



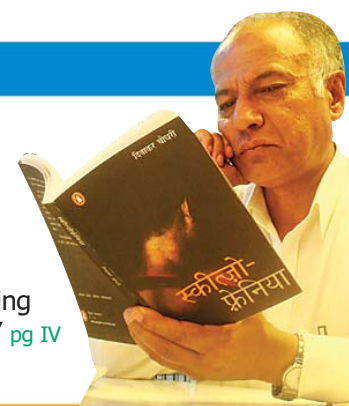
**MILEY CYRUS**  
John Travolta is her new singing partner pg 111

# City Post

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## "Hum Jayega"

The gopher jokester of Darjeelingtown

For general information, Hum Jayega, the fabled character of Nepali jokes, was not any fictional character. His descendants are found in Kathmandu itself, and one granddaughter reads news on a TV channel every evening.



Hum Jayega with Jeena

Through his associations with funny stories, Hum Jayega has time and again made us laugh and continues to do so. Nepali stories told in the form of jokes are incomplete without Hum Jayega because his name lends a different flavor to them. That is the reason his stories continue to be equally popular to this day.

There would hardly be a Nepali who has not heard of Hum Jayega's stories, but very few know about the man himself. Most people think of him as an imaginary character from stories. Hum Jayega, though, was a famous driver of Darjeeling who used to take travelers around Darjeeling in his fabled Land Rover.

Hum Jayega's real name was Dal Bahadur Gurung. He was born in Marebong Kaman (tea estate) of Darjeeling in March 1922, and lived in Darjeeling his whole life, bringing laughter to everyone with his anecdotes and jokes.

According to his daughter Jeena, Hum Jayega died in March 1992. Jeena spent most of her time with her father and, being his eldest daughter, has seen him from very close. He had become "Hum Jayega" even before her birth in 1951.

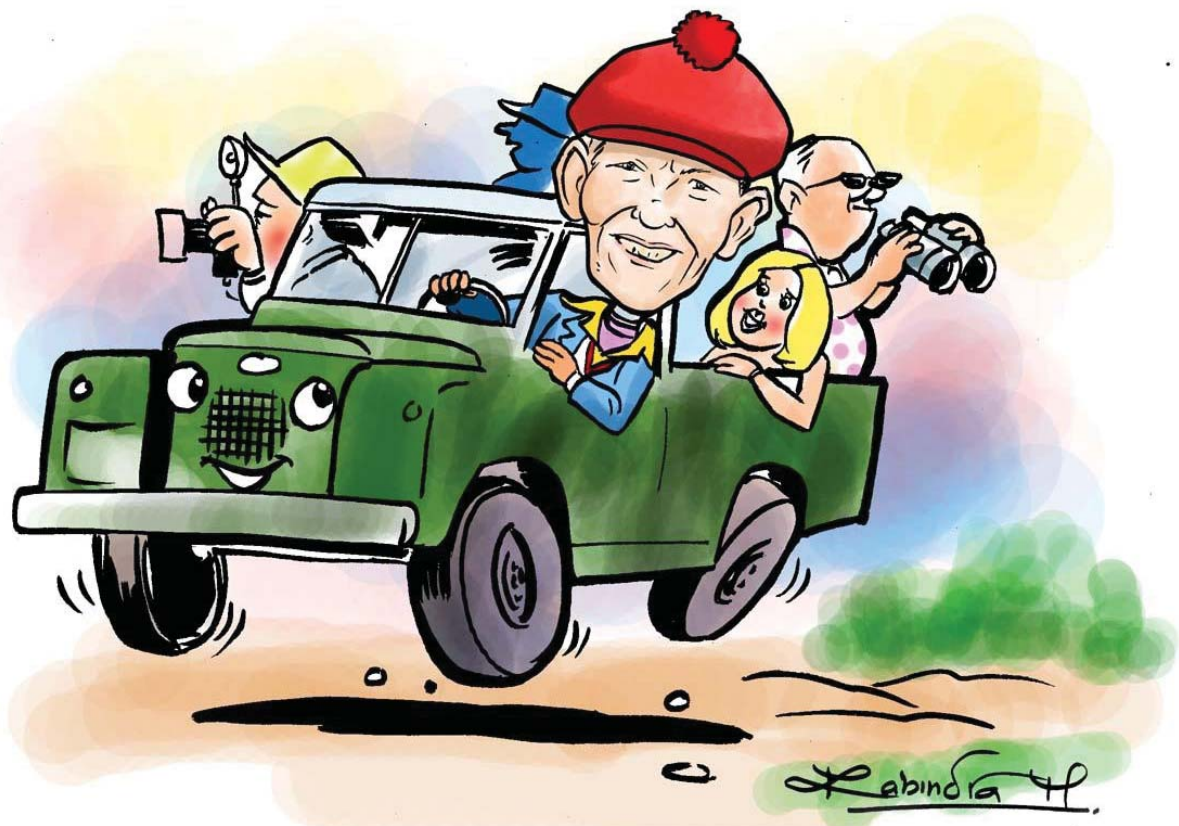
So how did Dal Bahadur become Hum Jayega? It is an interesting story. In those days, Darjeeling, being hilly, did not have good roads. So it was difficult to drive tourists over such terrains as per their time and desire. But Dal Bahadur was willing

**HUMOR MUGLAN STYLE**

and never hesitated. That obviously made him the favorite driver of tourists. During that time, it was mostly Indians who came to visit Darjeeling. His answer to their query, "Kaun Jayega?" ("Who will go?"), would always be, "Hum Jayega" ("I'll go"). That is how he got the name — Hum Jayega — which later would make him an inseparable part of Nepali jokes.

everybody. But she had heard that he was very naughty as a kid. Jeena said that he had left the tea plantation for Darjeeling Bazaar at the age of eight, and never returned to Marebong. Later, he enrolled in the army but his mother did not let him go. After that, he fled to Calcutta to become a pilot, but could not get admission in college, as he did not have the required academic qualifications.

He was not one to give up so easily, though. So he entered the engineering campus premises and started



### Hum Jayega's naughty girl

Hum Jayega was very impressed by the little girl whom he used to call "chhuchchi keti" (naughty girl). That clever little girl used to ask him many questions and even argue with him if she was not satisfied. He would often marvel at her intelligence. That girl, Bidhata Rai, is now an English newsreader on Kantipur Television. Bidhata is the daughter of Jeena and granddaughter of Hum Jayega.

Due to her grandfather's encouragements, Bidhata always stood first in class. Hum Jayega used to say that she would make a big name in Kagjhoda (a Darjeeling constituency), but she has exceeded his expectations.

Hum Jayega died when Bidhata was just 11, so she has very few memories of him. Even then, she has clear recollections of her grandfather before his death. Hum Jayega wanted to see her in St Loreto Convent's school uniform. "His last wish was fulfilled," says Bidhata, but she regrets the fact he could not see her on TV.

Having studied science, Bidhata came to Kathmandu two and half years ago and took a

media training on a friend's advice. She then got the chance to work on TV. Bidhata finds it a strange coincidence and credits it to her grandfather's blessings.

She does not possess the quality of telling jokes like her grandfather but adds, "I think I'm hard-working and friendly, like him." Bidhata says that people do not believe her as Hum Jayega's granddaughter, but instead ask if he was for real, and even make her tell jokes to prove herself. "But I don't have that quality," she shares her problem.



When in school, she sometimes used to tell jokes associated with her grandfather. She would call him "Hum Baje" in those jokes, while those who knew Hum Jayega used to address him as "Hum Bada". However, according to her, Hum Jayega preferred to be called "Hum Jayega" because he did not want to lose his identity.

Bidhata plans to come out with a book in memory of her beloved grandfather after some time. "That moment will be very important for me," she shares.

PHOTO: ANVESH KARMACHARYA

telling jokes. That was why Tulsi Ghimire invited him to play in his film.

Hum Jayega was also a great father. "Baba never failed in his responsibilities," Jeena remembers. After her mother's death, Jeena and his relatives had suggested him to marry again but he never agreed to it. "Baba didn't marry for us children," she revealed. "There are very few fathers like him in society who raise their children and give them happiness after his wife's death. We never felt the absence of our mother."

Though Hum Jayega was not a good cook, he used to manage with whatever he knew, just for his children. "Baba wanted to give us good food and make us happy," says Jeena. Hum Jayega was always neatly

dressed and his clothes had to have iron creases. "Our father was very stylish," says Jeena. He never forgot to have a hanky in his coat pocket. He even had a small mirror and a pair of black goggles with him all the time. She says that he used to teach his children to do the same. He very well knew the importance of person-ality.

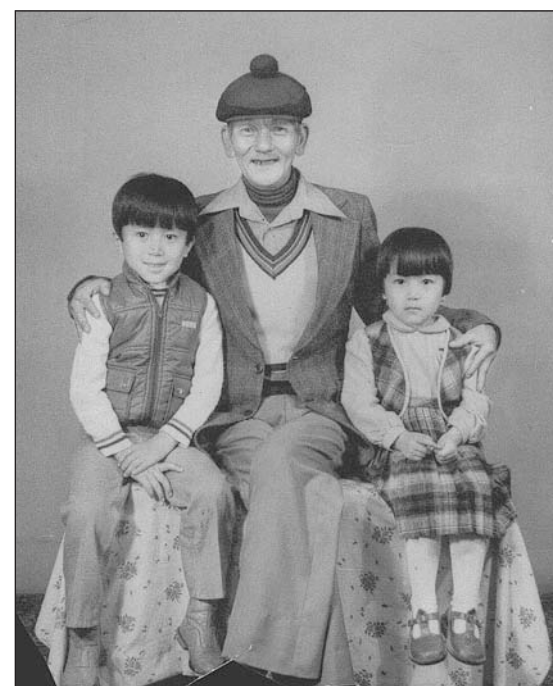
When in Hong Kong with her husband, Jeena had decided on a walking stick for her father. Hum Jayega, however, wanted to look young even as he grew older. "Baba didn't like sticks. He used to say he'd die without using one," says Jeena.

Hum Jayega used to tell different kinds of jokes, all based on incidents and happenstances in his life as a driver, but told with his unique style and relish. But that quality did not pass on to his children. "Not everybody possesses the same talent. We couldn't take the place of our father," Jeena says.

However, her 28-year-old son has inherited some of that talent from his grandfather. When asked about the qualities akin to her father, Jeena only smiled but her daughter said, "Like grandpa, mummy also mingles with everyone."

In the old days, say, the 1960s, many people in Darjeeling knew Hum Jayega. Writer Peter J Karthak is one of them, but even he was not aware of his real name till now.

"He used to be known as Hum Jayega," says Karthak. It has been four decades since Karthak left Darjeeling, but he still remembers the face and stories of Hum Jayega. Karthak also still packs a few of the timeless jokes ascribed to Hum Jayega, most of which have himself in the center of



Hum Jayega (center) with Bidhata (right) and her brother.

life's dilemmas and doldrums — dominated by his tough wife, cranky tourists, his own dunces fellow drivers and other social quirks — and how he emerges from each prickly situation, either wiser or worse off.

BY TARA CHAMLING

## In a changed world, million-dollar works continue to soar

NEW YORK: So, the market boom goes on in its most prestigious area, Impressionist and Modern art, but this is a different world from six months ago, and it is a different boom.

The new reality was partly concealed this week by the huge numbers posted at Christie's on Tuesday evening, \$277.27 million, and at Sotheby's on Wednesday evening, \$235.33 million.

World auction records were set as in the good old days. At Christie's, three star lots faultlessly sailed to their promised destiny.

The first one was of truly stellar importance. Rodin conceived "Eve" in its large version in 1881, and the 173-centimeter, or just over 68-inch, figure of a woman in the nude, bending her head and clasping her arms in embarrassment, was cast in 1897 by François Rudier. It is the biggest ever inscribed with Rodin's signature.

A period photograph reproduced in Christie's catalogue shows that

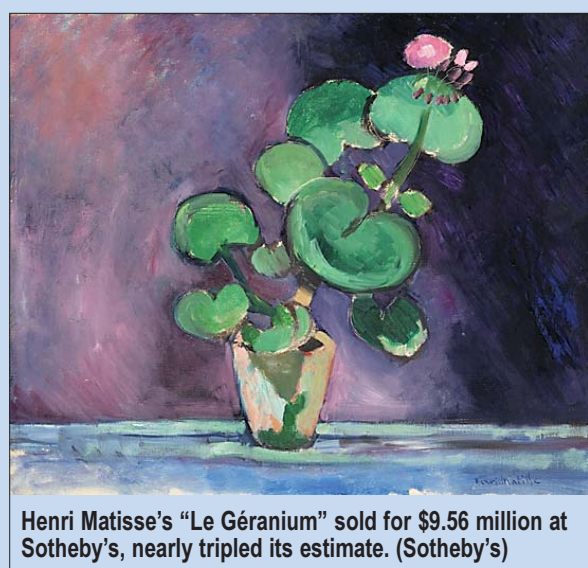
cast in Rodin's studio. The superlative museum piece expected to be knocked down between \$9 million and \$12 million, exceeded its high estimate by over one third as it set the latest auction record for a Rodin bronze at \$18.96 million.

Later, the story repeated itself when came the turn of "Grande femme debout II," cast in 1960, only months after Alberto Giacometti molded the model. The outsized figure of a woman was produced in an edition of six in the Susse foundry. This one was the first and biggest of them all. The price for the giant icon was \$27.48 million, exceeding by half the previous record for a Giacometti bronze set in May 2007 at Christie's New York, when "L'homme qui chavire" brought \$18.52 million.

A few clever dealers saw it coming a long time ago, as shown by the third star lot in Christie's sale. "The Railway Bridge at Argenteuil" was painted by Monet in 1873. The first of a series of five, Monet's "Pont du

chemin de fer à Argenteuil" broke new ground in handling a subject from the new industrial age for the first time, as well as ushering springtime into landscape painting. Looking at the clear blue sky, with white clouds rolling high up, you almost feel the cool breeze that made the river waters ripple.

There are greater Monets from that period but, sadly, almost none still knocking about the market. When it appeared at Christie's London, on November 28, 1988, the picture fetched the equivalent of \$12.4 million. This week, as they released the Monet



Henri Matisse's "Le Géranium" sold for \$9.56 million at Sotheby's, nearly tripled its estimate. (Sotheby's)

admirable study of trees done by Cézanne in the early 1890s missed the lower end of the estimate as it made \$713,000. The other, an exquisite still life by Edouard Vuillard, went for only \$481,000.

This was the more noteworthy, as another Vuillard, big and striking in its simplification of form and its color contrasts, had realized its \$6.08 million earlier in the sale.

The difficulty of finding good pictures that do not come under the superstar heading leads auction-house specialists to lower their standards in order to fill their catalogues.

There were some real dodos in Christie's otherwise brilliant sale. A nondescript Monet titled "Près de Vétheuil" was mercifully unsold, later followed by an unglamorous Gauguin. "Te fare hymeneae," was estimated to be worth \$10 million to \$15 million, but fell unwanted. Both were dispatched in a matter of seconds as if the auctioneer, Christopher Burge, was too embarrassed to spend much time on the matter.

In Christie's sale, there were two gems for the connoisseur, and neither did particularly well. An

with impeccable timing, they watched it climb to \$41.48 million, setting a new record.

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