

EURO 2004 FEVER | SAJHA BUS BLUES AND BEYOND | CANINE CONTROL

JUNE 13, 2004 VOL. 1, NO. 8

www.nation.com.np

nation

WEEKLY



IN THE HOTSEAT



Gulf Traveller,
nobody's given a friendlier welcome than you.

Gulf Traveller is the Middle East's first and only full service all-economy airline. Because it's all-economy everyone is special to our cabin crew and everyone receives the same friendly smile and warm welcome. Contact your local travel agent, call Gulf Air on 4435323/4434464, or visit www.gulfairco.com. **With Gulf Traveller nobody's more important than you.**



مسافر الخليج
GULF TRAVELLER

A Division of Gulf Air

Garden Terrace

International Buffet Lunches

Business Advantage/SCP/04/05

Saturdays & Sundays

International Buffet Lunch for Rs. 500/- nett per person.
Time: 1230 - 1530 hrs. For reservations, 4273999 ext 6152.

Priority Privilege discount not applicable.

SOALTEE



KATHMANDU



Where you
rediscover yourself.

Ace Institute of Management

provides an excellent learning environment, where you can:

- explore your abilities
- ignite your creativity
- nurture your leadership

Our ability to bring real world practice to the classroom makes our curriculum distinctive, inspiring and of international standards.



The following programs are currently offered by the institute: **MBA | EMBA | BBA | Higher Secondary**



20 COVER STORY

Miles & Miles To Go

By Akhilesh Upadhyay and Suman Pradhan

The new prime minister has been assured of RPP support. But his travails continue

An exclusive with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba
NSU General Secretary Gagan Thapa's op-ed

COLUMNS

11 The Party is Over

By Suman Pradhan

What is interesting is that none of the Congressmen I spoke to in the immediate hours after Deuba's appointment saw the problem where it lay: in their own leadership

30 Minority Report



By Samuel Thomas

The Supreme Court directive on the Badis is a welcome step in tackling the criminal neglect of minority dalits and indigenous peoples

38 Winning The Hearts And Minds



By Deepak Thapa

On visits to some outlying districts in the last few months, I was struck by how contrasting the people's perceptions of the Army in different places are

40 The Robinson Saga

By Jogendra Ghimire

The Supreme Court decision to acquit Williams Robinson has dealt yet another blow to the judiciary whose public image has been on a sharp decline

18 Bitten By Euro Bug

By Ashish Bhattacharai

Football as a spectator sport may be in a serious decline in Nepal but come Euro 2004, the football fever will reach stratospheric heights.

26 A Mercy Mission



By Sushma Joshi

Taking an innovative model from Kalimpong and Jaipur, the KATC is trying to control the population of street dogs

28 All That Glitters Isn't Gold

By Ajit Baral in Pokhara

Pokhara, which had no transportation system until the early 50s, has turned into a booming city. But there has been no accompanying cultural growth

BUSINESS

32 Driving The Blues Away

By Satish Jung Shah

Despite dangerous warnings issued by the Maoists, Sajha Yatayat and many of its supporters say the show must go on

ARTS & SOCIETY

34 Portraits By A Young Artist

By Tiku Gauchan

Gaurav Shrestha's collages seek to break free from constraints

36 Theravada's Rocky Road to Revival

By Sushma Joshi

While Theravada Buddhism now enjoys a popular following, the thorny issue of ordination of nuns still remains

DEPARTMENTS

6 LETTERS

10 PICTURE OF THE WEEK

14 CAPSULES

16 BIZ BUZZ

39 CITY PAGE

44 KHULA MANCH: BANDA GOVINDA

45 BOOKS

46 LAST WORD

nation
WEEKLY

Nation Weekly, The Media House, Tripureshor,
Kathmandu, Nepal (Regd. 113/059-060).
Tel: 2111102, 4229825, 4261831, 4263098

EDITOR: Akhilesh Upadhyay

editorial@nation.com.np

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Suman Pradhan

COPY EDITOR: Tiku Gauchan

STAFF WRITERS: Sushma Joshi, Satish Jung Shahi

PHOTOJOURNALIST: Sagar Shrestha

DESIGNER: Raj Kumar Shrestha

AD & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR: Krishna Shrestha

MARKETING EXECUTIVES:

Sarita Gautam and Rameshwor Ghimire

ad@nation.com.np

MARKETING CONSULTANT: Kreepa Shrestha

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Nripendra Karmacharya

SUBSCRIPTION: Bipin Raj Ojha

subscription@nation.com.np

PUBLISHER: The Mirror Media Pvt. Ltd

AD ENQUIRIES: Tel. 4229825, 4261831, 4263098

COLOR SEPARATION: ScanPro, Pulchowk, 5548861, 5552335

PRINTING: Variety Printing Press, 4278869

DISTRIBUTION: R.B. News, 4232784, 4244679

Nation Weekly is published every Monday by The Mirror Media Pvt. Ltd.

All Rights Reserved. The reproduction of the contents of this publication, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited without the prior consent of the publisher.

Vol. 1, No. 8. For the week June 7 - 13, 2004, released on June 7

C O N T A C T

www.nation.com.np

nation
WEEKLY

We prefer to receive letters via e-mail, without attachments. Writers should disclose any connection or relationship with the subject of their comments. All letters must include an address and daytime and evening phone numbers. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and space.

E-mail: editorial@nation.com.np

Fax: 4216281

Mail: Nation Weekly

The Media House, GPO 8975, EPC 5620

Tripureshor, Kathmandu, Nepal.

SUBSCRIPTION

E-mail: subscription@nation.com.np

Nation Weekly, The Media House, GPO 8975

EPC 5620, Tripureshor, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 2111102, 4229825, 4261831, 4263098

Fax: 4216281

nation
WEEKLY

subscription

subscription@nation.com.np

2111102

SEE PAGE 16.



“ When you go home, tell them for us: for your tomorrow we gave our today... ”

YAM GURUNG

Unsung heroes

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK Nation Weekly for drawing the nation's attention to the plight of the Gurkhas (Satish Jung Shahi's "The Unknown Soldiers," Gurkhas, June 6). Yes, the new package to compensate the World War II veterans, who suffered at the hands of the Japanese, has come a bit too late for many Nepali Gurkhas. Interestingly, the numbers offered by GAESO and the British Embassy don't match. GAESO says some 3,000 Gurkhas were held in prison by the Japanese. The British Embassy estimates the figure could be around 350. Or are the strings attached to the Ex-Gratia Far East Prisoner of War Scheme so selective that they bar many veterans from qualifying for the belated package?

RAMAN SUBBA
DHARAN



IT IS GOOD TO SEE AMERICA honor its World War II veterans during the annual Memorial Day. Unfortunately, that's not the case with the Gurkha veterans. The following epithet is inscribed in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, in memory of those who fell on the Burmese frontline: "When you go home, tell

them for us for your tomorrow we gave our today." Hundreds of Gurkhas died in the frontline.

YAM GURUNG
RETD BRITISH ARMY SOLDIER
LALITPUR

Nepal as dumping ground

YOUR MAY 30 WAS THE BEST. You have good selection of writers and range of issues they have tackled is impressive. I must thank Sushma Joshi (Vol. 1 No. 3) and Samuel Thomas (Vol. 1, No. 6) for the articles on WTO and Genetically Modified crops. They clearly showed how Nepal is becoming a dumping ground for the western nations. I want to add some points. If you watch primetime television, you will realize we are paying a premium on every liter of cooking oil so that we can in return be bombarded with advertisements about pure mustard oil and happy mothers-in-law and healthy families. This is why price of cooking oil (GM oil) has doubled in the last two years as Thomas' article ("Rape Seed," Broadside, May 30)) clearly states. Traders are destroying our farming systems, our small millers and robbing us to pay for advertising and for western farm products and feeding us "pure, healthy" GM. Developed countries clearly have double standards: What is bad for them is good enough for us.

BAL BAHADUR K.C.
MALIGAON

Literary figures

IT'S BEEN A FEW WEEKS SINCE I started reading your magazine. It looks good but you could draw articles from literary figures like Abhi Subedi and others outside the country to add variety.

KAMAL RAJ SIGDEL
VIA E-MAIL

Mahasweta is Indian

IT IS GREAT TO READ MANJUSHREE Thapa's interview in Nation Weekly. But I would like you to correct that Mahasweta Devi was born in 1926 in the city of Dacca in East Bengal (modern-day Bangladesh). She is not a Bangladeshi writer. Since her family moved to West Bengal, she has spent her entire life in India and in 1984, she retired from her job as an English lecturer at a Kolkata university to concentrate on her writing.

SARAD PRADHAN
VIA E-MAIL

Bush begone!

I APPRECIATE ANIL SHAHI'S ATTEMPT to soothe my bewilderment over how one can oppose the war but support the troops, and I am greatly heartened to discover a like-minded colleague whose outrage over the Bush administration's deception matches mine.

The semantics of "support our troops" is still baffling to me, especially when I dwell upon how ironical Shahi's statement—"by 'supporting the troops' Americans are only hoping that their loved ones do well in what they were trained to do"—sounds in light of what American soldiers, "trained" by Bush administration's dismissal of the Geneva Convention, did to the Iraqi prisoners. While Iraqi civilians have died in the thousands, mostly at the hands of brave American soldiers, "supporting our troops" means, whether one wants to or not, supporting the deaths of these Iraqi civilians. It is hypocritical to want your soldiers arrive home in one piece after they butcher men, women, and children thousands of miles away.

Perhaps Shahi and I can seek consolation in the fact that increasingly the sentiments of this country are changing, as reflected in the newspaper editorials in the past few weeks. The brilliant and blistering criticism of Bush's damaging legacy by former Vice President Al Gore some days ago at New York University (accessible at moveon.org) would have been unthinkable before the prisoner abuse scandal jolted the American consciousness. Ultimately history will treat this war as a good lesson for America, and could usher a strong return to the basic foundation of this country—respect for individual life whether white or black or brown—that Bush has attempted to erode.

SAMRAT UPADHYAY
INDIANA, USA

nation
WEEKLY

We're committed to you

Here at **Nation Weekly** the very same care and attention that go into our magazine go into customer service. This means that if you're a **Nation Weekly** subscriber, your complete satisfaction is guaranteed because it's our top priority.

We're always here to help....

■ **When you have a question**

about your subscription, such as undelivered issues, duplicate invoices, your subscription expiration date, or anything else – please don't hesitate to get in touch. Be sure to include your Full Name and Address when you contact us.

■ **When you have suggestions**

or comments - especially about ways in which we can improve subscription service - we welcome them.

■ **When you want uninterrupted delivery - guaranteed**

please be sure to renew your subscription early. We'll notify you in advance, so you needn't miss a single issue.

Write or telephone:

E-mail: subscription@nation.com.np

Telephone: 2111102, 4229825, 4261831

Fax: 4216281

Mailing Address: Nation Weekly
GPO Box 8975 EPC 5620
Media House
Tripureshwor
Kathmandu, Nepal

nation
WEEKLY

THE MIRROR MEDIA PVT. LTD.

Read
the story
behind
the news
nation
WEEKLY

www.nation.com.np



TEX. WORLD

*A mark of
high quality*



Species of the fabric as unlimited as fish in the sea, from the daringly different, to the timeless tradition. Unexplored colours unexpected co-ordinates you will find unlimited possibility for your limited budget.

Spread your net at the Tex-World and spend some quite hours fishing through our collection you will go home with a great catch.

Picture of the Week



TACTICAL CHANGE: A CPN (UML) activist lays down the party flag during the five-party street protest

nw/Sagar Shrestha



The Party Is Over

What is interesting is that none of the Congressmen I spoke to in the immediate hours after Deuba's appointment saw the problem where it lay: in their own leadership

BY SUMAN PRADHAN

Last Wednesday, soon after Radio Nepal announced the appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as the new prime minister, I began calling Nepali Congress stalwarts to gauge their reaction. Almost all of them professed disbelief. Some sounded dejected, and at least one was furious. "This is a joke," said the angry one. "Deuba will run the country to the ground."

That may be an overly pessimistic assessment of the situation. But given the difficult times and his not-so-glorious past record, it is not surprising that many are wondering whether Deuba is up to the job—a job which has become doubly difficult since he was last in office. Only time will give us the answer. But what is interesting is that none of the Congressmen I spoke to in the immediate hours after Deuba's appointment saw the problem where it lay: in their own leadership.

Let's recount what happened last week. After King Gyanendra issued a 24 hour ultimatum to the parties to come up with a clean name for prime minister, Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala went all out to scuttle the selection of CPN (UML) leader Madhav Nepal as the five parties' consensus candidate.

Congress insiders told me that Koirala opposed Nepal's selection primarily because 1) A communist prime minister would send the wrong message to the international donor community 2) Congress cadres, who see the UML as their long-term rivals, would be angry and 3) Koirala himself wanted to become prime minister one last time so as to right the situation and leave behind a proud legacy.

The first argument doesn't hold ground because diplomats have gone out of their way to tell anyone who'll listen that they don't oppose a communist prime minister. One western diplomat told me "we don't care who becomes the prime minister as long as the parties get to agree on a name. Just send a name to the Palace."

The second sounds more plausible since the NC cadres, supporters and students do see the UML and its sister organizations as their greatest rivals. Indeed, if you look at the history of both the NC and UML, the two parties have often defined themselves in opposition to one another. Therefore, it could well be that Congress activists will find it difficult to accept a UML prime minister supported by their own top leaders.

The third argument, that of Koirala's legacy, is what is most interesting. As a political journalist over the years, I have watched and reported on Koirala's achievements and shenanigans. In that time we have all seen how a well-meaning and strong Prime Minister squandered not just the public goodwill of his Congress party, but together with other politicians, fed people's apathy towards politics and democracy. That, in turn, gave rise to extremist forces in both the right and left. That same

man now wants to become prime minister one last time to right his legacy.

If Koirala was really concerned about his legacy, he could have supported Madhav Nepal as the prime minister, and then gone about righting the situation in his own party by instituting much-needed reforms. Everyone knows the Congress is in tatters. The party is in denial mode, there's no internal democracy there, corruption and nepotism is entrenched. Above all, there is a succession issue to settle.

But Koirala didn't do that. By opposing a consensus candidate, he made it explicitly clear that he was fighting for the chair. Not many know that, as it dawned that the King was about to appoint Deuba, a frantic Koirala tried till the end to thwart the selection, but without any success.

As I pen this column, I do not feel a particular sense of glee in having to write about Koirala's bad judgement. Rather, I feel sorry. There was a time when I, like millions of other Nepalis, really admired the man. We saw him as a strong leader during 1991-94 who surrounded himself with able men and women. These people pushed much-needed economic and other reforms on a reluctant electorate. But sometime in the



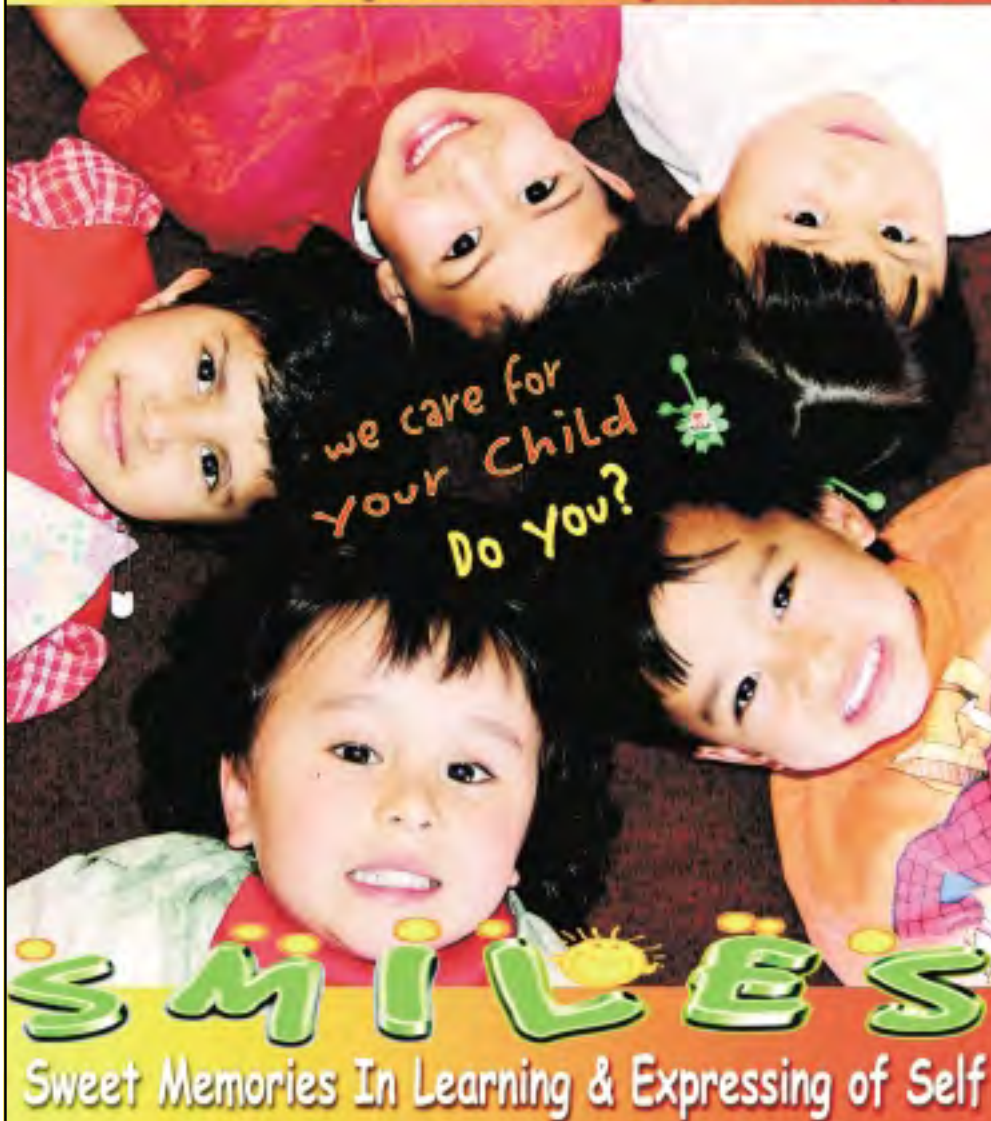
middle of 1994, Koirala and his party lost the way. The slide since has been steep and precipitous, bringing the party to its present situation.

In any other democracy, a leader who runs the party to the ground would have long been nudged into retirement. But that most likely won't happen here, because this is Nepal and it is the Nepali Congress. There are many people within the Congress who owe their positions to Koirala's power of patronage. They won't let the leader bow out in silence because they too will have to bow out with him. This is why, the cry for reforms by young turks like Narhari Acharya is courageous and exciting.

Let us hope the Congress, and particularly Koirala, realizes that this is the party's last chance. Your legacy, dear leader, will be intact if you see the wisdom in your situation. **N**

suman66@hotmail.com

Where Learning Develops Naturally...
Pre-School & Enrichment Programmes for children aged 18 months to 6 years old



- Wholistic Development
- In House Swimming Pool
- Creative Language
- Creative Art
- Music & Dance
- Science Discovery
- GymPlay
- Outdoor Activities
- Indoor Activities
- Pre-Maths Activities
- Computer Learning
- Fun-Cookery
- And Many Many More

We believe that each child is a unique individual who has the potential to be the best that he or she can be.

A whole new concept in learning....



In Association with



"SHAH MAHAL" HOUSE NO-613, SAMA MARG, OPP-IGP HOUSE, GAIRIDHARA, NAXAL KATHMANDU, NEPAL PHONE: 4413928, 4416539

if you publish

PLEASE TRY WORDSCAPE



<< THESE BOOKS
WERE DESIGNED
BY WORDSCAPE
FOR UNDP.

***“You can’t go wrong
with WordScape.”***

WordScape
CROSSMEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

The Media House, Tripureshwar, Kathmandu
GPO 8975, EPC 5620
tel: 4229825, 4261831, 4263098
fax: 4216281 info@wordscapeonline.com
www.wordscapeonline.com

Panda search

Worried by a sharp fall in numbers of the rare red panda (habre), animal activists started research on the rare species in the Langtang National Wildlife Sanctuary (LNWS). Kantipur quotes a sanctuary official, Binod Regmi, as saying that the research will help save the animal from extinction. The red panda lives above 2,200 meter in the sanctuary, feeds on bamboo leaves and is frequently seen in Polangpati area on the way to Gosainkunda.



Bhutanese Maoists

Police in Jhapa arrested three refugees from the Beldangi Camp in Damak with a homemade pistol and Maoist documents in their possession. Security in the camps has been tightened after the arrest. On several occasions in the past, the camps in Jhapa and Morang have seen pamphlets distributed by the Bhutan

Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist-Maoists). It was the first time that the police had found armed Maoists inside the camps.

Innocent deaths

Suspicious, apparently, led to the deaths of two innocent brothers in Mahottari. The villagers said a police patrol had forcefully asked the two men, Dayaram Yadav and Rajaram Yadav, to open the door of their house before shooting them to death. Villagers say the two were simple peasants. More than 150 villagers reached the district headquarters to protest the brutal killings. They have appealed to the Chief District Officer, Bimal Dhakal, for justice, increased security for themselves and compensation to the Yadav family. The police said that if the two brothers were not Maoists, as the villagers claim, they could have been used as human-shields by the Maoists while attacking a patrol team. A policeman said the patrol team opened fire at them after a group of six to seven people attacked them. For their part, the Maoists said the two were not members of their party.



MOTLEY CREW: Four of the prime minister wannabes

Anti-drug campaign

The Birtamod-based social organization Lifeline Health Group declared that it will make Jhapa a drug-free zone by the end of 2007. The organization formed by former intravenous drug users said that the increasing use of drugs among the adolescents has led to the rapid increase in HIV/AIDS cases in recent years. The number of intravenous drug users in the district is estimated to be 3,000. The group plans to organize workshops and awareness programs.

Death penalty

The Maoist area committee in Arghakhanchi has announced

'death penalties' against four locals for allegedly spying for the Army. Maniram Poudel, Pushkar Acharya, Khimananda Banjade and Durbata Bhusal are in the Maoist death list, according to Nepal Samacharpatra. Maoists have already killed a villager there for a similar charge.



Bus bombed

Even as the NHRC urged the Maoists to respect the principles of human rights, the Maoists continued vandalizing public property and targeting civilians. A blast on a Sajha bus in Kathmandu left one dead and 20 injured. Eyewitnesses later said three boys, between 12 to 14 years of age, were seen leaving the bomb inside the bus. The bus, which was heading for Baglung, had left the Sajha Bus garage at Pulchowk at 6 a.m. The Maoists took responsibility for the attack. They said the action was in retaliation of Sajha's defiance of their bandas.

Indian FM in Kathmandu

India's Foreign Minister K Natwar arrived in Kathmandu for a two-day "familiarization visit." In his arrival statement, Singh said the first priority of his government's foreign policy was to further improve and strengthen relations with neighbors. Nepal is the first country the foreign minister has visited after assuming office last month. New Delhi fears Nepal's insurgency has



now become a trans-boundary menace. Indian police last week arrested 11 Maoists, including NCP (Maoist)'s central committee leaders, in Patna. India in

recent months has tightened security along the Indo-Nepal border but Indian officials admit that policing the long open border will continue to be an arduous task.

Husband for meal

Family disputes led Indira Ghimire to kill her husband and cook parts of his corpse for a meal. Indira stabbed Gopi Krishna of Mrigauliya-2, Morang to death. Koshi Zonal Hospital said Indira had mental disorder. The incident came to public notice days after the killing when the villagers started looking for Gopi, and his wife could not offer them his whereabouts. They found the body parts in a sack inside a garbage pit nearby. It was the foul smell emanating from Ghimire's house that made the villagers suspicious. Indira had told her two sons that their father had gone to another village, according to newspaper reports.

Telephone results

If all goes well, Nepal Telecom will have up and running a system that will make the upcoming SLC results available on telephone. The number to dial: 1600. Excited, many students had gathered at Gorkhapatra Sansthan, which brings out the annual results in Gorkhapatra, last week when they heard about such a system. Officials at Controller of Examinations say the SLC results will be declared by mid-June.

Maoists arrested

The Indian media reported the arrest of 11 Nepali Maoists in Bihar on Thursday, a day ahead of the visit of Indian Foreign Minister K Natwar Singh to Kathmandu. Local television showed footages of an CPN (Maoist) central committee member Chitra Bahadur Shrestha, who had his face covered with a towel after the arrest. There are three other central committee members among the arrested. It is said that they were trying to step

into the leadership vacuum left by the arrest of Maoist leader Mohan Baidhya at Siliguri in March.

School shutdown

The student wing of the Maoists, ANNIFSU (Revolutionary), is all set to close down all educational institutions starting June 6, insisting that the boarding schools have failed to abide by the code-of-conduct prepared by a committee of government officials, student bodies, parents and teachers. Among the key demands of the Maoists: the boarding schools should lower their "exorbitant" fees to make them affordable to all sections of society. The Education Ministry and the Private and Boarding Schools Organization of Nepal has said they are ready to hold talks to defuse an impending crisis. Parents have appealed to the Maoists to repeal their decision to shut down the schools.

Army calls

The Royal Nepal Army came up with two telephone numbers, 4220000 and 9841-217913, for the general public to report suspected Maoist



LITTLE STAR: "Fruity" of Star TV's "Son Pari" fame was in the capital on a shooting assignment

activities inside the Valley. The move came after Maoists escalated their bombings ahead of their month-long banda programs.

Week in politics

May 30: King asks parties to name their prime minister candidate by next day, 5 p.m.; May 31: Palace receives a

total 35 applicants for prime minister.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Nepal Sadbhavana Party are the only parties in the dissolved parliament to name their candidates. Five agitating parties fail to declare their common candidate. King meets Sher Bahadur Deuba in the evening at Narayanhity; June 1: CPM(UML) says the five-party alliance did not declare a common candidate. Deuba meets UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal at the latter's residence; June 2: King appoints Deuba as the new prime minister; Deuba meets Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala after appointment; June 3: PM Deuba sworn in, says peace and polls government's priorities. Nepali Congress, Maoists give a thumb-down to Deuba's appointment; June 4: UML says Deuba's appointment not regression if he mends his ways, but is still undecided over joining the government. It however suspends its participation in street protests.



MONSOON WOES: Now a common sight in Kathmandu's thoroughfares

In search of Miss Nepal

Dabur Nepal will sponsor the Miss Nepal Pageant for the third time with this year's event to be held at the Birendra International Convention Center on August 7. The event will choose Nepal's 10th Miss Nepal since the annual event started in 1994. The Dabur Vatika Miss People's Choice has been added to other regular titles handed out during the beauty pageant. The organizer, The Hidden Treasure, says the contestants will go on a five-week extensive training as preparation for the contest. Application forms are available at www.missnepal.com.np.



New car in town

Nepali roads will be marked by the entrance of a new Malaysian five-seater car, Kelisa, brought in by Nemlink International Traders who are also the sole distributors of Perodua vehicles. Nemlink says Kelisa comes with its newly

developed 1,000 cc, three-cylinder, 12-valve EFI, double overhead camshaft that can release upto 85 bhp power. "Kelisa will be positioned in between the small car and the entry level sedan segment, meaning it is an upgrade from the existing small car but available at the same price," says Amitabh Dhakhwa, Nemlink's managing director.

Habib's hairstyles

Indian hairstylist Jawed Habib has extended his chain at the second floor of Kastamandap Departmental Store in Kamaladi. Nepal Lever's Sunsilk Naturals Shampoo, whose brand ambassador is Habib, conducted a workshop for Nepali hairdressers at the Hyatt Regency to demonstrate his art of hairstyling and coloring. Habib is known for innovative hairdressing.

Sangina shines on

Six corporate houses, Dabur Nepal, ICTC, Jyoti Group, Nabil Bank, Nepal Lever and Vaidya Group have appointed taekwondo star Sangina Baidhya as their brand ambassador. They promise to raise money for her participation in the upcoming Olympic Games in Athens. Sangina is the first official Nepali athlete scheduled to take part in the Olympics, though Bidaan Lama won a medal in taekwondo during the demonstration match at

the Seoul Olympics in 1988. Sangina's track record has been stellar in recent years. She won golds at two straight SAF Games and other Asian championships. She will be training in Korea prior to her participation at the Olympics.

Banda economics

The Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) claims the nation loses close to Rs. 1.5 billion for each banda day. The Himalayan Times, quoting experts, said the transport strike is the most damaging one, though no official data has been gathered on bandas so far.

Ultimate gin

A triple distilled grain gin from Himalayan Distillery has now been rolled out onto the Nepali markets. "Ultimate," the new gin, is made by distilling cereals with juniper berries, coriander seeds and orange and lemon peels.



nation
WEEKLY
READ THE STORY BEHIND THE NEWS

The Media House,
Tripureshwor, Kathmandu
Tel: 2111102, 4261831, 4263098
subscription@nation.com.np
www.nation.com.np

Why read Nation Weekly?

- We offer in-depth analyses of stories behind the news.
- We also cover other important areas as lifestyle, arts, books, and movies.
- We bring to you a range of interviews—that of riot police to young entrepreneurs who have made a difference in our lives.
- Our news snippets and City Page tell you the news and upcoming events in a nutshell.
- We want to make your reading wholesome.



Yes, I would like to subscribe to nationweekly for,

- 52 Issues (25% @ Rs. 1170) 26 Issues (10% @ Rs. 702) 12 Issues (5% @ Rs. 342)

NAME (Mr/Ms) _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

MOBILE _____ FAX _____

E-MAIL _____

FROM _____ TO _____

SIGNATURE _____

- Cash Cheque Bill me later

* Cheque should be made payable to **The Mirror Media PVT. Ltd**

To subscribe, fax completed form to **4216281** or call
Subscription at 2111102 or email at subscription@nation.com.np

**12 Issues for
Rs. 342**
(5% discount)

**26 Issues for
Rs. 702**
(10% discount)

**52 Issues
for
Rs. 1170**
(25% discount)

SUBSCRIBE AND ENJOY SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS

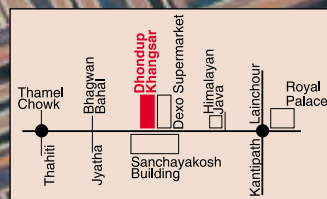


Dhondup Khangsar
Handicraft Center

Moved to
Thamel

FINE CARPETS & ANTIQUE TIBETAN FURNITURE

Tridevi Marg, Thamel,
Opp. of Sanchayakosh building
Tel: 4417295, 4416483
E-mail: wapema@wlink.com.np



BITTEN BY THE EURO BUG

Football as a spectator sport may be in a serious decline in Nepal but come Euro 2004, the football fever will reach stratospheric heights

BY ASHISH BHATTARAI

Sandesh Shrestha, a 20-year-old BBS second year student, felt like he was over the moon on the night of May 15. Not that he topped his exams or won a DV lottery to get permanent residency in the United States, something he has been trying in vain for several years.

Arsenal, an English football team, had won the Football Association (FA) Premiership with flying colors. The Gunners, as this North London club is popularly known, achieved such a rare feat that no person alive has known of it having been done before. Having already clinched the Premiership crown, Arsenal, with a 2-1 home win over Leicester City, completed the first undefeated league season at the top level of English soccer in 115 years.

Shrestha recalls, "It was amazing to see Highbury stadium awash in red and white as the Arsenal fans saluted their team." Arsenal, with 26 wins and 12 draws in 38 league games, finished the 2003-04 season with 90 points, 11 clear of second-placed Chelsea and 15 more than Manchester United—the world's richest football club. "And I felt like I was in the thick of things out there," he adds. "Thanks to cable television."

Football as a spectator sport is in a serious decline in Nepal and most local matches are watched by near-empty stadiums but there are thousands of football fans across the country who follow



Between class breaks, canteens hum with unending stories of Thierry Henry, France's goal-scoring machine

every single move by their overseas teams like Manchester United, Arsenal and Real Madrid. Thierry Henry, David Beckham and Manchester United replica shirts are common sights in campuses, streets and restaurants.

Come Euro 2004, this craze will reach stratospheric heights in Kathmandu. The European Championships, as it is formally called, kicks off on June 12 in Portugal with 16 of the best teams from Europe vying for the prestigious Henry Delauney Cup in the final night on July 4.

One local football administrator conceded recently "as more and more people tune in to readily accessible in-

ternational sports channels people here know much more about Manchester United and Real Madrid than they do about their national team." TV channels like Star Sports and ESPN have raised a whole new generation of fans for whom international football is where it's at. "All the Euro 2004 matches will be brought to you live on ESPN and Star Sports," says Shyam Sundar Sharma, deputy general manager at Channel Nepal, who also looks after the marketing of Space Time Network—the Valley's leading cable operator.

One only has to visit schools and colleges to witness football fever. Between the class breaks, canteens hum with unending stories on Thierry Henry, Arsenal's and France's goal-scoring machine, the delightful "Total Football" of the Dutch and Italy's strength on defense.

As a matter of fact, top-class football competition has always been a big draw with the Nepali sports crowd regardless of age.



HOTS-SPOT: Come Euro 2004, K-Too's will be abuzz with both Nepali and foreign football fans

the restaurants and cafés here. Euro 2004 matches, on the other hand, are played late in the night or well past midnight according to Nepal's time.

Gagan Pradhan, owner of Himalayan Java is excited about Euro 2004, although he makes a point to stress that Java is a coffee bar—and not a sports bar. Java has been showing European club football matches live during the weekends. Java was a popular destination during World Cup 2002 and “there was no standing room in here,” says Pradhan, recalling the Brazil-Germany final which the South American team won 2-0, much to the delight of the local fans.

This time round he is not sure if Java will see such happy moments, at least not all the time. “We pull down our shutters at 11 p.m. So we can show only early matches, those that start at 10:30 p.m. Nepal time.”

Dr. Bibek Banskota, 27, who works as a House Officer at B&B Hospital, says, “I know I will not be able to watch each and every match but I plan to see as much as I can and preferably not miss any of Holland's matches,” he says. “Euro Cup will be a great opportunity to socialize and meet up with old friends.” Banskota plans to buy the orange Dutch jersey soon.

Others are busy with the guessing games. Who will be the possible winner? Will the French manage an encore? Will the remaining members of the ‘golden generation’ of Portuguese football including stars Luis Figo and Rui Costa live up to huge expectations from the home fans?

While the real action may be in far-away Portugal, Carlsberg Breweries, one of official sponsors of the event, is working overtime to ensure that Nepali football fans have as much fun over here and that its money is well-spent.

“We're installing around 20 model outlets in Kathmandu where people can relax and watch live football,” says

Roshan Puri, senior brand executive of Gorkha Brewery, the local brewer of the Danish beverage.

The Danish beer giant expects the sponsorship to mirror Euro 2000, considered the most successful activity for the brand on a global scale, resulting in an 11 percent increase in sales over the period and a 5.4 percent rise in annual trade. The Championships were broadcast live over 200 countries delivering exposure to a cumulative TV audience of seven billion—the third highest after the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

In Nepal, there is a growing trend of fans going to restaurants and bars during the matches, which clearly serves a dual purpose for the viewers: meet up with old friends and enjoy the match. But there are apprehensions. During the last World Cup held two years ago, the kick-off times in Japan and Korea suited the Nepali viewers who watched matches live between afternoons and evenings. That in turn generated additional business to many of

Ekraj Adhikari, the manager at K-Too's in Thamel, however, has a different thought. Although the restaurant-cum-bar hasn't finalized its plan to cater to late-nighters for the Euro, Adhikari is confident that the matches will be shown and fans will have to be kept entertained. With a capacity for 230 customers, he says K-Too's has lately turned into a sports bar.

Thanks to the 2002 World Cup, the restaurant would entertain more than 300 fans a day, well beyond its capacity during that summer. Located close to Kathmandu Guest House, K-Too's is hugely popular among foreigners in and around Thamel. Adhikari says there are a handful of loyal Nepali football fans who make it a point to come every weekend to watch European club football. K-Too's hopes the current decline in customer attendance due to the poor security situation will see a reverse with Euro 2004. For both him and the football fans here, who need their world class-football fix, the festive days are just around the corner. **N**



MILES AND MILES

The new prime minister has already been assured of RPP support. But his travails don't end there. He has to get the formal support of the CPN(UML), and ultimately the Nepali Congress which is going through a rough phase itself. And assuming that he is successful in all these, there is still the task of getting the Maoists to agree to a peace deal. And finally hold general elections

BY AKHILESH UPADHYAY & SUMAN PRADHAN

These are difficult times to be Nepal's prime minister. Whether his third innings as the country's head of the government is going to be any bit happier than the previous forgettable ones, Sher Bahadur Deuba has little time to lose. And he knows that very well. Immediately after his appointment on Wednesday, his Budhanilkantha residence donned a new aura. Sniffing dogs, plain-clothes policemen, scores of friends and



SS/NU

'My First Priority Is Holding Elections'

On the day of his appointment on Wednesday, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba talked with **Akhilesh Upadhyay** and **Suman Pradhan** of Nation Weekly at his Budhanilkantha residence.

What will be the priority of your government?

The first priority is holding elections. Towards that goal, I will try to convince all the other parties to join the government, and then strive for a peaceful resolution of the Maoist conflict so that free and fair elections can be held. At the same time, there is a need to jumpstart the economy which has suffered due to the Maoist conflict. This government will introduce special economic programs towards that end. In October 2002, your government was sacked by the King after you suggested deferring elections. Now the King has appointed you as the new prime minister, and you say your priority is to hold elections. I consider my government to have been reinstated. That is what this is. But this is immaterial now. The King has shown great magnanimity by appointing me. I am profoundly indebted to him. As for the elections, I have already said in the past that postponing them was a mistake, and I have to accept responsibility for that. But this time, there won't be any such mistakes.

But many people are saying that elections can't be held until the Maoists agree to it. How do you plan to deal with the security issues surrounding the elections?

Why can't there be a conducive atmosphere for polls? Look at India. They could hold elections in Kashmir despite the violence. But I agree that first we must try to make peace with the Maoists.



Do you see a realistic chance for peace with the Maoists who tried to assassinate you in the past?

You can't let personal ego come into state affairs. Whether they tried to assassinate me or not happened the past. We will negotiate again with the Maoists, but the negotiations will be different from the last time.

How different?

I can't tell you everything right now.

But the Maoists are saying they will not agree to anything less than a constituent assembly election to draft a new constitution. Can you agree to that demand?

The present constitution is a document of compromise and I am serving under this constitution. If there is national consensus again on holding constituent assembly elections, I will have to give in to the public demand.

You said that you will try your best to gain support from other parties. But it looks like some major parties are against you. Do you see the Communist Party of Nepal

(Unified Marxist Leninist) and Nepali Congress joining your government?

Right now, it is too early to tell how will that pan out, but all of them have extended their support to me. The CPN(UML) has responded positively. I met Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala a while ago, and he too extended his best wishes. We will see how things go from here, but I want all other parties to join the government and help resolve the political crisis and the Maoist problem.

Do you see a chance that your Nepali Congress (Democratic) and the mother party, the Nepali Congress could reunite soon?

I certainly want re-unification, but it depends upon them. There has to be willingness on both sides but I haven't seen one on their side.

As a founding member of the Nepal Students Union, how will you deal with the NSU students who are protesting on the streets against your appointment? Will you use force as the last government did to quell the protests?

Everyone has the right to protest, but no one has the right to break the law. I don't think there will be any problem if they abide by the law.

Has the parties' demand for the restoration of sovereign rights been met with your appointment?

Indeed. The sovereign rights have been transferred to the people.

TO GO

relatives coming in to wish him luck and a battery of aides. It was easy to get caught in the frenzy. Not Deuba. He knew he had miles to go and tons of appointments to seek. But first: the mission impossible to woo the Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala at his Mandikatar residence.

"He wished me luck," Deuba told Nation Weekly later in the day, refusing to elaborate one bit despite repeated questions. But the courtesy all to Koirala was only the beginning of a long and arduous process. In the days since, the

newly-appointed prime minister has visited CPN(UML) General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal and RPP President Pashupati SJB Rana to garner their support for the fledgling government at extremely divisive times.

Despite the cautious welcome given by the RPP, it looks certain that the party will ultimately join the new government, giving it a much-needed boost. After all, when the King appointed Deuba after weeks of political uncertainty, the monarch gave him three specific tasks: form an all-party government, ensure peace and initiate the process towards holding the all-important general elections within the current Nepali year—all three fraught with dangers.

Given the mandate, the RPP's support is only more than welcome for Deuba. But his travails don't end there. There lies the difficult task of getting the formal support of the CPN(UML), and ultimately of his one-time party, the Nepali Congress which he split in 2002 to form his Nepali Congress (Democratic). And assuming that he is successful in those tough goals, there is the task of getting the Maoists to agree to a peace deal and hold general elections and complete the circle.

Senior aides to Deuba indicated to *Nation Weekly* that the new government would not make a big splash about peace talks, but rather pursue it quietly, even discretely, away from the media glare.

But that can wait. For now, the immediate task is to get the other parties onboard the government, sources said.

Developments over the weekend indicate that the UML would support the government in one form or another. The only question is how. According to a political document introduced by General Secretary Madhav

Nepal in the party's central committee meeting on Friday, the UML boss sees Deuba's appointment as a "partial correction to the regression" of October 4, 2002 (when the monarch sacked an elected Deuba government.)

Nepal also put forth a litany of proposals which the new government should meet in order to roll back regression for good, the chief among them being annulling all executive appointments made by Chand and Thapa governments, and ensuring that the government supported the UML's nine-point roadmap to peace with the Maoists. This roadmap calls for an all-party government, a round-table conference to decide on a future consti-

tution, and writing of that constitution.

But most importantly, UML insiders say, Nepal is firmly pushing a "wait and see" approach before he formally joins the government. For the time being, despite the over-eager calls to join the government by some central committee members like K P Oli and Bamdev Gautam, the UML is almost certain to adopt a middle-of-the-road position: support the government from outside, but hold out the fig leaf of joining later if and when Deuba pushes the UML roadmap.

"We are keen to see the Deuba government correct the wrongs committed by previous governments, though we do maintain that the restoration of a bona fide prime minister means regression is partially corrected," says Amrit Bohara, a central committee member of UML.

What this also means is that the five-party alliance which hinged on the cooperation between the UML and Koirala's Nepali Congress is now as good as dead—a huge relief for Deuba.

The five-party alliance which hinged on the NC-UML cooperation is now as good as dead



GOOD LUCK: The new prime minister receives tika from his Prasad Singh Deuba after his appointment while the First Lady Arjoo Deuba looks on.



On Friday, a day after Deuba met Nepal, the five-party alliance lost UML from its daily protests that started on April 1.

That realization has pushed the Nepali Congress into the throes of soul-searching: The party's young supporters are calling for an all-out pursuit of republican goals, all right, but what its senior members are demanding is making heads roll.

Witness the rancor in the Central Working Committee meeting last week. Narhari Acharya accused the leadership of taking the party to ruins. He called for a wholesale change in the party's mission statement. In his written proposal, Acharya asked the party to go for a policy review in the way it views monarchy. This he suggested had to be done by Maha Samiti, which represents party workers from all over the country. The Samiti, which is supposed to meet every year, hasn't been called for the past four years.

This review is warranted in view of the fact that there have been republican calls during the current movement and there has been a perceptible shift toward

republicanism in the party's student organization in the campuses, he argued.

The reformist calls have come other quarters as well. Central committee member Shailaja Acharya has asserted that the Nepali Congress is under the clutch of "the corrupt" and the party has been taking all its important decisions outside the central committee. "The central committee meeting is a mere formality."

Many analysts seem to think that Deuba's appointment, which reportedly came only after secret contact between the Palace and Maoists collapsed, was the best option for the monarch, given Koirala's intransigence. The grand old

man of Nepali politics wouldn't allow UML's Nepal to become prime minister but he wouldn't come up with another name, either. This perhaps left the King with no option but to choose Deuba whom he sacked in October 2002 as "incompetent."

In effect, the King has been forced to eat his own words, some analysts say, and the parties should recognize that and leave the matter where it is. It would be wiser to concentrate on Deuba, who has the propensity to fall off the straight and narrow path, and steer his government on the right track. Most other major parties are likely to follow that advice, though the UML shows signs of trying to have it both ways.

But not the Congress, it seems. And at least not Koirala.

Nation has learnt from very reliable sources that when Koirala realized that the King was all set to appoint Deuba as the new prime minister, the Congress president made two last-ditch calls. The first one to CPN(UML) General

Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, saying that he was willing to propose his name as the new prime minister; second to the Palace, imploring he would rather have Nepal, Pashupati SJB Rana, or even continue with Surya Bahadur Thapa. In short, anyone but Deuba.

The response: both Balkhu and Narayanhi told him, "Too late, sir."

Koirala's deep mistrust of Deuba, which borders on the fanatical, puts the Congress at a disadvantage. This is a party on a tight grip of Koirala. As such, it can't support the government, but and it doesn't quite have the wherewithal to launch a decisive street agitation on its own, the support offered by perennial opposition parties—the Nepal Majdoor and Kisan Party and the Janamorcha Nepal—and Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Anandi) notwithstanding.

The whole affair should have put the spotlight on the monarchy and even on new Prime Minister Deuba. But the irony is, Koirala's refusal to allow Nepal to become prime minister has drawn the spotlight on himself as well



TROUBLED WATERS: UML-NC alliance



TOUCHING BASE: Visitors at Deuba's Budhanilakantha residence after his appointment

*Taking you
more personally*



Abu Dhabi • Amman •
Bangkok • Bahrain •
Beirut • Cairo •
Casablanca • Cebu •
Colombo • Dhaka •
Damascus • Dammam •
• Dubai • Doha •
• Frankfurt • Hyderabad
• Islamabad • Istanbul
• Jakarta • Jeddah •
Kabul • Karachi •
Kathmandu • Khartoum
• Kochi • Kuala Lumpur
• Kuwait • Lahore
London Heathrow •
Luxor • Maldives •
Manchester • Manila •
Milan • Moscow •
Mumbai • Munich •
Muscat • Paris •
Peshawar • Riyadh •
Rome • Sanaa • Seoul •
Shanghai • Singapore •
Tehran • Tripoli •
Trivandrum • Vienna •
Zurich



*Qatar Airways awarded prestigious
5 star airline ranking by Skytrax*

(Qatar Airways joins the exclusive group of three airlines to reach 5 star status)

For further information, please contact your local travel agent
or your nearest Qatar Airways office

To join Privilege Club, our Frequent Flyer program, visit
www.qatarairways.com

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية

Taking you more personally



OPINION

Regression Continues

Sher Bahadur Deuba's appointment as prime minister does not resolve the larger problem: does the King have the authority to appoint the prime minister?

BY GAGAN THAPA

The constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal is such that it can be supportive or the development of democracy, but equally, it can be successfully used against our democracy."

This is a statement made by the Late B.P. Koirala, founder of the Nepali Congress, in reference to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (2015 BS). The remark turned out to be prophetic: King Mahendra used the constitution to overthrow Nepal's first elected government in December 1960. I mention this here because, King Gyanendra's action on October 4, 2002 and series of Royal moves thereafter are again said to be based on the letter and spirit of the present constitution. We all know otherwise.

After losing most of its powers and privileges in the 1990 People's Movement, the monarchy is bent on regaining much of its earlier position. Events since October 2002 culminating in the appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as the new prime minister last week, in hindsight, are just incremental steps in a larger design.

This brings us to the present situation. The country today is caught in a serious debate over Deuba's appointment, and two different but distinct arguments are coming to the fore. The first is that Deuba's appointment is tantamount to the "re-instatement" of his previous government, and therefore, the consti-

tution is back on track. The other argument holds just the opposite view—the King has put Deuba in the same category as his hand-picked predecessors Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Surya Bahadur Thapa, and that his appointment is continuation of the King's "regression."

I agree with the latter argument for the simple reason that the King's actions are outside the bounds of the constitution. The powers under Article 127 of the present Constitution are not unrestricted. They are to be exercised under the recommendation and approval of an elected government. Besides, if the appointments of Chand and Thapa were illegitimate and unconstitutional, how is it different this time?

One may argue that the King has transferred executive powers to the new premier under Article 35 of the constitution, and that he has also reaffirmed that sovereignty is vested on the Nepali people. But didn't the King say as much while appointing Thapa last year? In fact, isn't it contradictory for the King to say that the people are sovereign and then go about choosing a prime minister under Article 127 and ask him to bring peace and hold elections within 2061? This constitution, in the first place, has no provision that allows the King to order the government with specific tasks. This proves that Deuba is just another Bahadur—much like his pre-



decessors—and not the democratic prime minister he claims he is.

After last week's developments, the focus is now squarely on the five political parties which had been waging a street campaign against the monarch. The question is: what will be the future of the agitation? It is no secret that differences between the Nepali Congress and CPN(UML) has almost broken the alliance. The UML, which appears set to bolt from the alliance, is sympathetic to Deuba and is already arguing that his appointment, in the political sense, is "re-instatement" of his government. If it is so, then the UML must confess that their previous stands against the two appointed governments were wrong.

Having said that, the Nepali Congress should also take stock of the fresh situation. The NC has decided to take Deuba's appointment

as another step towards regression. The party may go on with the agitation regardless of the fate of the five-party alliance. But with the same old agendas? No, please! The Congress leadership still reiterates that re-instatement of the dissolved Pratinidhi Sabha is necessary for a satisfactory resolution to the crisis. Only parliament can amend the constitution and implement the 18-point agenda, it argues.

But these stands do not take into account the shifting ground reality. We can sense a gigantic fissure opening between the aspiration of the cadres and the party's present stance, which in the eyes of many supporters, seem rather apathetic to the grassroots. Has not the King's unconstitutional steps already torn the letter and spirit of this constitution? Can mere amendment to the constitution bring the Maoist insurgents into mainstream politics? Can the issue of republic be addressed within the framework of this constitution? There answer is: No. Then why stick to mere amendment? Why not go for an elected constituent assembly and draft a new constitution altogether?

If the Nepali Congress goes ahead with this one point agenda, it will be the ultimate winner as the tide of public opinion in the country is already turning in favor of a republican setup. If we want to bring an end to this endless series of Tikey Bahadurs, and if we want a constitution that gives no room for others to usurp democracy time and again, then drafting of a new constitution through an elected constituent assembly is the only way out.

All eyes are now on the Nepali Congress. It is time for the Congress to rise and face the challenge.

(The author is the General Secretary of the Nepal Students' Union, Nepali Congress' student wing.)

as the party's entrenched and overzealous politics.

"I was personally disappointed with Nepali Congress's decision not to back up the CPN(UML) General Secretary Madhav Nepal as prime minister," says Lok Raj Baral, an ana-

lyst, who was ambassador to India under a Congress government. "Whether the King would have appointed Nepal as the prime minister or not, a unanimous choice would at least have given the parties a moral high ground in the public eye."

That said, a larger problem perhaps lies in the way the Nepali Congress leadership functions, argues Baral. Blame it all on the Congress's traditional personalized politics instead of making decisions through vibrant and open dialogue inside the party. ■



A MERCY MISSION

Taking an innovative model from Kalimpong and Jaipur as examples, the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Center is trying to control the population of street dogs by sterilizing them

BY SUSHMA JOSHI

What do Maha, the famed comedian team of Madan Krishna Shrestha and Haribansha Acharya, and Ani Choying, a nun who's gone global with her extraordinary Buddhist songs, have in common? Besides their fame and high profile, they share an interest in ending the suffering of the dogs who roam the streets of Kathmandu.

"There's a feeling in Nepal that a good project can only be started with large amounts of international funds," says

Khageshwar Sharma, who manages the Kathmandu Animal Treatment Center (KAT). "But we wanted to show that we can do it with local support."

The idea behind KAT was simple enough. Everybody living in Kathmandu has memories, or heard stories, of piles of poisoned dogs being driven away on tractors. Dog owners in the city feel shivers go down their spine every time they hear that this inhumane initiative is underway. Many remember the days when their pets never returned from the streets. The poison, strychnine, stays in the carcasses of the dogs and is scattered

around in the streets, and also pollutes streams and rivers where the corpses are dumped. This poisoning program, conducted by the Kathmandu Municipality to reduce the street dog population, has been going on for a number of years but has failed to make much of a dent on the canine population.

Now, taking an innovative model from Kalimpong and Jaipur as examples, the KAT is trying to control the population of street dogs with a much more humane and effective method—sterilization.

KAT started with the initiative of Jan Salter, a British artist and longtime Kathmandu resident who was moved by the suffering of street dogs she saw every day. After visiting the Goodwill Animal Center in Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Salter embarked on a crusade to bring together a board of stellar supporters, including BBC presenter Dr. Charlotte

Uhlenbrock, and Kanak Mani Dixit, editor of Himal South Asia, for the project.

Started with a personal loan from Salter, the project, housed in modest premises in Chapaligoan, on the way to Budhanilkantha, boasts a cheerful looking red office, a small operating theatre and 18 kennels. The kennels are clean and well-kept.

A small brown mongrel licks herself as she looks up from a blood-stained plastic covering in Kennel 8. "Most of the dogs recover within four or five days of the operation," says Dr. B C Jha, one of KAT's part-time vets. "This one had complications, so we had to re-operate on her. We keep them here till they are fully recovered."

The bitch, blissfully unaware of the international standards of healthcare that has been bestowed on her, ignores the visitors. Then she suddenly wags her tail as she sees Ramlal Shrestha, one of the two helpers who has been provided by the Kathmandu Municipality to support the program. Ramlal goes out every morning at 6 a.m., along with his co-helper in a minivan to capture the street dogs. A contribution from Ani Choying helped to buy the van used in the morning forays. "We try to get them to come into the vans by themselves," says Shrestha. "We try to avoid putting them in sacks, unless they resist." Shrestha, 28, who admits he likes dogs, says so far he has not been bitten by a single dog.

The program, which got underway on May 11, has already treated 45 dogs—seven male dogs got rabies shots, two with distemper and cataracts got euthanized, and the rest, who were females, sterilized. Only two dogs have died—one from an overdose of anesthesia and respiratory distress, and the other from bleeding. "We don't know the history of street dogs, so it's hard to diagnose what went wrong," says Dr. Jha.

This is a good start, but the project has larger goals. "Our goal is to treat 70 dogs every month," says Khageshwar Sharma. Sharma, originally from Gorkha, ran the Goodwill Animal Center in Kalimpong for five years. He is the perfect man for the job—not only is he qualified, he radiates a sense of cheerful optimism and proactive productivity.

"Spaying a female dog costs us more than Rs. 1,000," says Sharma. "People



think: there's not enough money for people, why should we give it to spay a dog?" In spite of such reactions, Sharma says they are trying to increase local awareness and raise support for the project, rather than look for international funds. Support in the form of donated goods has already started—Serene Pharmaceuticals has donated food supplements. Now the project is trying to get food from hotels, and catgut (used in surgery) and antibiotics from pharmaceuticals to lower their costs. Besides meat, the dogs also eat rice, lentils, vegetables and soybeans, making food from almost any hotel a welcome donation.

Although WHO and the World Society for the Protection of Animals recommended animal birth control programs in order to reduce street animal populations as early as the 1980s, the Kathmandu Municipality has not been able to follow those guidelines due to lack of funds. Now, in partnership with KAT, they may be able to follow those international, humane guidelines. More importantly, this program might actually reduce the street dog population.

"The number of street dogs went down 80 percent in Jaipur and



Kalimpong after similar programs got implemented there," says Sharma. "Also, the incidences of human deaths from rabies fell to zero."

Will KAT go out of business when the lease on their land expires in six years? Hardly, says Dr. Jha. "There are 60,000 street dogs in Kathmandu. Even if we get enough funding to treat 200 dogs a day, that's still a lot of work to be done."

Kathmandu residents, recent witnesses to a spate of bombings against government programs, offices and vehicles, can heave a sigh of relief that at least there is one project out there that is trying to change the world by constructing, rather than destroying; by joining hands with the bureaucracy to replace an ineffective government method; and working towards a humble but still revolutionary solution. **N**

ALL THAT GLITTY

Taking an innovative model from Kalimpong and Jaipur as examples, the Katmandu Animal Treatment Center is trying to control the population of street dogs by sterilizing them

BY AJIT BARAL IN POKHARA

A resident of Nadipur, Chandra Pun, had left for South Korea disguised as a refugee when the 1990 Jana Andolan was raging. Back at home for the first time since his departure, Pun is literally reeling under the changes around him. “Pokhara has changed a great deal since I left,” he says. “I am not sure if I would have recognized this place if my family hadn’t been at the airport to receive me.”

Pokhara is changing so rapidly that you don’t have to be away for long, like Chandra, to feel the changes. Every few months new constructions come up, old buildings get revamped into state-of-the-art ones, roads get wider and slicker, cyber cafes crop up cheek by jowl, and ice-cream parlors, pizzerias, bakeries, pubs and discotheques pop up in the middle of nowhere. Pokhara is unrecognizably morphing into a glitzy city.

Though Pokhara, according to the oral history, developed into a market center only after 26 kurias (households) from Bhaktapur fled the Valley, fearing torture from the conquering army of Prithvi Narayan Shah more than 200 years ago, it started growing into a city in earnest only after the 1950s. Till then, it couldn’t even be called a town. An Italian traveller, Tucci, who came to Pokhara in 1952, wrote that “It [Pokhara] isn’t a town at



all, [but] it is an enormous bazaar winding along one endless street.” Apart from this bazaar that stretched from Ramkrishna Tole to Bagar and from Nalakomukh to Ranipauwa, Pokhara was all wilderness. It was under the

scourge of malaria and, naturally, thinly populated.

How then has the small town which had no transportation system till the early 50s turned into the booming city that it is now? Here it would be instructive to read what Tucci wrote about Pokhara in 1952: “Because of its [strategic] position, it [Pokhara] is bound to see a great expansion.”

This strategic location is what drove the state to throw a benevolent gaze on Pokhara. It was air-linked to Kathmandu in 1952, and in the same year the Shining Hospital and Prithvi Narayan Campus were established. Once the malaria eradi-

ERS ISN'T GOLD



Art Baral

town straddled in the Himalayan foothills and dotted with lakes. These developments created facilities for education, health services, hospitality, administration, transportation and communication, which in turn lured more people—mostly families of pensioners from the British and Indian armies—from the neighboring districts. This is when Pokhara's population reached its peak. Lahures flushed Pokhara with remittance money and different businesses—shopping malls and eateries, for example—sprang up to tap the new wealth.

Decades on, a disturbing aspect of this growth is evident. To many, Pokhara with all its riches is a cultural wasteland. School teachers, community leaders and literateurs all alike rue the fact that education, governmental and non-governmental organizations are so very centralized

cation program was initiated in the late 1950s, Pokhara became a sort of winter capital and the members of the Royal family would come here to beat the Kathmandu cold. This led to the paving of roads around Pokhara. The Siddhartha Rajmarga (which links Pokhara to Butwal and Bhairahawa) was completed in 1969 and the Prithivi Rajmarga (connecting Pokhara to Kathmandu), in 1971. It then evolved into the regional headquarters for the Western Region and administrative units were set up.

It was in the late 60s that hippies discovered the scenic settlement and thus began the backpackers' fascination for a

in Kathmandu that most of the educated people end up moving to the capital, rendering Pokhara intellectually hollow. "The state failed to decentralize itself according to its concept of regional development," says George John, who helped found Prithvi Narayan College. Adequate decentralization could have stopped the brain drain and rejuvenated Pokhara culturally.

This brain drain partly explains why there aren't any non-textbook shops in Pokhara that cater to the locals. There are plenty of bookshops on Lakeside, all right, but they are meant for the tourists. Indian newspapers still don't consider

the country's second largest urban settlement a viable market and Nepal's own English-language papers are visible, again, only in the tourist hubs.

"The changed demography partially explains why Pokhara isn't developing culturally as much as we would have liked," says lecturer Ananta Poudel. The theory is: many of the new migrants to Pokhara are more interested in landing a cushy foreign job than in learning. Though statistics of school dropouts are not available, it would be safe to assume that many of the school dropouts' parents hold jobs overseas. And since their parents are usually away they have all the freedom to do whatever they like and there is no one to tell them the value of education. Little surprise then, pubs and discos seem to do good business here and sights of fancy bikes and mobiles are common.

Pokhara looks beautiful, just like a man in a well-tailored three-piece suit and a necktie but Clearly all that glitters isn't gold.

Some years ago, poet Binaya Rawal put forward the idea of developing Pokhara into Nepal's cultural capital. Pokhereli Yuva Sanskritik Pariwar, an organization committed to the promotion of arts and culture, has since then lapped up that idea. Life member of the Pariwar, Tirtha Shrestha, says, "Pokhara is a repository of many cultures and traditions. Ghode Jatra, Bagh Jatra, Bhairab Jatra, Ghatu Nach, Sorathi Nach are performed here. It has a strong tradition of water color painting and it is home to luminaries like Alimiya and Dharma Raj Thapa. And we have nearly 40 music bands. So it is fitting that Pokhara be made a cultural capital."

That the local here hope will bridge the gulf between the city's cultural and material growths Pokhara. It will then be the man in a fine three-piece suit who looked even more beautiful when he spoke. ■



BY SAMUEL THOMAS

Those who continue to speak about Nepal as a garden of many flowers in that very trite manner are often those who know nothing about gardens or flowers. Nominally, it is still a garden of many flowers. In reality, more like a seriously disturbed patch of vegetation, with a few dominant species (call them strangler figs if you like) and a dying understory.

On May 20, the Supreme Court ordered the government to undertake a study into the status of the Badi and submit a comprehensive report within two months. The bench comprising Chief Justice Govinda Bahadur Shrestha, Justices Min Bahadur Rayamajhi and Balram K.C. issued the order as a response to a petition filed by Pro Public, an organization that champions the rights of farmers, women, dalits and indigenous peoples through public interest litigation. The court ordered the government to constitute a committee under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare to prepare the report and outlined the responsibility of the committee. It will have to cover the problems of the Badis and evaluate the programs carried out for the welfare of the community.

So, what shocked the apex court into action? The Badi are one of the smallest dalit groups in the country. If the Census figures are anything to go by, they number 4,442 today, down from some 7,082 in the census 1991 (a drop of some 37 percent). Sociologists attribute some fluctuation (this is also the case with several other minorities) to various reasons—the desire to escape the stigma that comes with their status, misidentification by enumerators and activists, and so on. But these aside, there are several more obvious problems. The NGO world that has grown around the Badi and other groups and areas from where women are trafficked and sold or forced into sex slavery is huge and growing. On any given day, there is a workshop or seminar in the capital. There is endless talk. The figures of women trafficked each year has remained the same for years now, and everyone quotes them off hand. So, after years of intervention, why are the Badi in much the same posi-

MINORITY REPORT

The dalits, janjatis, and the poor of the peripheral regions have always provided a colorful and at the same time pitiful backdrop to the context for a lot of development work. However, nothing has changed for many of them in the last decade; in fact some are worse off than before, some on the verge of extinction.

All photos: "Faces of Nepal" by Jan Salter and Dr. Harka Gurung



TATMA

tion or worse off? Their children are not entitled to citizenship. *Tole sudhar samitis* still love to throw them out of neighborhoods. The stigma, the entitlements that do not accrue because they are citizenship-less, young girls forced into the trade even today—these things haven't changed for many.

Many dalit groups, notably in Tarai, are similarly disadvantaged and severely neglected. Among the caste/ethnic groups that still report less than half the

national literacy average, four are Tarai dalit groups: Khatawe (11.5 percent), Chamar (10.1 percent), Dusadh (9.9 percent), and Musahar (4.2). These are functional literacy figures; the statistics on landlessness, maternal mortality, infant mortality, life expectancy and other basic indicators are more revealing and shocking. Many dalit groups do not even find mention in the 2001 Census, although they are listed in the dalit schedule.

The case is similar with several indigenous groups, some today facing the threat of extinction. The Census lists Kusunda (164), Munda (660), Kushwadia (552), Raute (658, down from 2,878 in 1991), Hyolmo (579), Hayu (1,821), Koche (1,429) as some with extremely low populations. Most show a downward trend. In the last two months people from two groups—the Kusunda and Bankariya—have come to the Valley to petition their cause. They made headlines, but it will probably take more than a Supreme Court order like in the case of the Badis to stir things up. Until then it will be business as usual for the development sector and agencies entrusted with their welfare.

The dalits, janjatis, and the poor of the peripheral regions have always provided a colorful and at the same time pitiful backdrop to the context for a lot of development work. However, nothing has changed for many of them in the last decade; in fact some are worse off than before, some on the verge of extinction. It appears that many will have no place even in the “memory museum” because many people do not even know enough about them—they remain inadequately studied and their language, culture and traditional knowledge poorly documented. There is more attention on the urban “lost generation” than there is on threatened peoples.

There are a couple of pointed lessons here for the develop-

ment sector, especially for its inexact aspiring-to-a-science monitoring and evaluation segment that in its scale rivals actual work on the ground. One, some facts are so clear they don't warrant search missions and evaluation consultancies. If monitoring and evaluation has not clearly revealed this neglect and reoriented intervention, then it has failed. Two, the development models that are being pushed clearly mirror the interests of dominant Kathmandu-based groups, so it is time to cut the talk about impacts on the poorest of the poor. This is important because the development world frequently engages in that often-farcical exercise of developing indicators to measure impact. Forget impact, they haven't even started to address special needs, and each minority has special needs.

Rights and special needs of mobile indigenous peoples should be addressed, but none of the national strategies reflect this

Take for example, the special needs of mobile peoples. I emphasize this case because in Nepal they are the peoples most threatened with extinction. The Dana Declaration and various international conventions are very clear that the rights and special needs of mobile indigenous peoples should be addressed, but none of the national strategies or management plans reflect this. Surely then there is a whole lexicon of developmentese to explain why these people are worse off and how difficult it is to improve their lot.

In the movie *Minority Report*, the Hollywood sci-fi thriller starring Tom Cruise, set in the 2050s, psychics called Precogs (precognitive thinkers) arrest and imprison would-be murderers before they have had a chance to kill. The Court decision on the Badis is similar in a very distant way; in that it has sought to arrest the criminal neglect that kills. But for some others it might already be too late. **N**



GAINNEY



RAUTE



DRIVING THE BLUES AWAY

Despite dangerous warnings issued by the Maoists, Sajha Yatayat and many of its supporters say the show must go on

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

Until a week ago, Mukunda Raj Satyal, chief executive at the country's only government owned bus service, did not think that Sajha Yatayat's operations would be affected by the Maoist threats that had time and again appeared on newspapers. The charges: Sajha had been running its buses on the capital's empty streets even during bandas.

It took one fatal bomb blast near the RNAC building on May 30 to remind Satyal how hard it is to run an operation in the face of such threats. The scene after the blast was gory: the injured, some of whom had to be

wrenched free from the mangled remains of the bus, were rushed to Bir Hospital bloodied and shocked, and many still remain hospitalized. The bus helper died later that evening. Among the injured were three Sajha staff and 20 civilians.

Although no passengers died on that day and no passengers have ever died while riding its buses since Sajha started in 1962, the blast underscored the added problems that an institution struggling to find its legs has to deal with. The attack by the Maoists on Sajha is now the third one and comes at a time when the bus company is just trying to bounce back from the red, its employees say.



"It was a painful incident," says Satyal, who joined Sajha in 1970 and is now on his third tenure. This time around he has his task cut out: he

has to revive the ailing company that started its operation again last May after the company had been closed down in January 2002 when it was on its way to liquidation. After strong lobbying from its employees and backed by a court ruling that ordered the government to resume operations, Sajha, its employees say is "still in a bad shape but improving." Many say it was the continuous meddling by successive governments post-1990 that is responsible for the decline of the once-robust state enterprise.

Satyal, who still fondly remembers Sajha's glory days, is confounded that

the national symbol could come under such brazen attack.

“Last week’s attack on Sajha was similar to attacking the Red Cross. Sajha has always been a cooperative of the people and the lifeline for many who cannot afford the more expensive means of transport,” says Satyal.

Many Sajha loyalists say the trademark blue buses should be allowed to continue to serve the people as it has been doing for the last 42 years. “The entire fleet of Japanese Sajha blue buses is like a museum in itself and many like me rode in them since we were young,” says renowned comedian Haribansha Acharya, who is a member of the Sajha Saathi Samuha that lobbies for Sajha’s revival.

The advocacy group has also been asking the transport company to be more transparent in its dealings, something its employees say Sajha has striven for since its revival. In the past one year, it issued tender notices to purchase 20 more buses as well as spare parts and discussed business plans with its cooperative members who number around a hundred. It had up to 400 members during its peak period in the 80s. The company now wants to start holding annual general meetings in order to financially revamp its service.

rupee fare—called Sajha buses their own. The fare has now gone up to Rs. 5 but that is still cheaper compared to minibuses, minibuses and tempos.

“We are still in a bad financial shape but are certainly heading towards a break even,” says Satyal. To raise funds, Sajha is now thinking of building rental complexes (like Sanchya Kosh has been doing) on its prime locations in Pulchowk and Lagankhel. Sajha also plans to generate income by allowing private vehicles to use its Japanese-built workshop and tyre-resoling plant which ranks among the best in South Asia.

Satyal recalls Sajha’s peak years, in the 80s, when it controlled more than 60 percent of the transport route, owned 180 buses and generated up to Rs. 400,000 per day. Its annual profit was more than sufficient to add one new bus to its fleet every year. The company even bought land in Lagankhel and paid off around Rs. 14 million to the government for the buses that Japan provided on grant. Japan used to train its employees, help establish infrastructures and provide buses on grants and loans that

to operate 100 buses under the name “Sajha” and pay royalty up to Rs. 5 million a year. A number of lubricant and machinery suppliers had agreed to provide their goods on credit for months when Sajha reopened its doors.

Sajha’s major asset, as shown by the verdict handed over by the Supreme Court, are its employees who filed a court petition citing procedural faults on the government decision to liquidate Sajha. Many of them even offered to work three months without salary to get the blue buses up and running.

Sajha is now operating 25-30 buses with less than 200 employees that include a selected few out of 1,100 who were employed when the company was almost running bankrupt. If all goes well, Sajha wants to run the Trolley, extend the its services to cover the Tribhuvan University area in Kirtipur, and run natural gas buses in the Valley.

“These are extremely challenging times for those of us at Sajha,” says Mahendra Pandey, a Sajha employee and member of Employees’ Action Committee that filed the court petition. “We

Sajha plans to run the Trolley service and extend the route to Kirtipur



Comedian Acharya has even sung a famous song “Sajha bus ma jo pani chaddhchhan” for a movie where he describes how people from different walks of life, including journalists, politicians and even pick pockets—all paying a two-

Sajha was able to pay without much hassle.

Sajha had so much goodwill that when it closed down in 2002, the Western Transport Entrepreneurs Association even offered the government a deal

have been of good service and the government should keep in mind that a good management can revive even companies running at a huge loss.” For now, a week after the bomb attack, Sajha looks determined to push past its blues. **N**

Portraits By The Artist As A Young Man

BY TIKU GAUCHAN

Among the oils and watercolors at the “Infinity’s Journey” exhibition at the Park Gallery Café in Lazimpat, there’s a collection of collages that mark a young artist’s struggles to find his own style.

What comes across strongest in 26-year-old Gaurav Shrestha’s collages is not a bold new artistic form but an honest attempt to capture as best he can, his take on the meaning of “the search for peace.” “Peace is not the absence of conflict but a continuous progress towards a better place,” says Shrestha. His collages seek to capture the inherent conflicts and the chaos that must be dealt with in this search. “Kathmandu Valley in the Evening” illustrates the transformation of this chaos. As your eyes move up the collage, the mélange of bright yellow paper strips depicting the Valley’s evening lights give way to sedate purple hills and finally an epiphany of yellows and oranges bursting in the sky. In “Blast,” there’s the Buddha meditating in the foreground, while a mushroom cloud of word-cutouts looms in the background like an ominous Bodhi tree. In “Moon and Sunset Cloud,” a red chaotic center, filled with sentence fragments, takes centerstage while the moon remains stranded on the periphery among words darkened into whispers.

Shrestha, a self-taught artist who initially started out with watercolors and later moved on to various mixed-media, took up collage in 2000 because he wanted to break free from the constraints of painting. He seems to have started out well but the collages at the exhibition still seem to be limited by the need to *look* like paintings. At the one end of the spectrum many collage artists do seek to create subtle harmonious compositions like the Japanese Chigirie artists do, but collage can also be

used to break away forcefully from confining ideas of what art should be to create totally new forms. Shrestha concedes that he has experimented more boldly in other works but he is hesitant to put them up because he isn’t sure how the crowd would receive them.

Check out his other projects (see pics) and you’ll see a more radical style, a bolder artistic form, evolving. In these works, both the content and the style find a more po-

into a red noise littered with word-fragments. Then there’s another collage, titled “Meditation,” where a wooden mask with serene eyes seeks to meditate amid a delirium of words cut out from an Italian magazine. This telling image captures well the arduous process that meditation is -- noticing one’s mind run riot is anything but a passive experience.

Shrestha’s more visceral collages can also be seen as a reflection of the increasingly complex world, and which can best be portrayed by newer media. It’s not just artists like Shrestha who swear by collage. In fact, the essence of collage—the mixing of different media—is all-pervasive in our lives. MTV

videos where photo montages and video fragments mesh with songs have become a mainstream affair; techno music which creates symphonies out of disparate bits of music is no longer confined to just the warehouse rave scene; news themes and ads on TV stitch together voiceovers, ambient noise and sound-bites. Mixing media is the name of the game today.

When Picasso and Braque, widely regarded as the godfathers of the medium, showcased their collages created between 1907 and 1914, they flung open the doors to a new artistic vision. Some, like New

Yorker Joseph Cornell, took the basic idea and created their own worlds in a 3D format. Some, like Robert Rauschenberg continue pushing the envelope in every direction.

In the art-scene here, artists like Gaurav Shrestha may represent our own breed of experimenters breaking away from the edicts of painting. “Time,” his latest work, could be a pointer to that new direction and style. In this collage, Shrestha has pasted strips of calendars onto a larger calendar and splattered the work with whips of ink. “I’ve attempted to capture the energy of urban Kathmandu here,” says Shrestha. Works like this perhaps capture the essence of contemporary reality better than his do works at the exhibition. **N**



tent outlet: the themes are less allegorical; the style is more primeval; and the pastiches, stuck on the canvas without their edges softened, generate tension within the medium itself. They aim not for the head but for the gut. In “Innocence,” passport-size-photos of children in school uniform surround a Ganesh. The photos seem to seep through a dark brown band, through a transitory phase, before disintegrating



T H E W O R L D ' S B E S T C L O T H S



DORMEUIL

Putalisadak, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel. 4412017, Fax. 977-1-5539787

Theravada's Rocky Road To Revival

While Theravada Buddhism and its offshoots now enjoy a popular following among the laity, the thorny issue of ordination of nuns still needs to be sorted out

BY SUSHMA JOSHI

Five years ago, I was walking in Patan when I felt the urge to go into the Kwa Bahal, a Buddhist monastery popularly known as the "Golden Temple." It was a quiet summer afternoon and the temple complex was deserted, but one of the men came out and started talking to me. "Young people," he said, "are no longer interested in the old rituals and traditions anymore. Foreigners are more interested in traditional Newari religion than Nepalis." Then he went on to talk about one such foreigner who had spent a long time learning everything about the guthi at the temple. This man, he said, was named David Gellner, and he had written many books.

Last month, David Gellner was present to give a lecture at the Social Science Baha. Gellner is University Lecturer of Anthropology at Oxford University, and is currently a visiting professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. His topic, interestingly, refuted the claim of the Golden Temple's priest—there is, Gellner claims, a revival of Buddhism, specifically of a transnational Theravada, in Nepal. Theravada, of course, is not the same as the Vajrayana Buddhism traditionally practiced by Newars, but this new Buddhism on the block has drawn many Newars into its folds.

There are three kinds of Buddhisms in Nepal—Tibetan, Newar and Theravada. The first two draw from Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, and are heavy on rites, rituals, magic and deities. The third is a reform movement that was introduced in the Valley only in the 1930s, but which has gained prominence since the 1950s. Rebellious against the

caste hierarchies and Buddhism's divergence from Shakyamuni's teachings, this movement tries to bring adherents back to the words of Buddha and meditation.

Not just Buddhist Newars, says Gellner, but also people from Hindu backgrounds, are increasingly getting interested in this new movement. One Theravada institution in particular—the Vipassana meditation Center in Budanilkanta, which follows the guidance of S N Goenka, has been especially



open to laypeople. Gellner says numerous people have come up to him and told him that Vipassana meditation has changed their lives, says Gellner.

But while Theravada and its offshoots now enjoy a popular following among the laity, the thorny issue of the ordination of

nuns within Theravada still needs to be sorted out. In the Theravada tradition, women are not accorded the same status as male initiates. Men can become fully ordained monks by taking 267 vows—the women, up until the 80s, could not. They were traditionally only allowed to become anagarikas, or lower-order nuns. Anagarikas take some of the vows that monks take and they do live in the Buddhist monasteries and sanghas, but they have limited access to Buddhist texts, and earlier they could not climb up the hierarchies to become full-fledged nuns and titleholders.

Drawing on the tradition of ordaining nuns in China, the nuns in Nepal started to follow the 267 rules like a male bhikshu. There was, needless to say, an outcry from the men who claimed this sort of initiation rites drawn from a Mahayana tradition, was not legitimate. But the women overrode these objections by pointing out that the male ordination tradition itself is of foreign origins, and that ordination traditions are common to all sects.

"Nuns," says Gellner, "have been phenomenally successful in Nepal." This, he explains, is because becoming a nun is often a way to autonomy and freedom for women in Nepal. Women escape domestic slavery by entering nunneries. Men, on the other hand, face restrictions when entering monastic life, and feel their lives are more confined. They often have difficulty following all the precepts required to be a fully ordained monk.

While Gellner's talk was thick with reference to medieval monks and nuns, with whom he seemed to be on easy Oxford terms, his dry British humor was also in evidence as he talked about the underlying politics of Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism, he says, has been very successful in marketing itself in Southern California, but has not been as open to Nepalis: foreigners who pay in dollars have access to expensive Mahayana workshops but Nepalis often feel left out of it, he mentions. Now that bit of knowledge, often delicately brushed aside by foreigners pursuing the path of the Buddha, must have taken some deep hanging out to figure out. **N**



Carlsberg
Part of the Game



Carlsberg Official Sponsor of Euro 2004

To win attractive prizes log on to www.carlsberg.com.np



Winning Hearts And Minds

BY DEEPAK THAPA

On visits to some outlying districts in the last few months, I was struck by how contrasting the people's perceptions of the Army in different places are. The districts in question are Khotang in the East, Lamjung in the West, and Bajura in the Farwest, all very different in terms of geography

and the effects of the ongoing conflict.

Khotang can perhaps best be described as the Farwest of the East. There is not a single kilometer of motorable road there and, but for minor variations, people's lives continue as they might have had for centuries past. Given this degree of isolation and deprivation, it is understandable that it has become a hotbed of Maoist activity for the last three years or so. Armed clashes are quite common, and so is the killing of innocents by both sides.

Of the many incidents that have taken place in the area around the small hilltop market of Chisapani in southern Khotang, the more well-known are the brutal murder of the local school headmaster by the Maoist-affiliated Khambuan Mukti Morcha in early 2002, and the midnight slaying of a teacher and his two cousins by the Army last year. The latter was admitted by an Army investigation to have been a case of the Army machinery having been manipulated to settle a personal score by a serving soldier.

The residents from the area around Chisapani have learnt to live with the Maoists. At the most, they would be forced to feed and shelter them, and, if they held onto the orthodoxy of the caste system, suffer the entrance of dalit Maoists into their homes. But as long as they acted docile, they were pretty much left alone. Not so, with the Army. The state troops had been there twice and each time they left behind a trail of blood. Soon after the ceasefire broke down last year, four local youth had been arrested in full view of everyone and killed in cold blood, and their deaths advertised as an 'encounter' complete with the 'recovery of socket bombs and Maoist documents.' A fair number of people had been slapped around for reasons that are still beyond their ken. Frightened as they are of the Maoists, it is the Army they are terrified of, all the more since it represents the state they believe has a duty to protect them.

In western Lamjung the Army had set up camp in Pasgaun, a pretty-looking village that was recently in the news on account of the 150 or so Maoists (at least that is what the government said they were) who had surrendered there. With the Army at Pasgaun and Besisahar (a day's walk away), Maoist activity for the time being seems minimal. It was not clear if the people were favorably disposed to the Army presence or not. While they do welcome the respite from the Maoists, they are fearful of a Beni-style assault on the Army and the repercussions they may have to bear during the counter-attack. The attitude in the country-

side, however, is that of indifference. Soldiers do arrive occasionally but the people are never sure when the Maoists will descend on them. They have learnt to live with the uncertainty.

Bajura is on a different scale altogether. Apart from Martadi, the district headquarters, the rest of this remote district had been under Maoist control since the security forces abandoned the district airport at Kolti in April 2002. Teachers and students had been swept into various Maoist 'campaigns,' and the locals had been forced to live with the Maoists and their decrees. The Maoists moved out after the Army came back to Kolti last year, and by and large the people are thankful. This despite the fact that they have suffered a lot at the hands of government forces earlier. They recall with horror that day in October 2002 when the Army had killed seven people in a case of mistaken identity, and a local shopkeeper in cold blood. People there say how they would not even dare look at the soldiers when they passed through their village back then. Abuses were rained on them on the smallest pretext, but the soldiers are more friendly now, they say. And, everyone agrees that it had to do with the positive attitude of the two majors who have taken charge of the Army garrison at Kolti consecutively.

Bajura shows quite categorically what a difference it makes when the



Army is restrained, ever so slightly. For the fight against the Maoists has to go beyond the battlefield; and the people need to be won over. Without the backing of the local population, the Army will continue to run around in circles. Marching in and beating up, and killing people for assisting the Maoists is hardly a worthwhile strategy, for everyone knows that there is a great deal of coercion involved in the 'support' for the Maoists.

Here, it also becomes pertinent to point out that admitting foul-ups in the field is also another way of winning the battle over the hearts and minds. Given the grave difficulties of counter-insurgency operations there will always be mistakes made despite the best

intentions. There should be no attempt at a cover-up when there have been errors in judgment. At the very least, that can throw open the possibility of compensation claims for the victimized. But more importantly, the Army should remember that at the ground level, everyone is aware of who has joined the Maoists from their area, and that they are also well-informed on the circumstances of 'encounters.' Taking recourse to labeling everyone a 'terrorist' is hardly likely to engender trust, for ultimately the people always find out the truth—if they do not already know it. **N**

CITY This Week

EVENTS

Cigar Tasting Dinner

June 12, 7 p.m. 1905 Kantipath. Thomas Kilroy together with Gy. Sgt. DJ O'Connor (U.S. Marine Corps) and Wendell Burlington (U.S. Embassy). Tickets: Rs. 5,500. For information: 4225272



Nanglo Tennis Aces

June 12 - 19. The 2nd Nanglo International U-18 Tennis Championship will be held at the Satdobato Tennis Complex. For information: 4434554, 4241408 (Extn: 37).



Juneli Spotlight

June 11, 7 p.m. ECS magazine and Hotel de'l Annapurna welcome everyone for a fun-filled creative evening at the Juneli Bar. Juneli Spotlight is an open stage event. For information and to be included in the performer's list: ashesh.sharma@tajhotels.com or 4256909 (Extn: 181)

Hoop-La

Till June 20

Fr. Watrin Basketball Championship

Twelve teams have been contending since June 1 in the tournament, which features prominent players who were in Nepal's

last national team. Gyan Club are the tournament favorites. But Himalayan White House International College, led by the national team captain Bipendra Maharjan, and GAA's own team aren't too far behind. The matches will move to the Dashrath Stadium Covered Hall after semis. The current matches are being held at GAA in Thamel. Apart from White House and GAA, Pool A includes two other

strong teams—Pulchowk Engineering Campus and Public Youth campus—along with Friends United and Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies. Pool B's front runners are RIBS and Gyan Club, followed by Peace Zone Club, Elites Co-ed and Georgian Boys Club. The semis are scheduled for June 12, 13 and 14 while the date for finals are June 18, 19 and 20.



ART EXHIBITIONS

Secret Moments

An exhibition of paintings by Bhairaj Shrestha. Siddhartha Art Gallery. Till June 12. For information: 4414607. The Siddhartha Art Gallery also exhibits art works at Cafe Mitra, Thamel. Ongoing show for the summer by Susan Boggs and Carol Irwin. For information: 9851023934

Infinity's Journey

Collage, mixed-media and water color by Gaurav Shrestha, Suman Shrestha, Ramesh K.C. and Binod Gupta. At the Park Gallery, Lazimpat. Till June 15. For information: 4419353

Faces & Aspects of Boudha

An exhibition of photographs by one of Nepal's best-known photographers, Mani Lama. At The Saturday Cafe & Gallery. Adjacent to the Boudhanath Stupa, the cafe occupies three floors and includes a boutique and gallery. For information: 4437888

ONGOING

Monsoon Wine Festival

June 1 to August. Featuring 16 Wines at Rs. 150 per large glass at Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. For information: 250440, 250441 (PIC from ECS)



Happy Hour

Everyday, happy hour from 6-7 p.m. Get two for the price of one @ Lost Horizon Bar, Hotel Shangri-La. For information: 4412999

Exotic Momos

Everyday, 12-7:30 p.m. Exotic momos incorporating Indian and Tibetan culinary traditions. At the Lounge and Terrace of Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. For information: 4491234

Dancing Gods

Every Tuesday, 7 p.m. onwards. Dance performance of Hindu and Buddhist Gods @ Great Pagoda Hall, Hotel Vajra. Tickets: Rs. 400. For information: 4271545

Electronic Music

Every first Wednesday of the month. Chill eastern dub and breaks at Tantra Restaurant & bar, Thamel. For information: tantra@info.com.np



The Robinson Saga

BY JOGENDRA GHIMIRE

The Supreme Court decision to acquit Williams Robinson has dealt yet another blow to the judiciary whose public image has been on a sharp decline. Robinson, a British national, was convicted by the Special Court on charges of drug smuggling after he was arrested red-handed with over two kilograms of brown

sugar. For the third organ of the state this unexpected and “different” judgment by a division bench comprising of judges Krishna Kumar Verma and Baliram Kumar could not have come at a worse time.

As the reactions of the Bar and the media since the judgment—and especially since the full text of the decision became available—indicate, the issue is unlikely to just fade away. And so much the better. Under pressure from lawyers and the heat generated by the unprecedented media interest in the case, the Nepal Bar Association has formed a special committee comprising of senior advocates and Bar leaders to look into the judgment and see if it passes the judicial scrutiny. Going by the facts of the case and the fantastic reasoning in the decision, it is difficult to see how the Bar committee will find the decision to be right.

But the sad part of the Robinson saga is that all this is unlikely to undo the damage. In fact, the absence of the Pratinidhi Sabha—which is the only organ of the state competent to punish a sitting Supreme Court judge—leaves the Bar and the members of the Judicial Council with a rather tricky choice. Neither can legally force the two judges to act in a particular way. And, considering that a section of the Bar is already vocally and vehemently defending the decision and the judges, it is unlikely that the duo will quit meekly.

As the action of the Bar, the Judicial Council, and the segment of lawyers who have come out to defend the decision, plays out, the ultimate victim of the Robinson scandal is likely to be the notion of independence of judges. It underpins the fundamental philosophy upon which the provisions of the judiciary in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 is based.

Drafted by the Constitution Recommendation Commission—where six of the nine members were lawyers with very strong views on the independence of the judiciary and against any form of interference from other branches of the government—the Constitution establishes the Supreme Court as the ultimate arbiter of the people’s rights. It is the sole interpreter of the powers and obligations of every other organ of the state. Towards facilitating the fulfillment of those obligations, the Constitution also makes judges of the Supreme Court immune from any action or investigation by the executive or any other constitutional body, vesting only on the Pratinidhi Sabha the authority to penalize a judge. This can be done through impeachment and that too only with a two-

thirds vote for causes of misconduct outlined in the Constitution and not for political or policy differences.

The status of the judges of the Supreme Court is different from their colleagues at the District and Appellate Courts in one important way as far as investigation and dismissal are concerned. Supreme Court judges can not be investigated by the Judicial Council, unlike the lower court judges. Nor can the Judicial Council recommend to His Majesty a dismissal of an apex court judge. The Constitutional provisions, read together with the provisions of the Judicial Council Act and pronouncements of a five-member bench of the Supreme Court eight years ago (*Bal Krishna Neupane v Council of Ministers et al*) that scrutinized the constitutionality of an amendment to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act, make so much very clear.

It is this ghost of complete immunity from executive intervention, and the security of tenure the Supreme Court judges enjoy until they reach the age of 65 that must be haunting the investigation committee of Nepal Bar Association. The same would explain the predicament of the Judicial Council. Legally speaking, they are both helpless as far as their recourse against the judges is concerned, even if they were to be convinced that the judges’ were in

fact guided by matters other than that of justice and due process.

The decision will, in all likelihood, be overturned by a larger bench of the Supreme Court. The Attorney General’s Office is already looking for every morsel of error in the decision handed down by Verma and Kumar, and will hopefully go back to the Supreme Court with a petition for a review. The outcome of such a review, if that were indeed to take place, will only be of academic interest. It will set a precedent for good law for future criminal prosecutions,

but as far as bringing the convict to book is concerned, that looks unlikely—unless Robinson reappears from nowhere to surrender to the authorities.

In the ultimate analysis, as the dust settles, popular opinion and also opinion among lawyers will be far less favorable to providing the Supreme Court judges the kind of security of tenure and immunity they currently enjoy. As a society that stands at the threshold of potentially drafting a new constitution, or amending the one in force, the unfortunate casualty of the Robinson scandal is not the wrongdoers but the singular most important attribute that gives the judiciary its moral high ground: independence. **N**



NWS/S



We are a publishing organization willing to learn and improve with every initiative. If you believe that creativity is a process and that there is no substitution for hard work, here is an opportunity to join an inspirational team of professionals.

Vacancies

Graphic Designer

Key Responsibility: Design various print publications published by the organization.

Minimum Requirement: Competent in Computer based layout and graphic designing with minimum 2 years of experience.

Computer Graphics Operator

Key Responsibility: Assist in designing various print publications published by the organization.

Minimum Requirement: Competent in graphic designing programs such as, Adobe Photoshop, PageMaker, Corel Draw etc. Pre-Press knowledge in publishing will be an advantage.

Subscription Representative

Key Responsibility: Solicit subscription and broaden the outreach of the various publications published by the organization.

Marketing Officer

Key Responsibility: Market the various publication and services offered by the organization.

Receptionist

Key Responsibility: Manage office telecommunication, fix appointments, file correspondence and administer front office duties.

Minimum Requirement: Intermediate with secretarial training.

Interested applicants must send their CV/Bio-data by E-mail, indicating the position applied for and the expected salary. Also mention your contact address and your day telephone number. Successful candidates will be called in for interviews.

E-mail: jobsvacancies@yahoo.com

Tel: 2111102

Vacancy Announcement

(Announcement Number: 073)

A foreign diplomatic mission in Kathmandu is seeking applicants for the position of Cultural Affairs Specialist in the Public Diplomacy Section.

OPEN TO: All Interested Candidates

POSITION: Cultural Affairs Specialist, FSN – 10; FP – 5
(*FSN-10 is a full performance grade level for the position. Selected candidate may be hired at a lower trainee grade of FSN-9 (FP-5) depending on the qualifications and experience.)

* Subject to availability of funding

OPENING DATE: June 4, 2004

CLOSING DATE: June 17, 2004

WORK HOURS: Full-time; 40 hours/week

BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION

As the team leader of the Cultural Affairs Section, the incumbent advises Mission officials on current trends in Nepal's political, civil society, educational and cultural environment and develops, organizes, coordinates, and implements countrywide programs designed to further Mission policies in Nepal. Programs include lectures, seminars, symposia given by visiting expatriate experts, study tours for Nepalis and other citizen exchanges, and cultural and performing arts programs. The incumbent maintains regular contacts with high-level government officials, academics, professionals, civil society and private sector leaders.

A copy of the complete position description is available in the Human Resource Office.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

NOTE: All applicants are instructed to address each selection criterion detailed below with specific and comprehensive information.

1. A university degree in the liberal arts, education, international relations, social sciences, or related fields is required.
2. Five to seven years of progressively responsible experience in Public Relations, NGO Management, Media, Academic or a related field is required.
3. Level 4 (fluent) written and spoken English and Nepali is required.
4. The ability to develop and maintain extensive high level contacts in the relevant sectors of government and society, as well as excellent proven organizational skills are required.
5. A thorough familiarity with Nepal's history, political, social, economic, and educational structure and institutions, their leaders and current trends is also required.

TO APPLY

Interested applicants should submit the following:

1. A current resume or curriculum vitae; **and**
2. Copies of any other documentation (e.g., essays, certificates, awards, copies of degrees earned) that addresses the qualification requirements of the position as listed above.

Please submit applications to
Human Resources Office,
G.P.O. Box 295, Kathmandu, Nepal.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

FREE TRIAL CLASS BEFORE ADMISSION

GRE
GMAT
SAT
Visa Preparation



Languages
TOEFL
IELTS
Abroad Counselling

Why should you believe us?

- Everyday different class with handouts.
- Regular new-tech audio-video class.
- Combined course of American & British English.
- Free sufficient materials for each student.
- Modern well equipped & convenient classroom with not more than 8-9 students.
- To check your improvement weekly testing system.
- Effective super learning system.

We haven't had a record even a student joined Axis Int'l Education became unsatisfied from our services.



AXIS
Int'l Education

Putalisadak (opp. Share Market)

Tel.
4419972

Study in GERMANY on Full Tuition Freeships

Join us for exciting careers

- in any desired academic field - from Bachelors upto PHD level



Mr B K Shrestha
Int'l Director - Memorex

will be available for
FREE COUNSELLING
AND INTERVIEWS

at **The Memorex Centre**
Naag Pokhari - Hattisaar
Call: 4422988 / 4424839

- * Intensive German course (20h/wk)
- * International study groups
- * Recognised by all German Universities
- * University application support
- * Conditional letters of admission
- * Free tuition at all German Universities
- * Accommodation with local Host families
- * Individual support for students
- * Health, accident and liability insurance

So many students are
Working and Studying on
Full Tuition Freeships !!



- You could too!! -

WARNING: Please beware of
false marketing gimmicks.....we can
help you choose the right University



RICHARD'S

Your future starts here

An Institute that is continually developing its educational facilities for students.

SALIENT FEATURES:

- ☛ Affordable fees.
- ☛ 100% regular classes
- ☛ 100% punctuality of teachers
- ☛ Classes run seven days a week.
- ☛ Outstanding scores in TOEFL, SAT, IELTS, GRE, GMAT
- ☛ Good success in Visa Preparation
- ☛ Abroad Study Counselling
- ☛ Outstanding success in fluency in spoken English.



These features are not just printed for an advertisement

Please visit our office to see for yourselves. We can assist you to achieve the results you've always dreamed of.

Contact:

Richard's Language Center

(Opposite Aangan Sweets), Putalisadak

Tel. 4420751

Planning to go abroad?

Worrying About Your Future?

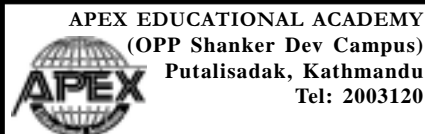
HEY GUYS

If so, then join with us and grab the golden opportunity

We Provide :-

TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT, SAT I, SAT II & ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(WITH LATEST MATERIALS BY EXPERIENCED INSTRUCTOR)

Tuition for all level & all subjects



APEX EDUCATIONAL ACADEMY
(OPP Shanker Dev Campus)
Putalisadak, Kathmandu
Tel: 2003120



Himalayan Paper Crafts
Manufacturer & Exporter of
Nepali Hand Made Paper & Products
P.O. Box: 21176 Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: hpcraft@hotmail.com
Phone: 4-288199, 9851046080

Signboard shines your business

MIGLIT SIGN

For: all kinds of digital signboard & computerised vinyl sticker


Po. Box: 8975 EPC 5688 Bagbazar, Kathmandu
e-mail: miglita@enet.com.np Ph: 4246752 Mobile: 9851043401

AKARSHAN
Wrought Iron Furniture



For details: 5545055, 4274615, 4782224
email: akarshanfurniture@hotmail.com
www.akarsan.com.np

INTERWEAVE
CANE FURNITURE



INTERWEAVE CANE FURNITURE INDUSTRY
1/82 GA, KUPONDOLE, LALITPUR, NEPAL
SHOW ROOM: KALAMANDIR
Kupondole, Lalitpur
Phone No: 5523376

PRODUCTS:
SOFA SETS, BEDS, GARDEN SETS, DINING SETS AND ACCESSORIES.
VISIT OR CALL US FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY AND RANGE OF OUR CANE FURNITURE.

IFB WORLD'S BEST WASHING MACHINE#



Microoven Oven
• Hot, 100°C Cookware
• Stainless steel body
• Power grill with microwave
• Cool safety lock
• Auto cook menu

Washing Machine
• Save 100% Electricity
• Save 100% Detergent
• Save 200% Water
• Hot Wash
• Tumble Wash

100% Clothes Dryer
• Highspeed Drying
• Colour free clothes
• Washes less clothes
• Easy to iron clothes
• Well mounting body

IFB
www.ifb.com.np

Business Associate:
Saganti Exim (P) Ltd.
Khatiwada, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4240244, Fax: 4225229
E-mail: saganti@moa.com.np

Authorized Dealer:
A ONE SALES & SERVICE
New Bantoli, Tel: 4420412
ASHOKA ELECTRONICS
A.T. Complex, New Road, Tel: 4418474
BHATHATHI SUPER MARKET
Bhatbhateni Chauri, Tel: 4420240

BLUE BIRD DEPARTMENTAL STORE
Tegowara, Tel: 4422726
C.T. ELECTRONICS
New No. 11, Bhat Bazaar, New Road
Tel: 4212580

*Fully Automatic *Conditions apply to best conditions against Top Load Washing Machine*


Fuji RDP 121



KISHOR KAYASTHA

PHOTO CLUB ☎5851052778

UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON.



Durbar Marg, Kathmandu Ph. 4221454

MESUCA
TOKYO, JAPAN 1978

Japanese Inspired Line of Sporting Goods & Sports Fashion Wear.



SINGI PLAZA
Royal Singi Hotel Arcade, Karsuki,
Kathmandu, Tel: 4424151 ext. 8501.
*Various Promotional items available at the best of the field.

WORLD CLASS
Kumaripati, Lalitpur, Tel: 5537518

MESUCA SPORTS
Open House Complex, Chhapeshunga
Mahendra pu., Pokhara, Tel: 061-530656

KALINTA
picture framing



main branch:
East side of
Royal Palace
Nag Pokhari
Kathmandu
Tel: 4442437

fine collection of frames by KALINTA
imported Italian matting & frames

now open in **Bouddha** Open
main road, Tusul 10am-6pm
Tel: 4461917

THE HYPER **Bouddha Plaza**

KAINTA sponsored

Banda In The Life Of Govinda

For Govinda Ghimire, bandas mean brisk business. Ghimire is a street vendor who sells different snacks according to the season: in winter he pushes a cart piled with chana, badam and bhatmas around the streets of Lalitpur; in summer he sets up

a lassi-and-fruit stall near the police station, beside the Jawalakhel zoo. Although his business does get better during bandas, Ghimire dislikes bandas for the nuisance they create in his life. Tiku Gauchan of Nation Weekly talked to Ghimire about the nature of his business, and how people cope and help others out during these trying times.

How did you get into the business?

I came to Kathmandu from Chahara VDC, Palpa, 15 years ago to get an education but ended up hawking because of financial constraints. I started out with a lighter refill station around Ratna Park. Back then people used Indian lighters, which they would refill on the sidewalks. Nowadays, you have Chinese lighters that cost only Rs. 5 and refilling them cost as much. I moved on to selling fruit and nuts because that seemed like a better market. My lassi stall is one of a kind, at least here in Jawalakhel.

How's business during bandas?

My sales definitely go up during bandas. Maybe it's because people seem to spot street vendors more easily when they are walking than when they are whizzing around in vehicles. Sometimes, people ambling around come up to my stall to make small talk and end up buying something. My sales are anywhere from Rs. 1,000 to 1,500 during banda days. During normal days they hover around the Rs. 1,000-mark.

How's business in winter?

In winter, I push my cart around Mangal Bazaar, Kupondole and Thapathali selling badam, chana and bhatmas. During bandas then you'll find people playing badminton on the roads and sunning

themselves on the pavements or storefronts—basically whiling away time. They have nothing to do, and badam sells well because badam means timepass.

And in summer?

In summer, I set up my lassi-and-fruit stall at the Jawalakhel Chowk near the zoo. There seems to be a bigger rush at the zoo during bandas—even more than on public holidays. These visitors to the zoo are my biggest clients. Parents come walking with their kids, sometimes from far off toles, and when they are tired they need my lassi or something juicy like my fruits.

Suppliers often help me out during bandas. Laxmi Dairy and the curd sellers from Godavari bring me my supplies a day before the banda

How hard is it to get your supplies during bandas?

Bandas do create certain complications for me when I want to procure stock. For example, papayas, which I usually buy for Rs. 400 a doko shoot up to around Rs. 600 a doko. The fruit wholesalers have problems with shipments coming in because of road blockades and thus the hike-up in price. Sometimes the fruits rot on the way, and I can end up with a bad lot. But the bandas also bring out the best in some people. Suppliers often help me out: Laxmi Dairy, from where I buy



NS/NS

my curd, and the curd sellers from Godavari bring me my supplies a day before the banda, at no extra cost. The Nagarpalika people, however, collect their dues no matter what—I have to pay them Rs. 20 as a daily fee for operating my stall, banda or no banda.

Do you bump up your prices to account for the more expensive stock?

I don't have to. The increase in number of customers makes up for the upped price of purchase. Besides, I have regular customers who don't like seeing price hikes every time a banda comes around.

How much do you sell your wares for?

A plate of mixed fruit—papaya, pineapple, water-melon—goes for Rs. 10. Lassi is Rs. 5 a glass.

Have you ever been threatened to close shop?

Never.

How do the police treat you?

I know most of the policemen from the station nearby. During non-banda days they hang around my stall and chit-chat. I give them lassi once in a while. During bandas they are off on other beats around the city and so you won't find them around my stalls then.

Last word on bandas.

Although bandas are good for my business I don't actually wish for them. For example, if someone I knew was in need of medical emergency it would be tough getting him to the hospital. There are many other inconveniences like that. I don't believe that bandas serve any political purpose and the added nuisance on my daily living is something I can do without. **N**

The Unforgiven

BY SMRITI JAISWAL

A story about two boys, each characterized by his difference. One white in a black community, another half-white raised by a black father. Both abandoned by mothers whose absences mold their lives; both brought up by reclusive geniuses, artists who don't know the first thing about being parents. It's a story about the strange and complicated friendship between these boys, their fathers and the neighborhood that wraps them like a blanket. A story of a street with fantasies exceeding human boundaries, and a friendship that rises above jealousy and attempts to escape it all. Age and race. A friendship that must stand up now for what it had meant then. Even if it fails.



Jonathan Lethem's "The Fortress of Solitude" is an unexpected blend of hard realism and surrealistic power: one that Dylan Ebdus, the white protagonist borrows from his black counterpart, but which brings annihilation when finally returned to the rightful owner. Or could salvation come only through annihilation?

The novel is a narrative of a disturbed, lingering childhood; an ironic picture of reverse-racism. Set in punk-hippie Brooklyn, in the 70s, it explores what being black means in a white country. But more, what being white means in a black community "born fighting" anything even remotely white. The other side of racism, like the other side of the moon. The powerful image of "yoking" that haunts its pages will haunt the reader too—the seemingly "harmless" persecution Ebdus suffers throughout. He walks the streets, a six-year-old with eyes quick and alert like a rodent's, a dollar or two tucked in the socks, a dollar or two clutched in the palm. He wants a comic book. Or a sandwich. That is all. But the white of his skin stands out too gaudily against the black of the street, even when he seeks to slink away. They come—looming black phantoms of the black street; push him to the ground, a few 'meaningless'

punches, a request for money "Hey, man, you got a dollar, man?" He pays up what he has. Then goes home. With or without the comic book, depending on whether or not the dollar in the socks was discovered. Mingus Rude, his black friend, will appear, will save, when he can. Till he can. Till he can no longer save himself. Till, like most other blacks, he is thrown into jail. Once. Then again. Then again. Then again. Till arrest becomes the only rescue "God's sake, throw me in ... before I die!"

In this vividly detailed novel, Lethem lunges at answers to some of the most opaque and disturbing questions. What happens when streets transform into fear zones? When children walk it with eyes on their backs? Or when color decides class? Is it worth being the only child of a genius? Or a revolutionist? Is it worth being a superhero, with powers of flight and invisibility, honestly set out to redeem the world and oneself? Is redemption a possibility? Will Spiderman survive if he experiences the streets outside comic books? Hostility enters the scenes not just physically, not just through "yoking," burglary, and murder, but through drugs, music, sex, graffiti, love, comic books, secrets. It's there pulsating like a tentacled hydra. Crack and Cocaine provide the "high" when everything else gets low: "I'm getting down I'm gonna have to get high soon;" music articulates this jargon-steeped world with rap and soul and blues. What cannot be said can be sung. What cannot be screamed can be scrawled on walls, graffitied like a scar, sprawled against dark walls like a bloodscript, a personal signature.

In this psychedelic world of poignant, twisting prose, escape is the only escape. And the ultimate desertion. Bravery is the only beauty. One that outlives hate. Even love. A faith outleaping race and politics. A friendship that brings its pages alive with humor and pathos, and forces one to come off a better person. **N**



Round

Kanchenjunga

Author: Douglas W Freshfield

Kanchenjunga, the slumbering giant of the eastern Himalaya—its mighty, gigantic walls practically insurmountable from all sides—sits like a brooding god on the borders of eastern Tibet, Sikkim and Nepal, unwilling to be desecrated. In 1899 this mountain, though clearly visible from the hill station of Darjeeling, was geographically completely unknown. The giant bastions of glaciers, outer guardian peaks and hidden valleys surrounding it were shrouded in mists as thick as those that rose from the twisted and impenetrable rhododendron forests on its lower southern flanks.

Following in the footsteps of the 1883 mountaineering party of W W Graham, which after climbing an 18,000 foot peak returned to Darjeeling after only a week, Douglas Freshfield set out with his party in 1899. He was to be the first mountaineer to explore the great western face of Kanchenjunga, rising from the Kanchenjunga Glacier.

This volume is the story of an exciting, often dangerous and frequently frustrating journey to discover the lower and upper ramparts of this great mountain. It is an epic story of adventurers seeking to open up a path to the base of the mountain for future climbers and to seek a pathway to the abode of the Gods. Douglas W Freshfield (1845-1934), a British barrister, mountaineer, writer, poet and geographer, was one of the greatest mountain explorers of any age. A prominent figure in the Royal Geographical Society, Freshfield is considered to be one of the most scholarly and sensitive mountain writers. His books include "Exploration of the Caucasus," "Round Kanchenjunga" and "Below the Snow Line." **N**

A Pilgrims Bookhouse Review
Phone:4700942



HOUSE FOR RENT

Ideally located in a private residential complex. Suitable for residence or office. Four bedrooms, living and dining and a separate annex with two rooms and a garage. Walking distance from the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza and Lincoln School.

For more details contact: Mr. Bhattarai Soalte Mode, Kalimati, 4278743 (Morning).



MANASLU PASHMINA

MANUFACTURER OF HAND WOVEN PASHMINA GOODS



NOW INTRODUCING AN EXCLUSIVE RANGE OF SAREES

SHOWROOM: # 351, Third Floor, Bishal Bazar, New Road
tel: 977-1-4242258 | fax: 977-1-4223344, 4435617
manaslu@pashmina.wlink.com.np

World Class Web Hosting



Service Provider of Web, Print & Multimedia

www.dreamsandideas.com

Tel: 4260989 Mobile: 98510-52705, 98510-47447
info@dreamsandideas.com Media House, Tripureshwar

Deuba's Third Term

A nightmare is over. The country finally has a new prime minister. After keeping everybody guessing for 22 turbulent days, King Gyanendra gave his nod to Sher Bahadur Deuba last week. Soon after, the new prime minister stated in no uncertain terms that the sovereign rights have now been transferred back to the people and hence the party protests against regression have lost their relevance.

We certainly hope so, though we remember all too well that his predecessor Surya Bahadur Thapa made similar assertions a year ago upon his appointment, only to take a complete U-turn when his party asked him to step down. Expediency has been the name of the game. Deuba's own past two tenures stand tall against any claims that he has been an ideological prime minister, but we hope he is anxious to right those wrongs. He told Nation Weekly as much right after he took office for the third time.

We certainly hope he is anxious to make a name for himself as a democratic leader, unlike another veteran from the Farwest, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, who has been served well over the years for mainly one outstanding leadership credential: loyalty. Very few politicians get so many repeated opportunities to redeem themselves and very few have squandered them like Messrs Chand and Thapa. Now it's Deuba's moment of truth. We are aware that he has made political comebacks in the past to prove wrong the political obits penned against him. But this could very well be Deuba's last opportunity to leave a lasting mark in history books. Indeed, maybe Nepal's own as a functioning state.

It will also be a big test for the King himself. Whether he's got it right the third time round—after the failure of Surya Bahadur and Lokendra Bahadur—will depend as much on what kind of synergy he strikes with Deuba as how much political space he will allow the new prime minister. Without the elbow



room, the prime minister will find himself severely hamstrung in forging new political equations with the popular forces, namely the political parties and civil society which were both deeply disenchanted with the unscrupulous ways of the previous governments appointed by the King. We say this having witnessed in the last 20 months that order and authority of ordinances

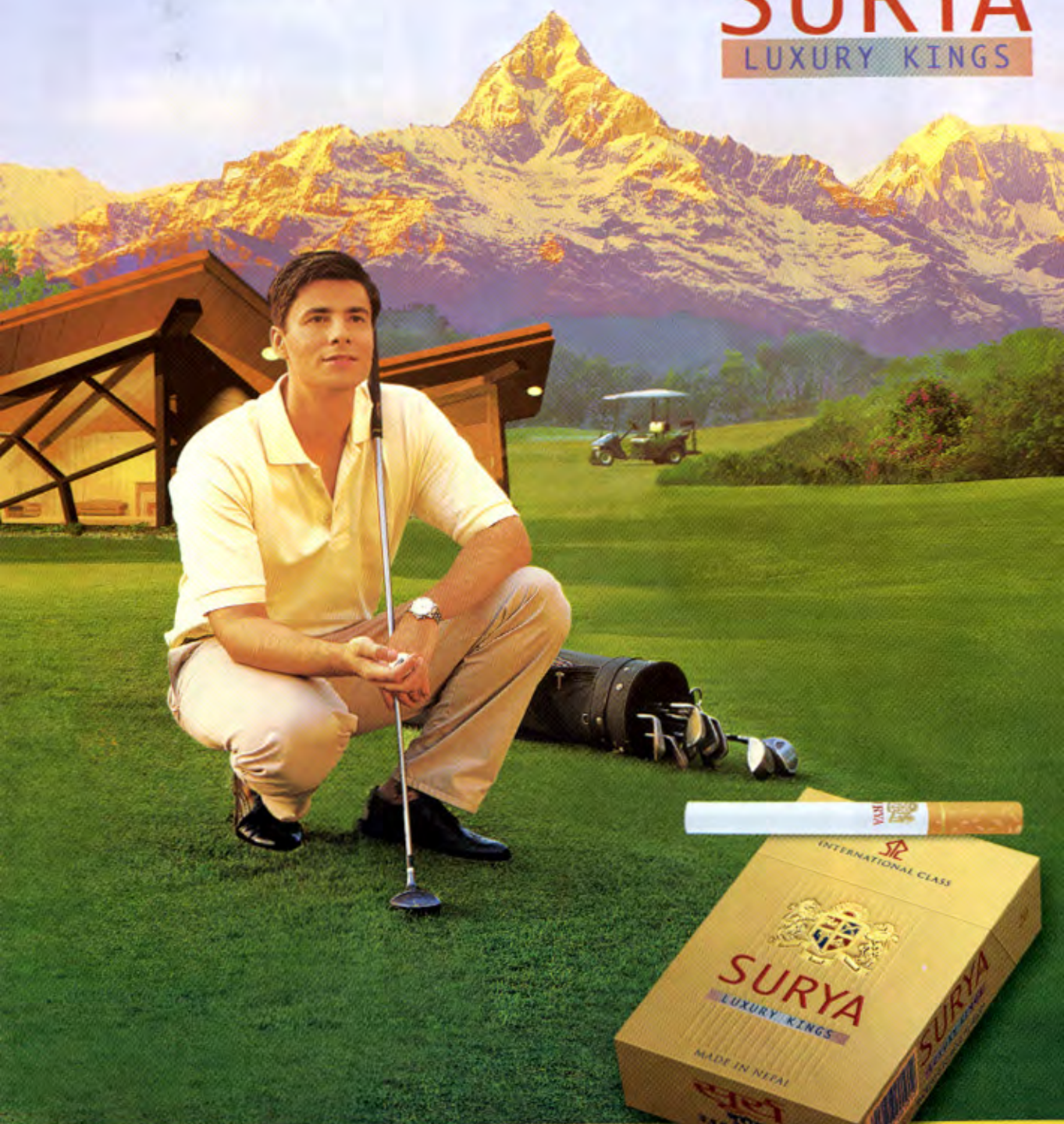
don't always travel very far in the land. So it is in the interest of all the parties, not least the Palace, to give the new government a much needed authority and legitimacy.

That done, the new government will at least be armed with popular support to tackle colossal challenges before it. Or else, the Maoists will continue to make inroads and will be happy to see two constitutional forces—the parties and the Palace—wear each other down to the ground. We have every reason to believe that the delay in appointing the new prime minister is not just due to the confusion among parties in their choice for the new prime minister. The Palace has tried every bit to strike a ceasefire with the Maoists. That it failed to do so should be a poignant reminder that time is running out for the Palace and the parties to work together.

Editor



SURYA
LUXURY KINGS



INSPIRED BY NEPAL

STATUTORY DIRECTIVE: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH.

Board Meeting & More @ Club Himalaya



The Resort, Windy Hills,
Nagarkot, Bhaktapur, Nepal
Tel: 6680045 - 47/80/83 | Fax: 6680068
E-mail: club@mos.com.np

Hotel Ambassador, Lazimpat,
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4414432, 4410432
E-mail: ambassador@ambassador.com.np