

The Reaches of Merit

One may suggest that in the imposition of Governor's Rule in Sindh, the Federal Government has shown resolve in not allowing motivated forces from side-tracking the real issues. On the same scale the Federal Government can do more through the broad spectrum of administration and governance on the basis of merit rather than political expediency.

THE Punjab Chief Minister, Mian Shabbaz Sharif, never ceases to surprise everybody. From time to time he pulls a rabbit out of a hat that goes a long way to show that while democracy may not be well, at least the concept is alive in Pakistan. In the final analysis, democracy is about institution building and accountability thereof, that despite rumours of an early demise, given the right environment the parameters of democratic norms, one that allows the reaches of merit, can be sustained. On Sunday November 15, 1998 a unique event took place simultaneously in Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi. Aspirants for Medical and Dental Colleges in the Punjab took part in an examination conducted by the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi — 5425 at Lahore, 2391 at Rawalpindi and 2004 at Multan, a total of 9820 aspirants. According to a rough result approximately 7,000 passed the examination and will be eligible for the 2500 seats available.

According to the weightage procedure 60 per cent marks have been allotted for the FSc examination results and 40 per cent for the merit examination. Obviously, there were discrepancies, in one case a first position holder in Multan could not even qualify the test.

Those taking O' Level examination had a distinct advantage but on the whole this exercise gives hope that admission to the colleges and universities will be made mostly on the basis of merit. The merit examination was quiz-type with 180 questions in various subjects: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English — 30 minutes were given to attempt 45 questions in each subject i.e. approximately 40 seconds to answer. For every four mistakes one mark was to be deducted from the total. This negative marking had the effect of forcing the students to think again before attempting to guess the question. Only those who had up to 60 per cent marks in F.Sc. were allowed to take the examination. A record was created when one student got minus, 13 marks which only goes

to show the measure of the quality of his/her education and how his/her 60 per cent marks had been achieved in F.Sc.

It is a well known fact in Pakistan that examination papers are mostly leaked out much before the examinations and large scale cheating takes place which is protected by the vested interests. This makes a mockery of the whole system. Merit examinations may not entirely eliminate the entry of the "Safarishi" students who cheat their way into colleges and universities but will certainly act as a check and balance to ensure that merit has some place in the future, for the moment at least the medical profession is certainly gone down over the last few decades as functional illiterates, incapable of drafting even a sentence, were elevated to top positions. Obviously

This precedent can be emulated through the broad spectrum of our society, some tend to say that this was just a flash in the pan and "one swallow does not a spring make". This initiative of Mian Shabbaz Sharif may just peter out as a simple publicity ploy unless he puts into place institutions to support the process. The Chief Minister has shown to have a real purpose in trying to better the quality of life in the Punjab province. The IBA-conducted examination has given competition a life of its own and brought integrity back to the examination process. On the national level one hopes that Mian Shabbaz Sharif's initiative will certainly encourage his elder brother's Federal Government to emulate what is being done in Punjab: One may suggest that in the imposition of Governor's Rule in Sindh, the Federal Government has shown resolve in not allowing motivated forces from side-tracking the real issues. On the same scale the Federal Government can do more through the broad spectrum of administration and governance on the basis of merit rather than political expediency.

AS I SEE IT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

those who are benefitted by the system, can buy the question papers and/or influence their way to whatever class they desire, will certainly not be happy with exams on merit.

Hard working students from less affluent families who do not have a chance more often than not give vent to their frustration in criminal pursuits, that the seeds of anarchy were sown, at the threshold level of information absorption and character building. Intelligent hard working people full of potential rarely have a chance to make their way to the top. Over a period of time this frustration hardens into resentment and spills out into the streets, mainly due to shortage of employment. For us the most important thing is to bring in merit and accountability at the grassroots level of our society i.e. transition from school to higher education. By invoking a merit-oriented examination, Mian Shabbaz Sharif's Government has set a model for the future.

these examinations IBA were paid fees, they deserved more than what was given to them. One hopes that this process will be institutionalised for entry into each and every college and university of the country so that the evil of nepotism and favouritism overwhelming merit will be totally eradicated in the future.

Mian Shabbaz Sharif has set a trend which is both commendable and deserving of full-throated support, at least in the present environment of nepotism and favouritism. The Chief Minister has proved to be a hands-on manager who is result-oriented, that he can do this without being subjected to different pressures is by itself remarkable. Will his abilities rub off on Islamabad? But then it helps to be the PM's brother, or is the PM lucky that Shabbaz is his brother? People may think that this merit examination was simply a publicity gimmick and an exercise in futility, that eventually the practice of having merit examina-

This is especially so in choosing the right people for the right jobs, based on merit rather than cronyism. And once they have been so chosen, to let them get on with it. For example a good number of Bankers who had lucrative jobs abroad acquired on the basis of merit and against the odds came back selflessly to help Pakistan steer a difficult course through an economic minefield but as a lot, their merit has now become suspect. The unceremonious exit of Mr. Mooinuddin Khan, former Chairman CBR, has been a very bad example for those expatriates who want to do patriotic duty and serve the country. When their sacrifice is being so questioned, will they like to continue in a place where merit has no value? The opposition that the Punjab initiative to explore the reaches of merit has attracted, must come to some startling conclusion. Unless we go the merit route honestly we are doomed.

Ensuing Indian State Elections

A Battle Royale in Madhya Pradesh

by V T Joshi

Interestingly both the parties share the same fickle fortune, the same set of weaknesses, the same negative features, the same propensity to amass funds for their massive political and electoral expenses, and the same evils of rampant factionalism and groupism. The difference, if any, is only a difference of degree.

IT is election time again. Its surest sign is when a candidate can recognise you across the street, as Kin Hubberd has observed. The late Mr N V Gadgil, the old Congress war horse of the 50s and father of V N Gadgil, the party spokesman until recently, used to say a candidate must regard and address the voter as "Your Majesty The Voter". The elector is indeed the monarch though only till the polls are over.

It was the experience of many, as was certainly mine, that one of the junior ministers in the Nehru government had developed a style of his own to woo the voters, whenever he had to face elections — and that was on several occasions — he would make it a point to come out of his cosy coach and walk down the platform at every railway station on his route (fair travel was rare in those days) and greet everyone around with a charming smile and effusive handshake. On the return journey on the same route after the polls he would not descend even to come out of his first class coach. Whenever he occasionally did, the benign smile and warm handshake were conspicuous by their absence.

Over the years the attitude of politicians has not changed much. It has indeed worsened. Poll time has acquired a sinister hue. Money and muscle power has become the sinews of modern electoral warfare. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Mizoram which go to polls next month to elect new state legislatures are most likely to prove it further this time.

With high stakes in their bid to retain or capture power the election bids fair to become a battle royale between the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party with no holds barred in Madhya Pradesh — as elsewhere too.

The BJP is in an upbeat mood and will leave no stone unturned to recapture power it

lost after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. And so will the Congress which will not hesitate to resort to any means not only to arrest its own rapid decline but also to checkmate the BJP in its tracks and recapture its long lost glory and power in Delhi, this time through its performance in the ensuing state elections.

Madhya Pradesh is in a unique position in the national scheme of murky politics. Unlike in most other States, polarisation is complete here between the two major political forces of the country — Congress and BJP. Both have shed ideological pretensions and are almost evenly balanced in their firm vote banks, each having carved out a minimum of about one-third of the total electorate of about four and half crores. A slight swing is sure to spell the fortunes of one and spell the doom of the other.

Interestingly both the parties share the same fickle fortune, the same set of weaknesses, the same negative features, the same propensity to amass funds for their massive political and electoral expenses, and the same evils of rampant factionalism and groupism. The difference, if any, is only a difference of degree.

A significant factor in favour of the BJP is the emergence of K B Thakare as its president and an important voice in the ruling coalition at the centre led by his party, however shaky it might be due to the periodical tantrums of Mamata, Samata and Jayalalitha and antics of Subramaniam Swamy. Despite some recent aberrations Thakare continues to be a father figure in the Madhya Pradesh BJP which he has raised (and its earlier incarnation, Jan Sangh), from the "hired straps" as it were to make it a formidable force in Madhya Pradesh — unlike in most other parts of the country. He knows the state and its

cadres like the lines on his palm and it is bound to fetch certain electoral advantage.

Both the Congress and the BJP have handicapped themselves through a variety of sins of commission and omission and are approaching the electorate without naming any of their respective leaders for the coveted post of chief minister. Faced with unrelenting detractors within the party, Digvijay Singh, who is the third chief minister of Madhya Pradesh to complete the five year term in the past 45 years, has fettered himself by promising the Congress high command that he would voluntarily choose political oblivion for ten years if he fails to bring the party back to power. If he succeeds he could well be expected to stake his claim for a second term.

As for the BJP there are quite a few controversial veterans aspiring for the top slot ranging from former chief ministers, Sunderlal Patwa, Kallash Joshi and all-but-forgotten V K Saklecha to the young and ebullient Vikram Verma, presently leader of opposition in the outgoing assembly, and Babulal Gaur, a former down-to-earth trade unionist who has become active, vociferous political leader among quite a few others who are measuring their feet to fill chief ministerial shoes. A dark horse, fancied by her supporters, may be Ms Sumitra Mahajan, a shy, suave, urbane middle aged BJP second ranker, according to reports from Indore from where she has won its (Lok Sabha) Parliamentary seat in the past four elections in a row.

There is a subtle move in the party to deny ticket to all the old warring heroes in favour of new blood. It conflicts with another stream of thought that all sitting MLAs should and would automatically be re-elected. This argument is countered by some pointing out the dramatic "transplantation" of Ms Sushma Swaraj from central

cabinet ministryship to become Delhi chief minister.

A wag however wondered if the "change of horse" in mid-stream of the election in Delhi did not offend the code of conduct enunciated by the Election Commission which promptly orders the cancellation of the transfer of even a peon or a minor official during the pendency on the polls.

As has been happening in the past few years the coming election is also devoid of any major policy issues animating the parties except their habitual mutual mudslinging, trading of grave but so far largely unsubstantiated allegations of corruption against one another, criminalisation of politics, rising crime graph climaxed by the recent ugly episodes like the rape of nuns in Jabhua and a number of similar incidents.

It was as ludicrous as it was unfortunate that even such grave matters led to sectarian divisions and partisan politics instead of universal condemnation. For instance, after the Jabhua nuns assault-and-rape incident, a call for closure to the mark day's protest against it was confined to the Christian missionary schools in Bhopal, although it was the sole concern of only the Christian community. Other schools and colleges were neither closed nor asked to close. Even worse was the spectacle of stalwarts of the major political parties accusing sections of each other of deliberately "engineering" the troubles and calling for the ubiquitous "CBI inquiry". Time was when a demand for "judicial inquiry" into each and every minor or major aberration was fashionable. Now the demand for CBI inquiry is routinely invoked — members play to the gallery without the requisite sincerity or seriousness, much less a modicum of succor to the victims.

— *Mandira*
The writer is a well known journalist from Bhopal.

Good Driving in Dhaka?!

by A M M Aabad

No music please, and tune your inner space — you have more free space there than you can utilise! Take a bet — for how many minutes can you drive in Dhaka without using the horn even once? I know somebody who drove silently for half an hour.

If you drive a car in Dhaka — notorious for having the world's worst driving conditions — this quiz or check-list is for you; to protect your car and your pocket (pay for other's fault).

Check if you are following most of the tips mentioned here. If you have a driver, pass on some of the tips to him; but in small doses at a time. The local drivers are not impressed with technicalities — it is for the professionals, they say, and Dhaka's working conditions are exceptional. A foreigner from a developed country cannot drive in Dhaka — you know why.

Never visited a servicing centre? Please do once in a while, even if have never opened the bonnet. Never depend on your driver or the centre (lack of professionalism, especially in the former). Make you visit to the servicing centre interesting with some general knowledge (a car is worth almost a million taka). Tips on

better driving will take more space, than is permissible here, but some stray tips are included.

Accelerator. That pedal on the right is not for constant pumping. Press or ease off gently — like a gentleman — for smooth pick up or slowing down gracefully. Too much use of the pedal increases petrol consumption. Do not become a **brake-and-accelerator driver**. (It is not a compliment), constantly pressing one or the other pedal, it is bad, jerky driving. Driving should be smooth, and unhurried.

Develop judgement by watching the traffic conditions just ahead of your vehicle. The situation in front of you (and on the other three sides) is beyond your control. Irritation and frustration are no remedies or cure. Dhaka is the place to practice a bit of philosophy in life, while caught in a traffic jam. No music please, and tune your inner space, you have more free space there than you

can utilise! Take a bet — for how many minutes can you drive in Dhaka without using the horn even once? I know somebody who drove silently for half an hour.

Brakes. To check if some one is a good driver, find out after what interval (xx, 000km) the brake linings (pads) are replaced. A bad driver wears out the linings quicker. Be gentle on the brake pedal. *If your dosing passenger does not wake up when you brake (and accelerate), you are a good driver.*

Same for gear change or acceleration. *Brake early, and press gently.* Memories the

"braking distance" formula — how much distance you should keep from the vehicle in front of you. The formula is simple: one car length for every 10 miles (16 km) per hour speed. That is, keep 3 car lengths away if you are driving at 30 mph.

How long the brake pads should last on the average? 20,000 miles is an acceptable figure; 30,000 and you an excellent driver. Keep a Maintenance Log Book (buy a cheap pocket note book). There is another checkup: brake fluid.

Battery. A weak point in any car. Take care of your battery as you take care of your health.

otherwise face tantrums right during a fit. Check the level of the fluid inside the battery (electrolyte, acid) once a week; and top up with distilled water if necessary. Keep an eye on the charging metre on the dashboard, whether the battery is being charged or not. If you are using air-con, be extra watchful of the condition of the battery. Battery life is short in the tropical countries. During the third year watch the health of the battery, and be ready to replace it.

Choke. What's a choke? It is used more frequently in cold climate for starting the engine. In the hot countries don't worry if you don't know much about it.

Clutch. Say ABC from right to left. The Accelerator and Brake pedals are operated with the right foot. C is used to disconnect the engine from the wheels, by pressing the pedal (to de-clutch the engine). Do not cultivate the half-clutch habit. It is a bad habit, and you have to get the clutch plate replaced more frequently. Half-clutching burns out the plates due to excessive heating (why so is more technical). Either you clutch or you don't — no half-way please.

Good driving. That's a separate chapter or series of articles. **Engine.** That dirty ugly monster with the power of many horses (50 or more) hiding inside the hood, growling all the time. It hums a merry tune when you tune it right and drive the right way (a giant can be tamed, but perhaps not a shrew — remember your Shakespeare?).

A rare combination of sight or sound, especially in our country, where the majority of the cars are hired drivers', with modest education and humble technical knowledge (more facts than facts), and ambitious driving egos. Engine tuning is an art backed by science; and not recommend for self-tuning by most of the owners. Go to an authorised or a well-established servicing centre — it is economical in the long run (lengthens the life of your car and engine). Avoid footpath mechanics.

How do you detect whether the turning is right or is slightly off? If will take too much space here, so better ask a technical friend, if you are not keen to read popular books on driving and maintenance (no local magazines available yet).

Fan. Inside the bonnet, not the car air-conditioner. The fan belt is temperamental. Give it a close look once in a while. Replace if worn out (don't leave a repair decision to the driver or the servicing centre. Sometimes stay back and watch how a car is serviced; I always do; man is good at aping).

Watch the thermometer on the dashboard. H means hot, C means cold; red mark means danger. Keep yourself and the engine cool. Prevention is better than cure.

Gears. A tricky nuisance, with a short history to play with. Remember what the five gear numbers stand for (first gear, second gear, ... and reverse gear). Memorise when to use which gear. What is "High gear" or "Low gear"? The lower the number, the higher the gear. You initially move (forward) with the first gear, and cruise with the 4th (uncrowded road) or 5th (highway). In the crowded city roads, you would be driving

mostly on second or third (especially with so many rickshaws around).

You can spot another driver using the wrong gear, by the jerky movement and throbbing sound. Most drive on the third gear when they should get into the second at lower speeds in the city. It strains the clutch plates, and the engine does not like it. No half-clutching please.

Hydrometer. See Battery.

Ignition. A function of the spark plugs. Keep the plugs clean, regularly. Other information may be too technical.

Jack. Always keep it in the car. Learn how to change a wheel on the roadside (sometimes self-help is the best and only help around). Practice a few times (hide in the garage), just for the fun of it.

Lights. Get the headlights focused correctly (at the workshop), so as not to blind the oncoming drivers (you could be the oncoming driver facing the blinding headlights of another car). The Dip switch should be working. Make a habit of using it. Gentleman drive smoothly.

The side and brake lights must be in operational condition (the latter is vital to avoid your car being rammed from behind). Keep spare small bulbs in stock.

Metres. There are several metres on the dashboard. It is not for show, but to show the driver some vital information (dynamics) before and during driving. Ignore these at your peril. If you are not sure, ask. Be impartial, look at all of them without discrimination (that is democratic. Isn't it?).

Mirror. Not for checking on the make-up, but for watching the traffic behind, and especially before and during taking a turn (right or left). In Dhaka, the vehicles, especially rickshaws, overtake from the left. How to keep one eye on the rearview mirror and the other on the road ahead? Not possible, but the combined use has to be practised. Before moving, ALWAYS look at the mirror and driver some vital information (dynamics) before and during driving. Ignore these at your peril. If you are not sure, ask. Be impartial, look at all of them without discrimination (that is democratic. Isn't it?).

tion or your engine is weak, do not take chance; wait. Remember that it is difficult to judge the speed of an approaching vehicle, as you are looking almost at zero angle.

Pressure. Not blood pressure, but tyre pressure. Pay attention to the correct tyre pressures (the pressures are different). Menorise the numbers, tell your driver, and watch the metre at the filling station. Keep a pressure gauge inside the car (it is a small and inexpensive gadget, looks like a pen).

Unequal pressures of the front tyres impair steering control, and it may be dangerous at high speed on the highway. Keep the pressure equal on both the front wheels (and both the rear wheels), and do not over-inflate (lose grip). Do not depend on eye estimate; measure, (radial tyres look un-inflated, but are not so). Good drivers can detect a difference of one or two pounds per square inch pressure between opposite wheels.

Radiator. That's at the front of the bonnet, and is used to cool the water that cools the engine. Like the battery, open the cap of radiator (when cold) and check the water level, and top up as necessary. You should learn at what intervals (days) to look. The temperature metre on the dashboard should read normal.

Steering (wheel). Keep your body away from the wheel. The drivers in Dhaka tend to crouch over the wheel and bend the elbows too much, and bend down the head. Keep the back straight and the face up, for the eyes to be at a higher level from the ground (gain height by using, if necessary, an extra cushion on the driver's seat). The elbows should be bent slightly, keeping the driving arm more or less straight. Keep the hands on the wheel at 10 and 2 o'clock angles. Avoid using extra tape, bars, or cover for the wheel. The wheel should be a bit slippery as designed by the manufacturer, for quick maneuvering.

Wipers. Must be in working condition at all times. Do not delay in replacing worn-out wipers — bad visibility is dangerous for driving. Do not forget to refill the water for the wipers. Use some cleaning fluid to remove grease and insect marks from the windshield.

Happy driving! It means careful driving, meaning you must know what you are doing and why.

The writer's hobby was rally driving.

Passion for Music Leads to 18-Year Jail Term

Despite all the celebrity attention to the plight of Tibet, the Chinese crackdown in the so-called autonomous region has worsened. Gemini News Service reports on the story of one man whose jail sentence for spying symbolises the Tibetan struggle
Mike Crawley writes from London

ATibetan musician who won a prestigious Fulbright scholarship might seem an unlikely candidate to engage in the murky world of espionage, but not according to the Chinese government and legal system.

Ngawang Choephel is currently serving an 18-year prison sentence in Tibet for spying and "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement". He went to Tibet in August 1995 — for the first time since his family fled when he was two years old — to film traditional Tibetan music and dance, travelling legally on a Chinese-issued visitor's document.

Rarely a month after Choephel arrived, Chinese authorities arrested him. No official announcement of his status was made until December 1996, when state radio reported that a closed court had found him guilty and handed down the sentence, one of the longest ever given to a Tibetan political prisoner. He was paraded through a marketplace with 28 other Tibetan prisoners in a public display later broadcast on Chinese television.

China says recording the songs and dances was merely Choephel's pretext for collecting sensitive information. The official news report of his sentence claimed he was sent to Tibet "by the Dalai (Lama) clique with expenditures and equipment provided by a certain foreign country."

The worldwide campaign to free Choephel is now being led by his mother, a tiny, grey-haired 62-year-old who speaks no English except "Thank you". Sonam Dekyi lives in the Tibetan refugee enclave of Mungod in southern India, but has travelled to the US and the UK, appealing to politicians to put pressure on the Chinese government. All the while clutching a framed photo of her only child with a Tibetan guitar across his lap.

Dekyi recently battled a bout of tuberculosis and fears that she will die before seeing her son again. During an interview in London, she spoke through an interpreter, but the tears that streamed down her eyes needed no translation.

"He is innocent," she de-

clared. "I guarantee he was not in any way spying or doing any political activities." She says her son's passion is for music and dance, not espionage.

While in London, Dekyi posed for a publicity photo with the former Beatle, Paul McCartney, another example of the celebrity attention that has pushed the issue of Tibet into the mainstream media spotlight in recent years. Big names and Hollywood movies might work wonders for getting attention in the west, but for the people living in Tibet, little substantial change has come from all the hype.

"In spite of it, the human rights situation is becoming worse in Tibet day by day," said Tsering Norzom Thonsur of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

The centre's most recent statistics say 1,216 Tibetan political prisoners are confirmed to be in Chinese jails, many of them serving sentences on charges of espionage, counter-revolutionary activity and endangering state security. "Those are just the documented and confirmed prisoners, there may be many others who are not known," said Thonsur.

Human rights groups report that the Chinese use torture widely in Tibetan prisons. Jailers' methods and equipment include electric cattle prods, extracting blood, solitary confinement in dark freezing cells, and beating the bottoms of prisoners feet.

The latest report of Choephel's condition came from a monk who served time in jail alongside him and described the musician as "weak and dazed". He was being interrogated in secret and other prisoners were not allowed to have contact with him, according to the monk.

Choephel's jail term is just one of the more extreme examples of the recent intensification of the Chinese crackdown in Tibet.

Through incentives as well as forced migration, ethnic Chinese have moved into the region in such numbers that they now outnumber Tibetans. Since 1996, China has been on a campaign to expel Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns and "re-educate" the rest. Work teams have been sent to monasteries and nunneries to persuade the occupants to sign a political pledge to denounce the Dalai Lama and the notion of Tibetan independence, a campaign that Beijing has declared a success.

More recently, China has introduced forced retirement of monks and nuns at age 60. "Monks and nuns who practise religion, it's for their lifetime, they don't retire," said Thonsur.

Dekyi has applied three times to go to Tibet to visit her jailed son and has been refused each time. A Chinese embassy official in London confirmed that the law of China gives prisoners the right to see visitors. When told that Dekyi had not been allowed to see her son, the official asked, "Do you believe her?"

"If I had the opportunity, I would even visit China and appeal to the president personally to understand the pain of a mother separated from her son," said Dekyi.

"If recording music and dance in Tibet were a crime, the amount of three years and one month he has already spent in prison is more than enough. This sentence of 18 years, I don't accept."

After finishing high school, Choephel went to Dharamsala to study music at the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts. He then worked for six years as

a music teacher in two Tibetan settlements in south India, including the one where his mother lives.

Choephel next attended Middlebury College in the state of Vermont on a Fulbright Scholarship, a prestigious international award. His former teachers there describe him as soft-spoken and interested only in music and dance.

"He was always very interested in learning music and dance from his childhood days," says his mother. "As a Tibetan, he felt it was very important to preserve the Tibetan culture and heritage in the form of music and dance."

The most recent official word of Choephel's location came in May of this year, when some Beijing-based European ambassadors on a delegation to Tibet were told that he was being held in Nyari detention centre in Shigatse, the town where he was arrested.

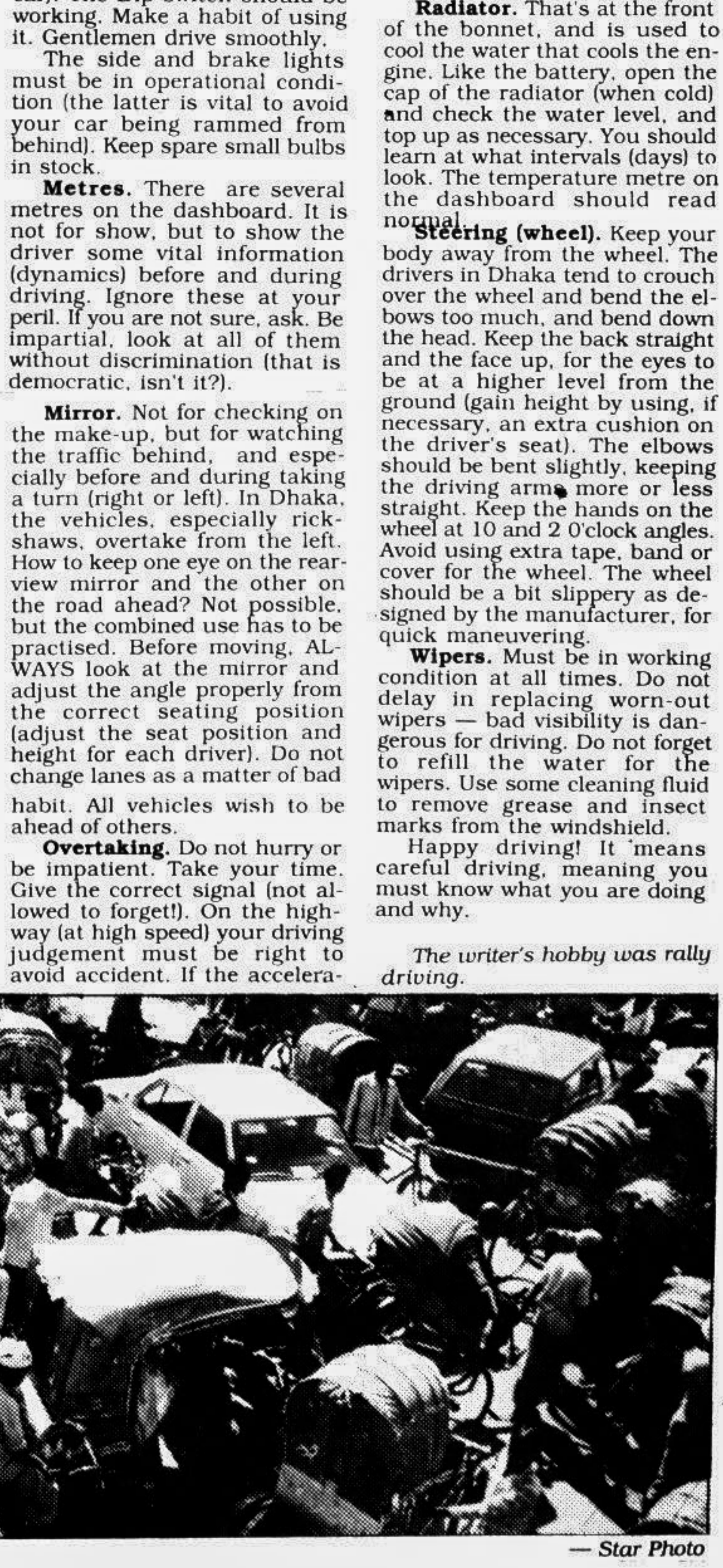
During her visits abroad, Dekyi met with Congress members and State department officials in Washington, as well as members of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Tibet in London. All gave her plenty of assurances that they will do their utmost to appeal to China, but the fact remains that they're a handful of low-level politicians dealing with the case of one man imprisoned in a territory occupied by the world's largest undemocratic country, a country that consistently dismisses human rights concerns as internal matters.

Negotiations between China and the Tibetan government-in-exile remain a possibility. Until now, Chinese president Jiang Zemin has said the Tibetans must accept that Tibet is part of China as a precursor to negotiations. In late October, the South China Morning Post reported that the Dalai Lama is soon to make a statement about a willingness to engage in negotiations, but no specifics were mentioned.

— *Gemini News*

The writer is a Canadian journalist working in London for Gemini News Service on a fellowship with the International Development Research Centre.

Happy drive, if you can...



— Star Photo