their daughters to be Kamalaris as a last resort when they are under extreme pressure to settle debts; many of them end up being trafficked,” said the Representative of OHCHR-Nepal, Richard Bennett.

Yesterday Mr. Bennett met with a 10-member delegation representing 600 Kamalaris from the Mid-and-Far Western regions of the country, who came to the capital to campaign for the implementation of the Supreme Court decision and for the liberation and rehabilitation of all Kamalaris.

The delegation is also seeking clarification of the fate of Kamalaris who have gone missing and justice for those who have been subject to sexual or other kinds of exploitation. In addition, they are calling for an end to the practice of contracting Kamalaris during the Tharu festival of Maghi, which is celebrated in mid-January.

OHCHR-Nepal’s Mid Western Regional Office has been supporting the Civil Society Network in Dang to end the practice and support former Kamalaris and their families, including by enhancing understanding and knowledge about human rights standards and monitoring violations.

“I urge the Government to take concrete steps to prohibit this practice, search for the missing Kamalaris, and provide for rehabilitation to those who have been victims of this practice,” said Mr. Bennett.

**Economy**

**Obama plan 'could create 4m jobs'**

Source BBC News

US President-elect Barack Obama says urgent action is needed on the economy, and his \$775bn stimulus plan could create up to four million jobs. Mr Obama, who takes office in two weeks, wants to cut taxes and create jobs through increased government spending on public works projects.

"It's not too late to change



**Prime Minister Met With President Yadav and NC President Koirala**

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On January 05, 2009, after meeting President Ram Baran Yadav, speaking to the reporters Prime Minister Prachanda said that he had talks with the President concerning the controversy over the new recruitment in the Nepali Army and the appointment of new priests to the vacant positions of priests at the Pashupati shrine.

Answering to the question of a reporter on whether the stay order of the Supreme Court of Nepal concerning the appointment of priests at the Pashupati shrine would be honored or not, Prime Minister Prachanda said that it would be honored.

The Prime Minister also went to meet with Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala at his Maharajgunj residence. Coming out of the meeting with Nepali Congress President Koirala, speaking to the reporters, Prime Minster Prachanda said that he had talks with President Koirala concerning the controversy over the new recruitment in the Nepali Army and the appointment of new priests to the vacant positions of priests at the Pashupati shrine and also about running the sessions of the Constituent Assembly smoothly. Members of the Constituent Assembly belonging to the Nepali Congress have been boycotting the sessions of the Constituent Assembly demanding the return of the properties grabbed by the Maoists during the 10-year period of conflict to the former owners; they also have been demanding the government to annul the appointment of the Nepalese priests to the vacant positions at the Pashupati shrine.

On January 6, 2009, in the morning news, the State-run Radio Nepal said that the total cash amount received from the offerings made to Lord Pashupati within the period of a few days of Nepalese priests had worked at the Pashupati shrine reached one hundred thousand rupees. It makes sense why the Nepali Congress leaders have been voicing against the appointment of the Nepalese priests at the Pashupati shrine.

**Mulayam Singh Yadav Meets with Prime Minister**

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On January 5, 2009, leader of Indian Samajbadi Party Mulayam Singh Yadav met with Prime Minster Prachanda at the official residence of the Prime Minster at Baluwatar, Kathmandu. They talked about the political situation in Nepal and the Indian

Other demands of the students included developing Faculty of Education to an academy for excellence, transforming Education Service Commission into a constitutional body, giving priority to graduates in education in the teaching profession, and a seat for them in the task force formed by the Ministry of Education on Friday, January 02, 2009. Different units of All Nepal National Free Students' Union, All Nepal National Independent Students' Union-Revolutionary and Free Students' Union at Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal supported the movement. [15]

On January 05, 2009, Tribhuvan University (TU) Victim Struggle Committee called traffic shutdown at Balkhu intersection on the Ring Road from 8 AM to 12 Noon affecting the traffic on the Ring Road. Coordinator of TU Victim Struggle Committee Dev Chandra Maharjan said that the struggle committee and the natives of Kirtipur declared a protest movement to put pressure on the government to meet their demands. He also said that they would prohibit Vice-chancellor, Registrar and Rector of TU from entering their offices. He said that the government had acquired the land from locals to build buildings for TU in 1956 but had not provided them with the full compensation for the land the government had taken from them. The government had acquired 6,500 ropanis (one ropani = 5,625 sq ft=0.0523 ha) of land from most of the households in Kirtipur for the TU. The locals have been demanding compensation from the government following the agreement the government had reached with the locals in 1956. [16]

On January 05, 2009, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly acting as the Speaker of the legislature-House called off the business after the six small parties threatened to disrupt the House session unless the government took out the Scholarship (third amendment) Bill of 2008 submitted to the House for amendment. Education Minister Renu Kumari Yadav had submitted the Bill following the approval of the cabinet to pass it before the House would go to recess after the summer session. Fringe parties particularly the Dalit Janjati Party led by Bishwonath Paswan objected the decreasing of the percentage of scholarships allocated to the dalit students. The Bill has proposed to provide the dalit students with nine per cent scholarship against the previously allocated 15 percent of the government scholarships allocated to the dalit students. Leader Paswan demanded the scholarships be made available to the dalit students in proportion to the population of dalits. On Sunday, January 04, 2009, Prime Minister Prachanda met with the leaders of the protesting political parties such as Dalit Janjati Party, Chure Bhabar Ekta Party Nepal, Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandi Devi), Federal Democratic National Front, Nepali Janta Dal and two independent CA members at his Baluwatar official residence in Kathmandu. The Prime Minister asked them to come up with a proposal for an amendment to the Bill if they deemed it necessary. Leader of Chure Bhabar Ekta Party Nepal Keshav Mainali said that the people of hill origin living in Terai needed the reservation for the government scholarships as well, as they were in minority in the region. [17]

On Tuesday, January 06, 2009, laborers working at the jute mills in Biratnagar have continued to block Nepal-India border at Jogbani for the third consecutive day. They have been staging protest rallies against the shutdown of jute mills since the past 10 days and demanding the minimum wage of Rs 190 per day set by the government and an end to power-cuts along the Sunsari-Morang industrial corridor. According to media reports, the eight privately owned mills have been losing over Rs 10.7 million a day due to the laborers going on strike. Various rounds of talks among political parties, trade unions, civil society members and industrialists have not resolved the problem, yet. Jute mills owners said that the government' decision setting the workers' minimum wage was frivolous and insensitive to the conditions of the mills at the time of heavy power-cuts. [18]

On January 07, 2009, landless people obstructed vehicular traffic at Pulchowk and Aaptari in Narayangadh, Chitwan demanding the inclusion of their representatives on the Land Council. The irate landless people burnt tires and halted the vehicular traffic in the areas for the second consecutive day affecting the transportation along the East-West Highway despite the government declaring the area as the "transport-shutdown-free area". [19]

On January 07, 2009, Freed Kamaiyas (bounded laborers) have called an indefinite transport shutdown in Bardiya district stating the government did not enforce the agreement reached with them in the past. Traffic has been halted along the East-West highway and the Gulariya-Nepalgunj road section since early morning. They suspended the previous shutdown after the political parties assured of putting pressure on the government for enforcing the agreement within four days. The government had agreed to enforce the 11-point demand and include their representatives on the Freed Kamaiya Rehabilitation Council for proper management of the rehabilitation of the freed Kamaiyas in the past. Their other demands include free education, healthcare services, and identity cards among others. [20]

On Tuesday, January 06, 2009, protesting against the arrest of its cadres, the Nepal Students' Union (NSU) shut down academic institutions in Dhanusha district. Two weeks ago, the police had arrested NSU cadres: Binaya Thakur and Alok Jha on charge of possessing a robbed motorcycle. The two detained NSU cadres are under the custody of Siraha police. Meanwhile, the NSU has warned of continuing the strike if their cadres are not released. NSU is affiliated to

course, but only if we take immediate and drastic action," he said. The US unemployment rate is 7.2%, after 524,000 jobs were lost in December. The number of job losses last year was 2.6 million, the largest since World War II. The figures, released on Friday, heightened fears that the US is entering a long period of recession.

The president-elect published a detailed analysis of his recovery plan by his economic advisers, who said it could create up to four million jobs by the end of 2010. The analysts estimated that the unemployment rate at the end of 2010 would be 1.8 percentage points lower if the plan was enacted.

"If nothing is done, economists from across the spectrum tell us that this recession could linger for years and the unemployment rate could reach double digits. "They warn that our nation could lose the competitive edge that has served as a foundation for our strength and standing in the world," he said in his weekly YouTube address.

The report estimates how many jobs each part of the plan would create. More than 40% of the new jobs should go to women and 90% of them should be in the private sector.

It concedes that the estimates are "subject to significant margins of error". This is because the assumptions on which it is based may prove wrong and the package may change as it goes through Congress.

Senior Democratic senators have expressed skepticism that tax cuts will lead to growth and job creation. They want more money spent on infrastructure and energy projects.

**Exchange Rates**

As of aa zz, 2009			
Currency	Unit	Buying Rs.	Selling Rs.
Indian Rupee	100	160	160.15
U.S. Dollar	1	77.95	78.55
Euro	1	106.58	107.4
Pound Sterling	1	118.74	119.66
Swiss Franc	1	71.25	71.8
Australian Dollar	1	55.21	55.64
Canadian Dollar	1	65.76	66.27
Singapore Dollar	1	52.7	53.1
Japanese Yen	1	8.55	8.62
China Yuan	1	11.41	11.49
Saudi Arabian riyal	1	20.78	20.94
Qatari riyal	1	21.41	21.58
Thai baht	1	2.24	2.25
UAE Dirham	1	21.22	21.38
Malaysian ringgit	1	22.02	22.19

Only Buying rates		
Currency	Unit	Rates/Rs.
Swedish Kroner	1	9.97
Danish Kroner	1	14.3
Hong Kong Dollar	1	10.05

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



cooperation on the Nepal's development. Mr. Yadav also expressed his concern about the appointment of the priests at the Pashupati shrine.

The Indian leader also met with Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala and had talked about the political situation in Nepal. Nepali Congress President Koirala complained to the India leader about the Maoists breaking up the political consensus.

After the talks with different leaders and the President and Prime Minister of Nepal, Indian leader Yadav told the reporters that he hoped the Nepalis would write a new constitution with the full cooperation of all political parties. Concerning the controversy over the appointment of Nepalese priests at the Pashupati, he said that it was a sad incident. He canceled the program on visiting the Pashupati shrine, as the caretakers of the Pashupati temples and their sympathizers have been staging protest rallies at the Pashupati area.

### Defense Minister Badal On Nepali Army

By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

On January 5, 2009, talking to the reporters in Chitwan, Defense Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal told the reporters that his ministry had sent the instructions to the Nepali Army for stopping the new recruitment process, and would take the actions following the provision made in the Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007 if the army would not honor the instructions. He also strongly protested the political speech delivered by Chief of Army Staff Rukumangad Katuwal at the event held in Nuwakot on Sunday, January 04, 2009. Defense Minister Badal also told the reporters that Chief of UNMIN Ian Martin had written to the Defense Ministry stating the new recruitment in the Nepali Army would go against the Comprehensive Peace Treaty. The Nepalese media had been reporting about the controversy over the new recruitment in the Nepali Army for some time.

Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala had been charging Chief of UNMIN Ian Martin of always favoring the Maoists in Nepal. The UNMIN had stated that its chief had been following the agreements and the terms of conditions of his job. The charges labeled at him by the Nepali Congress President were baseless. Recently, Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel said that his party would launch a movement against any actions on removing the Chief of Army Staff Katuwal.

### Madheshi People’s Rights Forum in Disarray

the Nepali Congress party. [21]

On January 07, 2009, hotel and restaurant workers went on strike for an indefinite period in Pokhara demanding the minimum wage of Rs. 4,600 set by the government. Hotels and restaurants at the Lakeside area in Pokhara were closed leaving hundreds of tourists high and dry. Tourists have been going around in search of bakeries and looking for something to eat. “Banda never solves problems. The demands of the protestors can be solved through peacefully,” said Bachchu Tiwari, Chairman of Pokhara Tourism Council. He, however, said that the minimum wage could not be enforced immediately as hotels and restaurants were unable to run their businesses well due to the prevailing power-cuts. Chairman of All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers’ Union, Rajendra Timilsina said that the workers spontaneously halted their work, as the entrepreneurs refused to enforce the minimum wage announced by the government. [22]

None of the political parties have been cooperating each other on crafting a new constitution rather inciting their sister organizations to take the advantage of the interim period for their benefits. The labor organizations affiliated to the CPN-Maoist and CPN-UML have been primarily responsible for the labor unrest in the industrial and business sectors. Similarly, sister organizations affiliated to the Nepali Congress take even the slightest opportunity of exaggerating any issues that they think they could use for opposing the Maoist-led six-party coalition government. If they continue such unruly activities soon the doomsday of Nepal would surely come to end the life of Nepal as a State.

Footnote:

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**Kathmandu Market**  
**As of January 06, 2009**

Bullion	Rs/10 gm
Hallmark Gold	Rs 21,565.00
Worked Gold	Rs 21,435.00
Silver	Rs 303.00

**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.

### India IT boss quits over scandal

Source BBC News

The boss of Satyam, India's fourth-biggest software firm, has quit after revealing false accounts including some \$1bn (£663m) in fictitious reserves. Chairman Ramalinga Raju apologised and said "the gap in the balance sheet has arisen purely on account of inflated profits" during several years.

He said he was subjecting himself to the laws of the land and would "face the consequences". India's benchmark index fell nearly 7% on the news, as Satyam stock shed 82%. In a letter to the board of directors, Mr Raju said that neither he nor the managing director took any money from the company and did not benefit in financial terms following the "inflated results". He added that no board member had been aware of the situation the firm was in.

"What started as a marginal gap between actual operating profits and the one reflected in the books of accounts continued to grow over the years," said Mr Ramalinga's statement, which was sent to the stock exchange. "It was like riding a tiger, not knowing how to get off without being eaten," he said.

Satyam specialises in business software and benefited from the IT outsourcing boom.

"We have to go beyond this letter and find out what actually has happened," the Securities and Exchange Board of India told reporters. "This is an issue which has very serious implications... It also raises the issue of authenticity of accounts that have been audited and certified by the auditors."

Hitesh Agrawal, head of research with Angel Broking, said: "Indian corporate governance standards have been put at stake here, the role of the auditors have also come under serious question". The BBC's Sanjoy Majumder in Delhi says analysts see this as one of the worst crises to have hit corporate India, at a time when the country was hoping to attract foreign investors looking for quick gains in emerging markets.

Our correspondent says many fear that the international community will now take a harder look at Indian companies and think twice about placing their money there.

The news comes after plans to acquire Maytas Properties and



By KTM Metro Reporter in Kathmandu

Out of 52 members of the Parliamentary Party of Madheshi People's Rights Forum (MPRF), a group of 35 members claiming the two-third majority submitted a petition to the Prime Minister for sending back the four ministers such as Foreign Minister Upendra Yadav, Minister for Physical Planning Bijaya Kumar Gacchadar, Education Minister Renu Yadav, and Minister Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta, as they did not follow the party line.

The young emerging leader of the MPRF in a press conference told the reporters that the four ministers seconded by the MPRF had been deviating from the MPRF party policy line, and speaking against the autonomy of Madhesh, and they were not representing all districts, too. He also said that they decided to remove Gacchadar from the parliamentary leader of the MPRF parliamentary party and the Chief whip of his party Ram Janam Chaudhary from the office, and informed the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly about it. However, another member of the MPRF parliamentary party Sharad Singh Bhandari said that their decision was not valid.

On January 07, 2009, the Parliamentary Party meeting of MPRF held in its office in Kathmandu after the heated discussion on these matters decided to suspended the decisions made by the group of the 35 dissident members of the Parliamentary Party.

**International News**

**Did Bush cause the financial crisis?**

Source BBC News

"Consider the terrible consequences of the 'anything goes' Bush Administration, whose irresponsible non-regulation of financial institutions has led to this crisis."

Those words, from the Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, sum up the charge against George W Bush - that in the eight years of his presidency he actively pursued policies of deregulation which caused the biggest financial and economic meltdown since the Great Depression. It is a grim legacy for President Bush to contemplate as he enters his final days in office - but is it true?

He certainly presided over a widespread failure of regulation. On his watch, the US authorities did little to prevent the sale of millions of mortgages to people who could never afford them. They failed to police the market in mortgage-backed securities which has now collapsed with such devastating consequences.

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**Culture and Tradition**

**Reciting Swosthani Story**

By Siddhi B. Ranjitkar

Every Nepalese household believing in Lord Swosthani recites the story of Swosthani every year during the month called Magha. This year reciting of Swosthani story starts on January 10, 2009, and then ends on the next full moon day. After the evening meal all family members and some neighbors who have no Swosthani readers gather together and sit for listening the story every night for the whole month.

Traditionally, anybody could read out the story, and a reader does not need to perform purification rituals; so, anybody willing to recite the story might sit and take the meticulously hand-written rectangular (3-5" x 9-10") unbound book usually wrapped in a piece of red cloth and revered as a God Swosthani in Nepal Bhasa and read it out. Currently, printed books are available in the Kathmandu market in Nepal Bhasa and Nepali language, too.

The reader performs a simple ritual of worship to the holy book and lights an incense stick to it before reading it. A small wicker basketful full of tidbits is placed nearby the Holy Scripture at the time of reading it out. After reading a few sheets of the book for a night, the reader distributes the tidbits to all listeners as the blessing from the god.

The Swosthani story is about the creation of earth and the life on it. Then, it tells about mainly Lord Shiva, his two spouses, and two sons. His first tricky marriage with Satidevi ends up in tragedy, as Dacche Prajapati: father of Satidevi could never accept the unequal marriage. After the untimely death of Satidevi, Lord Shiva almost goes insane and carries the corpse on his back being unable to accept the reality of death of Satidevi. As the organs of the dead body of Satidevi falls one by one, each organ fallen at each place becomes a deity and takes the names of the organ.

Satidevi in her next incarnation becomes the daughter of King Himalaya, and gets the name of Parbati. When she reaches puberty, her parents think to give her in marriage to Lord Vishnu but she dedicates her life to Lord Shiva and ultimately gets wedded to Lord Shiva.

The divine couple of Lord Shiva and Parbati have two sons called Ganesh and Kumar.

Ganesh becomes an elephant-headed. After a long time out of his abode called Kailash, Lord Shiva comes back and finds Ganesh at the entrance guarding her mother Parbati to take a long bath in her inner sanctum, and refuses let him in not recognizing Lord Shiva. Fiery Lord Shiva in his anger cut off the head of Ganesh and enters his abode. Parbati finding Lord Shiva unexpectedly showing up in her inner sanctum feels something must have gone wrong to Ganesh. Lord Shiva realizes his mistake and asks his attendants to go immediately to the east and cut off the head of any living being they meet first on the way and bring it home. They bring a head of an elephant. Lord Shiva fixes it on the shoulder of Ganesh and revives him.

Lord Ganesh receives the boon of the privilege of having the first offering among the Hindu deities. When both Ganesh and Kumar come of age, the parents want to bestow a boon on one of them that completes a round trip to Mount Sumeru first. Kumar having a peacock as his vehicle immediately flies on it to Mount Sumeru but Ganesh having a mouse for his vehicle remains helpless and gets upset. His steed mouse finding its master so upset repeatedly asks Ganesh the reason for being so upset. Ganesh tells the reason. Then the mouse counsels Ganesh how to please his parents. Following the counsel of the mouse Ganesh goes to his parents and asks them to stand together and then makes three circles around them saying, "you are the parents and the mount Sumeru for me." Then, Lord Shiva and Parbati together bestow on Ganesh the privilege of receiving the first offering among the deities. So, none of the Hindu deities accepts the offerings made to him/her without first offering to Lord Ganesh.

After the story of the divine couple, the story of the mundane folks starts.

A childless couple gets a girl child. A childless couple serves a holy man for years and pleases him. Then, the holy man gives them a lump of fresh cow dung and asks them to keep it under the cover of a brass bowel for twenty-one days and then see it on the twenty-second day. The couple follows the instructions and finds a girl child and names her a 'Go-maiju' means born of cow dung.

plans to acquire a 51% stake in Maytas Infra failed. "The aborted Maytas acquisition deal was the last attempt to fill the fictitious assets with real ones," said the letter. Mr Raju said a task force investigating the failed deal had been set up. He also recommended to the board that Merrill Lynch be entrusted with the talk of "quickly exploring" merger opportunities.

BBC correspondent Karishma Vaswani in Mumbai says the consequences for corporate India are extremely dire, given that Satyam is not just listed on Indian stock markets, but was also the first Indian technology firm to list on the hi-tech US Nasdaq market.

Satyam said its managing director and co-founder B Rama Raju, Raju's brother, had also resigned. The company did not give any reason for the resignation. Just three months ago, Satyam received an award from a group of Indian directors for excellence in corporate governance.

**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.



And credit default swaps, those multi-billion-dollar bets on other people going bust, went virtually unregulated.

In recent days, Congress has been holding hearings to determine how the regulators at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) missed numerous warning signs - "Red Flags" - about Bernard Madoff, the man accused of running a gigantic Ponzi scheme which has defrauded investors of at least \$50bn.

Paul Kanjorski, the Democratic Representative who is chairing the hearings, argued that the SEC's failings were - in part - due to chronic understaffing, implying that the Bush Administration had starved the agency of the resources needed to do its job.

In the blame game for this financial crisis, George W Bush comes a close second to greedy and unscrupulous Wall Street bankers. But there are serious flaws in this argument.

Deregulation started long before President Bush came to power, and it was enthusiastically pursued by both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Here is just one example: The Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 separated the activities of commercial banks, which take deposits, from investment banks, which invest money. It was repealed in 1999. That relaxation of the rules enabled commercial lenders, like Citigroup, to trade instruments such as mortgage-backed securities and collateralised debt obligations.

Many see the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act as a major, direct cause of the current financial crisis. But it was signed by a Democratic President, Bill Clinton, and supported by many other Democratic politicians, among them the scourge of Bush deregulation Nancy Pelosi.

What is more, President Bush actually increased the burden of regulation on US companies, enacting in 2002 what he called "the most far-reaching reform of American business practices since the time of Franklin D Roosevelt", the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

A response to a number of major corporate and accounting scandals, including the collapse of the energy group Enron, Sarbanes-Oxley significantly increased the reporting requirements and accountability of company boards and management.

So the image of Mr Bush as the arch deregulator and the Democratic Party as the champion of stricter rules for business does not quite tally with the evidence. But Mr Bush is not entirely blameless.

‘Go-maiju’ becomes a spellbound. One day while ‘Go-maiju’ was sorting small stones out of the rice spread on a large wicker cake, a holy man comes begging for alms. ‘Go-maiju’ takes time to attend the holy man. The holy man burning with anger casts a spell on her: ‘you at the age of seven be married with 77-year old man’.

None can escape from such a spell and revoke the spell; even the spell-caster cannot do so at that time. So, ‘Go-maiju’ gets wedded with a man of 77 years of age. ‘Go-maiju’ gives birth to a son. The husband goes to get some auspicious items required for performing purification rituals of the birth of a child. He never returns home.

Nawraj: son of ‘Go-maiju’ goes in search of his father and finds his remains and performs the funeral rituals to the remains of his father and completes the duty of a son to the father and sets the soul of his father in peace.

By the favor of Lord Swosthani, Nawraj becomes the king. ‘Go-maiju’ is the devotee of Lord Swosthani and makes offerings to Lord Swosthani and listens to the story of Swosthani every year for a month. By the merits she has earned, her son Nawraj becomes the king but his spouse ‘Chandra-woti’ falls in a swollen river and suffers for a long time, as she disrespects Lord Swosthani. She regains everything after atoning for the disrespect shown to Lord Swosthani. Thus, ends the story of Lord Swosthani.

A religious festival is held at Shalinadi River about 25 Km northeast of Kathmandu for a month starting on the full moon day of the month Magha and ending on the next full moon day. Hundreds of men and women devotees take a religious retreat at the shrine to Lord Swosthani on the bank of Shalinadi River for a month. They eat a single meal a day after fasting for a whole day and performing various religious rituals and listening to the story of Lord Swosthani.

Most of the believers in Lord Swosthani visit the Shalinadi River at least once during this auspicious month to revere Lord Swosthani. They also revere ‘Chandra-woti her two carriers, and Nawraj in stones dedicated to them on the bank of the Shalinadi River.

The large plot of agricultural land turns into a car parking lot, and hosts a number of makeshift eating-places, and some sorts of stores for serving the pilgrims visiting the Shalinadi River for revering Lord Swosthani. About two-kilometer long road from the parking lot to the Shalinadi River becomes full of walking pilgrims from and to the Shalinadi River for about four hours in the morning every day for the month of Magha when the festival of Lord Swosthani is held.

January 10, 2009.

### Travel

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### Did Bush cause the financial crisis? Continued..

Affordable home ownership, especially for African-American and Hispanic borrowers, who had traditionally found it difficult and expensive to get a mortgage, was a key policy goal of the Clinton administration and one enthusiastically carried forward by President Bush.

A laudable aim - but there is evidence that it led to severe political pressure on mortgage providers to lower their lending standards, spawning the now infamous "NINJA" loans for borrowers with "No Income, no Job or Assets."

The mortgage finance company Fannie Mae was also being urged to fulfil its mission of helping low income homeowners by buying up more and more risky loans. This political pressure, as well as rock-bottom interest rates and unscrupulous lending practices, helped to inflate the sub-prime housing bubble.

President Bush must take his share of the blame. There is no doubt that George W Bush is a natural supporter of deregulation and that his administration did nothing to stop all sorts of questionable financial activities in the private sector (even though it did not condone them). As president, he bears the ultimate political responsibility and his party has paid the ultimate political price.

But this financial crisis has many causes, being - as it is - the product of conflicting human emotions and imperfect markets and organisations.

It is impossible to blame it all on one man.

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### 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

### Technology

### Hard drive destruction 'crucial'

Source BBC News

The only way to stop fraudsters stealing information from old computer hard drives is by destroying them completely, a study has found. Which? Computing magazine recovered 22,000 "deleted" files from eight computers purchased on eBay.

Freely available software can be used to recover files that users think they have permanently deleted. While Which? recommends smashing hard drives with a hammer, experts say for most consumers that's a step too far.

Criminals source old computers from internet auction sites or in rubbish tips, to find users' valuable details, and a number of recent cases have shown the dangers in disposing of second-hand equipment.

A number of software solutions exist to more definitively erase files and information. The most straightforward solution, according to Which?, is complete destruction - and it recommends using a hammer. It must be done with caution because those smithereens contain environmentally harmful materials so they should be recycled - for instance at the vendor from whom a new hard drive is purchased.

However experts advise that even a treatment with a hammer may not be the end of your data. Expensive and sophisticated techniques could be used to recover deleted data, even from a hard drive platter that has been physically damaged. But for most people, the freely available deleting software or a simple hard drive formatting procedure should make the data sufficiently difficult to retrieve as to not be worth a criminal's time.

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

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

Answer to the last week’s Sudoku.

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