

AUGUST 8, 2004 VOL. I, NO. 16

www.nation.com.np

nation

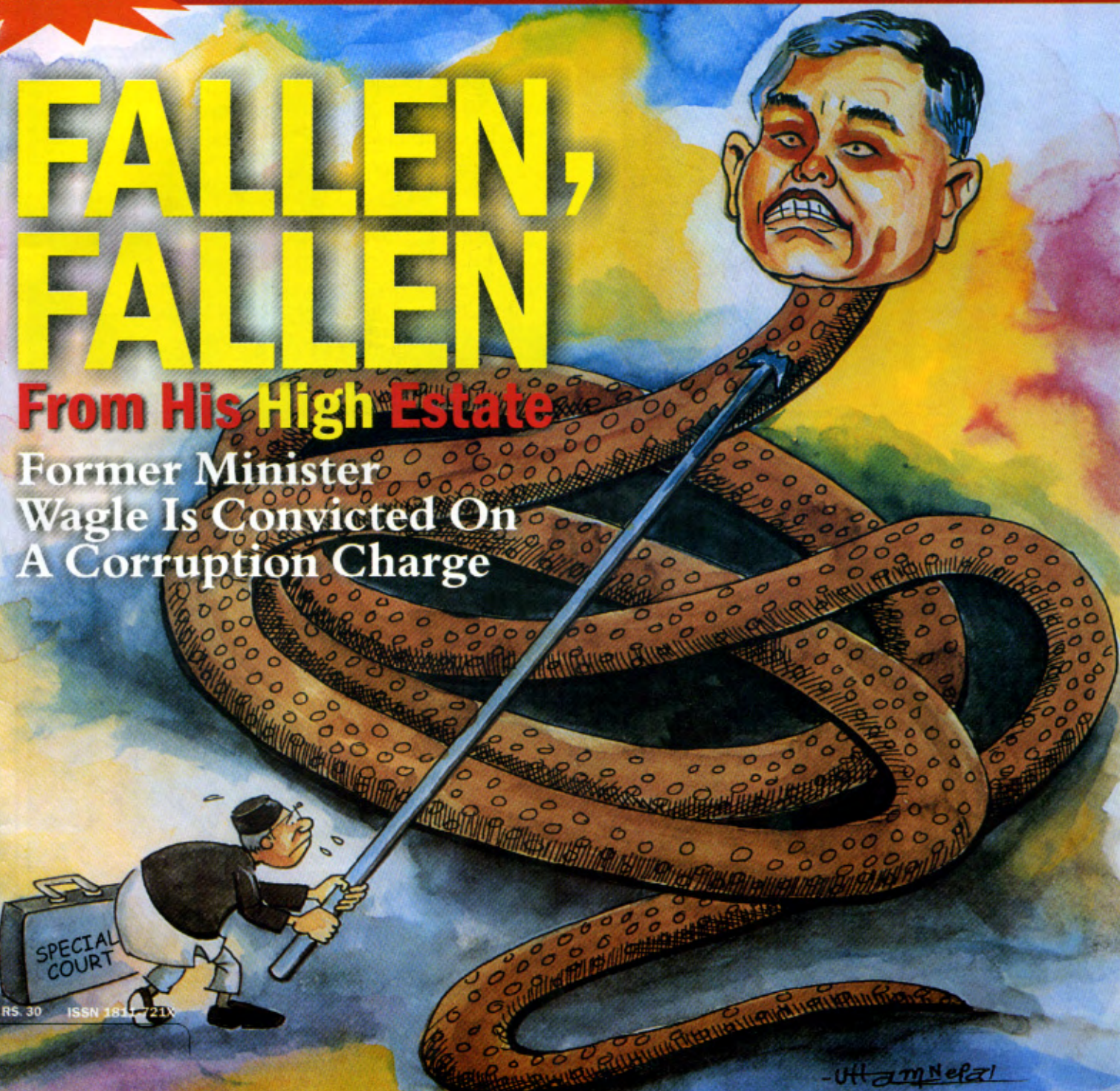
WEEKLY

60 Pages
Now On

FALLEN, FALLEN

From His High Estate

Former Minister
Wagle Is Convicted On
A Corruption Charge



Learn to lead

join

APEX



Apex provides an educational environment that stimulates, inculcates, rewards, and reinforces a quest for life-long scholarship and professional excellence.

Education at Apex is rigorous, practical, and market relevant to prepare you to innovate and manage organizations in the global context.

Programs Offered:

- *Masters of Business Administration (MBA)* - 2 yrs
- *Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA)* - 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Computer Information System (BCIS)* - 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Computer Engineering (BE -Computer)* - 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Electronics and Communication Engineering (BE-Elx)* - 4 yrs

Eligibility

At least, second division or a CGPA of 2.0.

Masters of Business Administration

At least 15 years of schooling that includes a 3-year Bachelors degree in any discipline.

Bachelors

BBA/BCIS:

BE Computer/Electronics:

10+2 or PCL in any discipline,

10+2 or PCL (Physics or Biology)

or a Diploma in Engineering or Architecture.

Available:
Apex Merit Scholarship

Baneshwor, Kathmandu.
Tel: 4467922, Fax: 4467923.
Email: admissions@apexcollege.edu.np
www.apexcollege.edu.np

APEX

COLLEGE

(Affiliated to Pokhara University)

Education for Rewarding Career.

For You.

Memories are an Integral Part of *True Wealth*



NABILCARDS *VISA* Electron

Let the Nabil Visa Electron add to *Your Wealth of Memories* with a Vacation in Malaysia.

With an account in Nabil Bank, when you apply for a Nabil Visa Electron you not only ensure the safety and growth of your financial wealth, but can also start building a *wealth of memories* by qualifying for a 5 day vacation in Malaysia*.

Features of NABILCARDS *VISA* Electron:

- ▲ Valid in Nepal and India
- ▲ Round the clock service
- ▲ No interest, late fee or penalty
- ▲ Secured transactions
- ▲ No charge on the use at Nabil ATMs and all POS terminals
- ▲ Can be used for purchase of merchandise/services or cash withdrawal

Give us a call and start enjoying the enhanced "**You tility**" of the Nabil Visa Electron and give us an opportunity to add to the *wealth of Your Memories*.

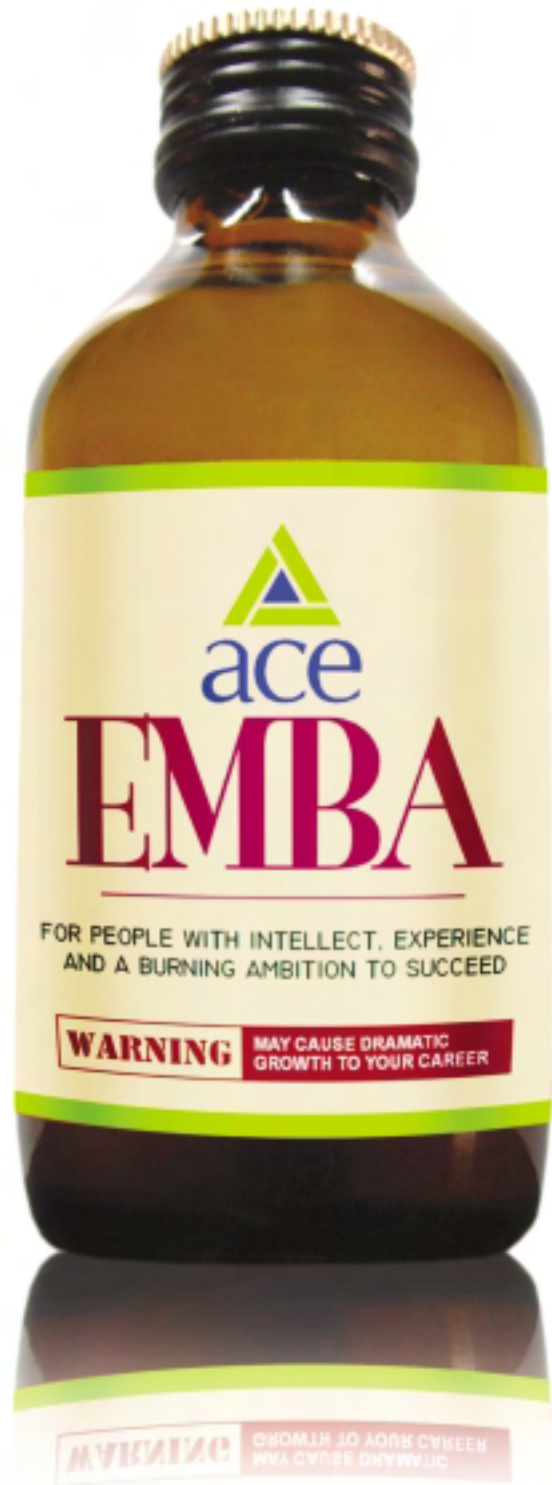
* Please call if you are interested to know the details of the lucky draw scheme.

Call Us : 2002030, 4223125

- Kamaladi - 4429546
- Lalitpur - 552043
- Biratnagar - 526213
- Alau - 528680
- Kantipath - 4227181
- Birgunj - 521476
- Itahari - 580741
- Bhairahawa - 524041
- New Road - 4224533
- Butwal - 541059
- Dharan - 530130
- Nepalgunj - 524221
- Jorpati - 4470498
- Bhalawari - 560357
- Pokhara - 525715

NABIL BANK
Your Bank at Your Service

Revive your career.



EXECUTIVE MBA DEGREE

A successful career is nurtured, not neglected. It is about making the right choices at the right time. The Ace EMBA degree could be the timely remedy. It is an intensive MBA programme **for working people** that allows you to learn and work together without having to compromise on either.

The only EMBA programme in its 6th year with hundred plus students enrolled.

ADMISSION FALL 2004 (11th Intake)

Classes:	Monday to Friday, 17:30 – 20:30
Upon Completion:	Awarded the Masters Degree in Business Administration
Eligibility:	Bachelors degree in any discipline with 2 years of work experience
Application deadline:	Friday, 13 August 2004
Entrance test:	Sunday, 15 August, 2004



Call us for further details. Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu.
Ph: 4474712, 4469019, email: aim@aim.edu.np



COVER STORY

20 Not Above Law

By John Narayan Parajuli

Wagle's conviction could break the culture of impunity

Interview: Kul Shekar Sharma, President, Transparency International Nepal

OPINION: Deuba In The Dock by R.K.Regmee, Author of "Firing the Corruption"

18 Ticket To Korea

By Satish Jung Shahi

Widespread use of lotteries to select workers for overseas positions could plug the loopholes both government officials and employment agencies use to make big money

26 No Comebacks



By John Narayan Parajuli

Bhutan's decade-long tactic of procrastination may have paid off

28 A Failed Aid



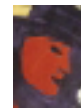
By Sunil Pokhrel

The Tenth Plan target to promote condoms to 35 percent of the population between 14 and 50 years of age looks impossible

HUMOR

32 Uma's Manifesto

By Swarnim Wagle



'Let's start a bloodless revolution, beginning on the august date of Gai Jaatra'

ARTS & SOCIETY

34 Gossip Sells



By Sushma Joshi

Director Meera Nair has jumped on the "gossip is the web of life" bandwagon.

36 Hitler With A Harmonium

By Sanjeev Uprety

Joshi Sir ruled the high school with an iron hand; Hitler was his hero

DEPARTMENTS

6 LETTERS

10 PICTURE OF THE WEEK

14 CAPSULES

16 BIZ BUZZ

44 CITY PAGE

52 SNAPSHOTS

56 KHULA MANCH: ROBIN SHARMA

57 BOOKS: FIVE POINT SOMEONE

58 LAST WORD

COLUMNS

11 Peace Before Polls

By Suman Pradhan

CPN-UML is right in pointing out that without a stable peace, polls are impractical

30 Promoting Media Freedom

By Pratyoush Onta

Journalism has taken a severe beating

38 Cold Comfort

By Deepak Thapa

If the checkpoints are meant to prevent the Maoists from smuggling arms into the citadel of Kathmandu, the strategy is definitely flawed

40 Unrealistic Expectations

By Daniela A. Ponce

Are Nepalis waiting for a Gandhi, or a Mandela to one day surface and make things better for everyone?

PROFILE

42 The Hand With The Scalpel

By Siddhartha Basnett and Yashas Vaidya

Dr. Paleswan Joshi Lakhey, the first Nepali woman to become a general surgeon

LIFESTYLE

47 Upwardly Mobile

By Satish Jung Shahi

The vast majority of the 180,000-plus mobile phones are in the hands of ordinary people who are living the mobile lifestyle

SPORTS

50 Not Sporting

By Raman Shrestha

The country's two main sports bodies are in the news again and for all the wrong reasons.

KarmaCharita

www.karmacharyagroup.com

Rs. 10/-

दुई फलक
दुई ठेके



A QUALITY PRODUCT FROM KARMACHARYA GROUP

KARMACHARYA
BISCUIT

Great taste Great satisfaction



Letters



“Ke Garne? The culture shock is mutual!”

HIMALI THAPA

“Ke Garne?” is not all

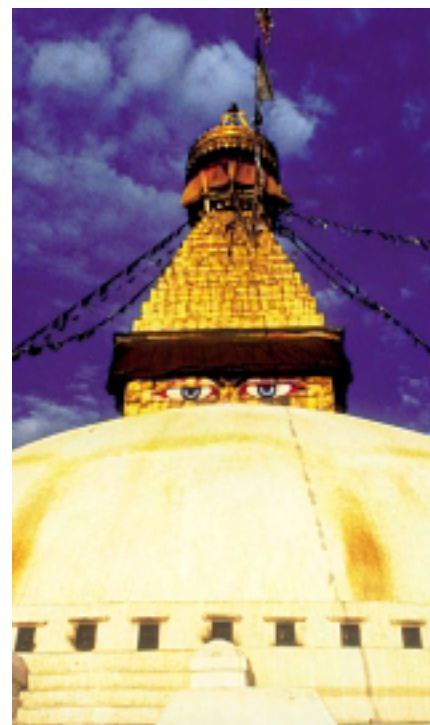
I FIND JOHN CHILD’S TONE IN “KE Garne?” (Cover Story, Opinion, August 1) condescending. With due respect to his “American brain” and “American education,” which he refers to as effective tools in identifying and solving problems, I consider his education incomplete if he cannot apply “socio-economic relativism” other than “fatalism” in his analysis of the situation in Nepal. It is high time Child and the likes discarded “Fatalistic Theories” to explain the development process in Nepal. It gets old after a while when every second analyst latches on to Hinduism, Buddhism, Karma and Caste-ism to prop up their reasons for Nepal’s failure to progress at the breakneck speed of “developed” nations. I suppose the revered Dor Bahadur Bista is to be blamed for giving currency to “Fatalism” as being the sole reason for all things that do not work in Nepal. The analysis of “Ke Garne?” seems to be the last straw that many intellectuals hang on to when they have nothing logical to say. If according to Child, “Fatalism” and “Karma” did apply to everything in Nepal:

The Maoist Movement would not have existed today; Nepal would still be asphyxiating in “Rana Rule” for more than just those 104 years; Panchas and Panchayat would still be holding absolute sway; urban migration would be non-existent; frequent load-shedding would be hounding our lives (like it did in my school days when studying in candlelight was the norm!); English would not be spoken or taught in schools; Nepali career women would

belong to a rare, non-existent species; girls would not get an education; women would not be wearing trousers and riding around in mopeds and scooters; the young would not be “chatting” with others of a different caste and sometimes even marrying them in the process; the Blue Diamond Society would be burned at the Hindu stake...and the list of changes continues!

Perhaps, the writer does not consider such urban changes (as mentioned above) worthy of inclusion in his sweeping analysis of the “stuck-in-a-fatalistic-mire” Nepal.

Now how about a “Ke Garne?” analysis of the United States? According to George Bush (and regardless of other views), the United States was/is destined to be the eradicator of evil



and terrorism at any cost. Didn't his holiness call for prayers and Christian strength before embarking on his "Shock and Awe" mission of salvation? 9/11 was not fated to happen but the "Iraq War" was predestined by the preemptive strike. All people are equal but some are less so than others: Gay marriage is not legal in the United States (the Bible does not condone it!). Medicare has sent many a senior citizen to an early grave. Enron has sent many more! Education/Educational facilities are an afterthought: Many U.S. public schools cannot boast of updated academic course books, let alone air-conditioned school rooms and well-equipped libraries. Inner-city kids are still being sold street drugs by white-collared drug pushers while the authorities plead ignorance...and the list is long!

Ke Garne? The culture shock is mutual!

HIMALI THAPA
KATHMANDU

Policing traffic

WITH REGARD TO DEEPAK THAPA'S article ("Policing Traffic," A Little Word, July 25), it is encouraging to see someone finally speaking about the state of traffic in this country, in general, and of Kathmandu, in particular.

Driving in Kathmandu is actually a kind of "free-for-all," a manifestation of "tragedy of the commons" wherein everyone's pursuance of their individual interests hampers overall welfare. Despite traffic rules, hardly anyone seems interested in following them. Pedestrians prefer the road to side-walks, cross busy streets when the traffic signal bars them from doing so and walk just under overhead bridges putting their own lives at peril.

Drivers (both two and four-wheelers) enter "no-entry" routes, park vehicles wherever they feel like and have utter disregard for fellow commuters. One of my friends actually remarked that driving in the Valley (can be generalized for the whole of the country as well) increases blood pressure levels due to both expression and suppression of "road rage." What, then, are the solutions?

One of the hallmarks of a civilized society is the regard for rules, norms and discipline. These values have to be inculcated in citizens right from school itself. Only an emphasis on rights without stress on civic sense and duties would make any form of society ungovernable. Thus, if some norms like seatbelt wearing can be made mandatory, there is no reason why others cannot be too. It is apparent that "traffic awareness" weeks need to be observed seven days a week and 52 weeks a year. Besides raising awareness and warnings through the public and private media, a system of checks and balances is required through strict enforcement of rules. The traffic police should fine pedestrians violating the rule of the road—at overhead bridges, zebra crossings or those caught jay walking. Fines should also be imposed on drivers who are negligent towards the condition of their vehicles and misusing public space.

This can actually be a source of income. The traffic police should also repair faulty equipment in a speedy manner. Junctions that have heavy traffic should have traffic lights and roads repaired, maintained and extended. These measures could go a long way in preventing accidents and making life much easier for citizens. However, it is also common knowledge that the thriving market, wherein licenses are a commodity obtained through money rather than through tests, is also to blame for this problem.

SHYAMAL K SHRESTHA
SITAPAILA

Media analysis

RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE media ("The Panchayat Media," Cover Story, by Pratyoush Onta, June 6) offers an acute insight into the state of Nepali media. The media offers plenty of news and information but analyses are rare. Almost nil, in my view. We will be informed and educated if you continue to offer these analyses.

RAMESH KUMAR NEPALI
BAGAR, POKHARA

nation

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: John Child

SENIOR STAFF WRITERS: Sushma Joshi, Satish Jung Shahi,
Tiku Gauchan

STAFF WRITER: John Narayan Parajuli

PHOTOJOURNALISTS: Sagar Shrestha, Das Bahadur Maharjan

DESIGNER: Raj Kumar Shrestha

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS: Indra Adhikari, Yashas Vaidya

AD & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR: Krishna Shrestha

OPERATING MANAGER: Ashish Bhattarai

MARKETING EXECUTIVES: Sarita Gautam, Rameshwor Ghimire
ad@nation.com.np

SUBSCRIPTION OFFICER: Bipin Raj Ojha

subscription@nation.com.np

ASST. SUBSCRIPTION OFFICER: Jeshna Karmacharya

DISTRIBUTION: Angiras Manandhar

MARKETING CONSULTANT: Kreepa Shrestha

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Nripendra Karmacharya

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. I, No. 16. For the week August 2-8, 2004, released on August 8

C O N T A C T

www.nation.com.np

nation

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

subscription

subscription@nation.com.np

2111102

POLITICS

SPORTS

ARTS & SOCIETY

OPINION

DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

CIVIL CONFLICT

BUSINESS

“... democracy is

only of use there that it may

Of the

pass on and come to

its flower and fruit in manners

in the highest forms of interaction

between people and

their beliefs

For the

— in religion, literature,

colleges and schools —

democracy in all public

and private life. ”

Walt Whitman

By the

People



People



People



THE NOTION
OF NATIONHOOD.

EVERY MONDAY

अढाई बर्ष जेलमा
भ्रष्टाचारको खेलमा !



STANDING TALL: Support for the Special Court decision to jail former minister Chiranjivi Wagle for two and a half years on charges of corruption was widespread



Peace Before Polls

CPN-UML is right in pointing out that without a stable peace, polls are impractical

BY SUMAN PRADHAN

While appointing him the new prime minister in early June, King Gyanendra had given Sher Bahadur Deuba several tasks. Among them: initiate elections before the current Nepali year is out.

But the vagaries of coalition politics, especially the opposition to polls without peace by the CPN-UML, have pushed the agenda to the back burner. Prime Minister Deuba and his ministers no longer adhere to the King's schedule for polls within 2061 B.S. The new mantra is: peace first, then polls.

All well and good, except somebody forgot to tell that to Bharat Mohan Adhikari, the deputy prime minister and finance minister sent by the UML to keep an eye on government policy. While unveiling the budget early this month, Adhikari made no mention of the government's, and more specifically his party's, new mantra. Instead, the budget says, "sufficient funds have been earmarked to initiate elections by the end of this year."

This makes the picture confusing. Will there be polls within 2061 or not? If yes, why don't all the coalition partners say so? If not, then why earmark funds in the budget, which after all is a policy document?

While speaking of polls, allow me to digress a little. This budget has done away with a novel idea floated last year by the Thapa government. Then Finance Minister Prakash Chandra Lohani came up with a unique proposal to finance political parties before elections. He had proposed that national parties receive Rs. 20 per vote in public funds to contest elections.

This would put a stop to much of the corrupting ways of political parties, he had argued. Though heavily criticized by the smaller parties which had no hopes of gaining at least three percent of the popular vote (hence becoming national parties), Lohani's proposal had its merits. It is a pity that Adhikari, who earmarked substantial funds for elections this year, didn't have any for the parties.

Could that be due to fear of having to make party books transparent to public scrutiny in exchange for the public funding? Or was it the concern that the parties would hence be getting only millions in public funds instead of the tens of millions through corruption and extortion?

Before I digress any further, let us get back to the issue of elections. We can only wish the government clarifies its stand on polls, but that is highly unlikely since fudging the probability of elections serves its purpose just as well. While it can keep the Palace thinking that the government is serious about elections, it can also keep the alliance partners happy that nothing of the sort will happen before there is genuine peace.

The issue of elections is crucial. No one doubts that it is the most democratic exercise which, if conducted freely and fairly, has the potential to right many of the wrongs in today's Nepal. But there is an inherent danger in it. Because it appears to be the mother of all democratic actions, the pressure to hold elections can grow, especially from well-intentioned but naïve international do-gooders.

The UML is right in pointing out that without a stable peace, polls are

impractical. Who will guarantee the safety of the candidates, the voters, the returning officers? And that too, not just on polling day but for the entire campaign, the voting and counting phase of the elections? The Maoists, whose prime leverage is their ability to disrupt polls, will never allow that leverage to be squandered away without extracting comparable concessions. What might those concessions be?

A far-sighted government would get down to work on those concessions. For eventually, some give and take must occur for the Maoist conflict to be brought to a peaceful end. What can the government offer that the Maoists can't reject? We know what the rebels want: an elected constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. Comrades Prachanda and Baburam have repeatedly indicated that this is the absolute minimum they need to shove the bitter pill down the throats of their young warriors.

It may be difficult for the government to agree to the Maoist demand just yet, but that doesn't mean it should make the task even more difficult. Minister for Information and Communications Mohammad Mohsin, however, did just that last week. While stating the government's desire to talk peace, the minister laid out pre-conditions as well: no negotiations on monarchy and democracy. Someone should tell the minister that laying out pre-conditions before talks, especially on the very issue the Maoists are keen to negotiate, if only to show to their own cadres, is just not the way to call for talks. **N**

suman66@hotmail.com



LYING IN WAIT: Idle ballot boxes



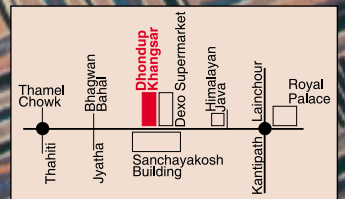
Dhondup Khangsar

Handicraft Center

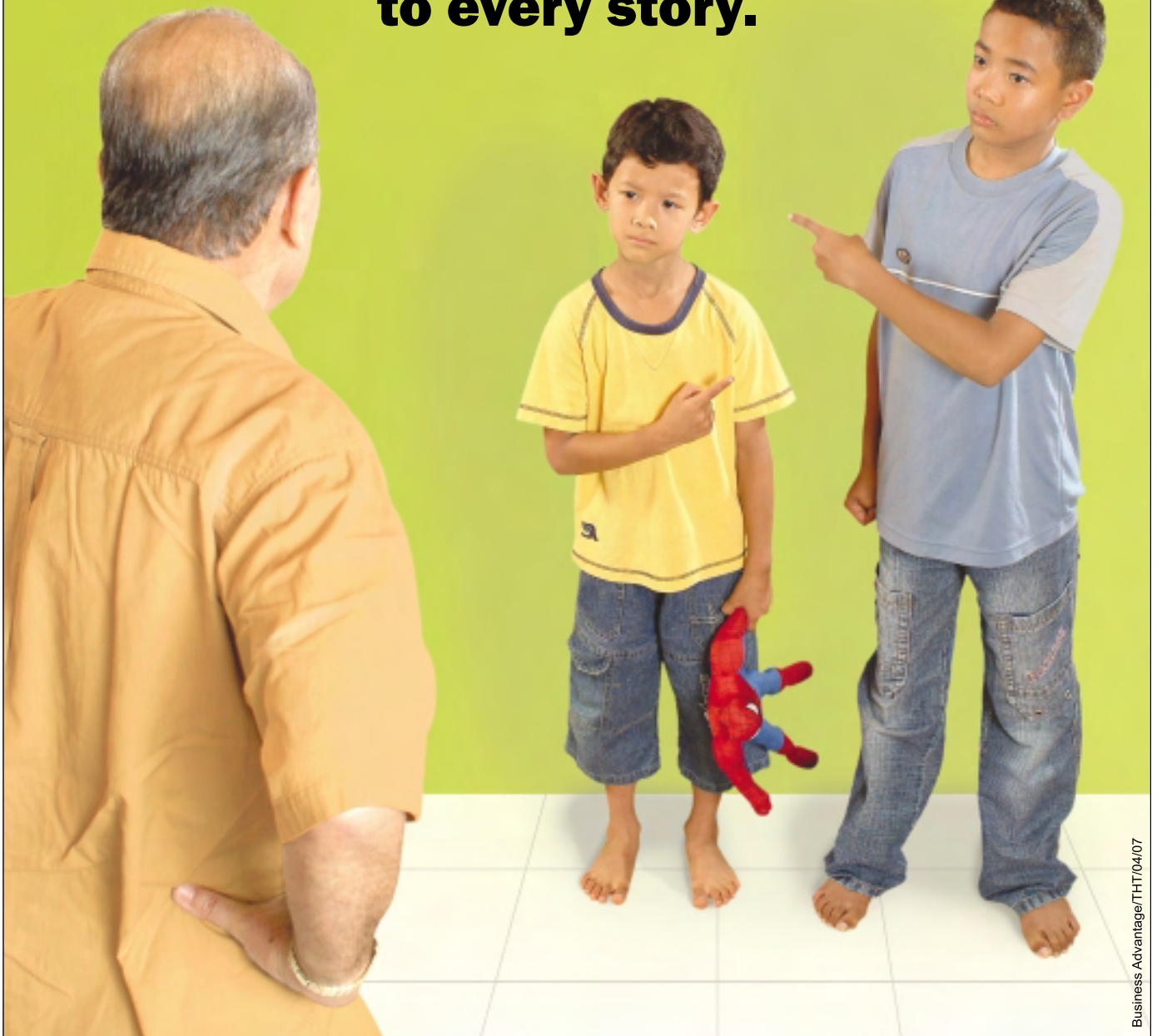


FINE CARPETS & DECORATIVE ARTS

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



There are two sides to every story.

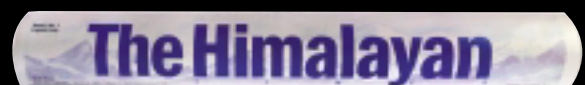


Business Advantage/TH/04/07

There are always two sides to every story. Who's right and who's wrong does not depend on which side you're on. To a third person, there may not even be a right or wrong, just a difference of opinion.

The important thing is to move on, change and adapt while keeping your goals intact.

The Himalayan Times is not about taking sides. It is about positively expressing the view of both sides.



A GREAT NEWSPAPER

Oil exploration

Cairn Energy Company (CEC) of Britain will begin exploration of petroleum in Tarai after monsoon. CEO Bill Gammell and director Mike Watts of CEC flew to Kathmandu last week to hold talks with Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Ishwor Pokhrel. Last Monday, the Cabinet had agreed to award CEC the exploration rights in five blocs—Dhandagi, Karnali, Lumbini, Birgunj and Malangawa. A bilateral agreement is likely to be signed by August 15. CEC produces oil and natural gas in Bangladesh and India. The company officials said they remain undeterred by the Maoist insurgency.

Strike off

Part-time Teachers at the Tribhuvan University (TU), who have been agitating for the last 16 months for permanent placement, called off their strike after the university officials promised to meet their demands. Nanda Kishore Singh, president of the TU Part-time Teachers' Association, broke his fast-unto-death at the capital's Ratna Park on the 14th day of the strike.

Embassy floods

The Nepal Embassy in Dhaka was flooded. A devastating monsoon deluge swamped a number of important offices and diplomatic missions in the Bangladeshi capital, the Daily Star reported. Nearly two-thirds of Bangladesh and half of the capital remain inundated. At least 10 diplomatic missions' premises and the residences of diplomats were reported to be knee-deep in water.

Labor dispute

The dispute over the idea to select the workers for South Korea through lottery continued, as both the Ministry of Labor and the recruiting agency remained adamant in their stance. The government is in favor of lottery but the agencies insist they should have a say in deciding over the selection. The agencies say the government should be held responsible if South Korea removes its quota for Nepalis workers due to the current standoff. The State Minister of Labor and Transport Management, Urba Dutta Pant, said the government would not retract its decision.



DIVERSITY: Muslim women welcoming British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Gareth Thomas in Lumbini

Property rights

Women will no longer have to return their inheritance to their maternal home, when no other heirs exist even after marriage. The Supreme Court (SC) ordered to do away the provisions relating to heirless property in the Muluki Ain, Nepal's civil code. The SC issued a directive to the government to scrap Section 12 (a) of the Muluki Ain, which allows married women to inherit heirless property but mentions that unmarried women have to give away the property after marriage. The same SC directive also ordered the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to conduct a study on discriminatory laws against women and form a

panel under the secretary of National Human Rights Commission to look into the contradictory provisions in law relating to family and property rights that discriminate women.

Poland arrest

Two Nepalis along with 17 other Asians were arrested by Polish border guards when they were trying to cross over to Poland from Germany in a lorry. The lorry driver, a Pole, will be charged with human trafficking and faces up to five years in prison, AFP reported from Warsaw. However, the fate of two Nepalis, alongside 12 Vietnamese and three Afghans, was not known immediately.

Maoist split

Two militant organizations affiliated with the Maoists have severed ties with the group. The Kirat Workers' Party (KWP) and the Madhesi National Front (MNF), in separate meetings, decided to part ways with the Maoists. The MNF has accused the Maoists of continued discrimination against people of Madhesi origin. KWP said they had disagreement over the party's policies, especially the "direction" the Maoists were heading to.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) has asked the government to dismiss attempts to shut down

the country's only gay rights group, Blue Diamond Society (BDS). A petition had been filed at the Supreme Court to shut down the Blue Diamond Society on June 18, arguing that homosexual activities are deemed by Nepal's law as criminal. In response to the petition, the Su-

preme Court gave the Ministry of Home Affairs until July 27 to show "why open homosexual activities should not be banned in

Equal rights



Nepal?" The effort would go against the right to freedom of association and expression, HRW said. Last week, BDS accused police personnel of committing atrocities against homosexuals. It has been pressuring the government to decriminalize homosexuality.

Risal obit

Senior Nepali Congress leader and former Rastriya Sabha member Basu Risal, who had been suffering from asthma, died at the age of 77. Risal was a founding member of Nepal Students' Union and had served as the general secretary of the Nepali Congress. He was also minister for water resources, information and communications after the restoration of democracy in 1990.

Prison term

A New Delhi court sentenced two suspected Nepali Maoists to five years in prison. The two suspects, Surya Bahadur and Kishan Bahadur, were arrested at the Old Delhi Railway station while trying to smuggle explosives to Nepal some two and half years ago, the United News of India reported. The two are said to be from Lumbini.

High dam

India and Nepal will build a high dam on Koshi river. Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh said that Indian officials have been holding talks with their Nepali counterparts, The Indian Express reported. Singh, who toured the flood devastated regions of Bihar last week, said his government had allocated Rs. 390 million to conduct feasibility study to build a high dam. The Koshi claims hundreds of lives both in Nepal and Bihar every monsoon.

Train arrives

After a successful test in June, the Birgunj-Kolkata direct cargo train arrived at Sirsiya dry port in Birgunj last Tuesday. The rail service started its commercial transaction carrying the cargo for business houses. The Himalayan Terminals, an Indo-Nepal joint



venture company, has been given a 10-year lease to run the dry port. The company said it was planning to operate two trains a week.

Court acquittal

The Special Court acquitted former Minister of Information and Communications Jaya Prakash Gupta along with the Managing Director of Kantipur Television, Kailash Sirohiya. The court said it didn't find enough evidence to convict them on charges of irregularities while taking back KTV's bid bond.

Refugee options

The Bhutanese refugees have urged the government of Nepal and UNHCR to explore alternatives to repatriation. Refugees said they didn't believe reparation would ever take place. Rakesh Chettri, a refugee leader, told Nation Weekly that a third country resettlement should take place. The government of Nepal should approach the U.S. government for a resettlement drive, he said. Even the UNHCR officials have said that they won't encourage repatriation unless a third party monitors the bilateral process.

Oil pipeline

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has proposed to put up a Rs. 350 million pipeline to Nepal to export petroleum products. The pipeline, IOC said, will be laid from Raxaul in India to Amlekhganj in Nepal. The project will be

implemented in two phases: in phase-I, Rs. 330 million will be spent and in phase-II Rs. 23 million will be spent, the project monitor reported.

Mortality aid

The British government's Department For International Development (DFID) will provide Nepal 20 million pounds to combat maternal mortality. Gareth Thomas, British Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, who was visiting Nepal last week, made the announcement. Nepal has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Asia. Twelve women die every day due to pregnancy-related complications.

Rights violation

Amnesty International (AI) denounced both the security forces and the Maoists for flagrant violations of human rights since the breakdown of ceasefire in August last year. In its annual report released on Wednesday, Amnesty documents an escalation in arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and torture. Members of the CPN-Maoist have also been responsible for grave human rights abuses, including assassinations of political op-

ponents and civilians, torture and mass abductions of school students and teachers, the report said.

Everest dispute

The Mountaineering Division of the Ministry of Tourism has asked foreign climbers to help resolve a row over the fastest ascent of Mount Everest. The ministry has sent letters to the leaders of 13 foreign climbing teams. On June 10, Lakpa Gelu Sherpa petitioned the ministry questioning the authenticity of Pemba Dorje Sherpa's record breaking ascent to the Everest in eight hours and 10 minutes. Lakpa held the previous record of 10 hours and 56 minutes.

Taxi strike

The traffic in Katmandu came to a virtual standstill last Friday when taxi drivers parked their vehicles in the middle of the streets. The drivers were protesting the police intervention in their rally at Koteshwore the day before. The drivers, who said that the protest was aimed at police high-handedness and chanted slogans against Valley's traffic management. The police were able to clear the jam only after 7 p.m.



CHAKKA JAM: Taxi drivers brought out their grievances on the streets last week

NEPAL'S PILGRIMAGETOURISM

Nepal took part in the 16th edition of the India International Travel Mart (IITM), India's premier travel and tourism exhibition in Bangalore from 24-26 July. The Nepal Tourism Board and Royal Nepal Airlines promoted Nepal as a popular holiday destination for the Indian market in the IITM. P. G. R. Sindhia, Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium-scale Industries, described his memorable weeklong holiday in Nepal several years ago as being one of his best. "Wonderful scenery, weather and warm friendly people. I am coming back very soon," he said.

Visitors also made number of enquiries and requested RNAC to resume its flights and complimentary hotel packages that were offered last year. Apart from queries about religious tourism, they also enquired about tours to Mt. Kailash and Manasarovar in Tibet, as Nepal is an established gateway to Tibet.

ROYAL THAI RESTAURANT EXTENDS

The Royal Thai Restaurant recently opened a new branch at Kasthamandap Bazaar in Kamaladi. The conveniently located restaurant offers authentic Thai and continental cuisine, executive lunch and catering services. The other branch of the same restaurant is located at New Baneshwore.

ADB DELEGATION IN NEPAL

A delegation from the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) arrived here last week on a four-day official visit. The group is visiting three countries in South Asia—Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal—to gain a better understanding of their needs. In Nepal, the group is said to discuss ADB operations and the impact of conflict on Nepal's development with government officials. The delegation will also hold consultations with civil society, the private sector and other development partners. A visit to the ADB-assisted projects in Pokhara and the Melamchi Water Supply are also on the schedule of the delegation. Established in 1966, ADB is owned by 63 member states, of which 45 are from the region.

COSMIC YINGYANG RALLY

RabRen International, the sole distributor of Cosmic Yingyang Motorcycles in Nepal, organized a test ride and rally in Kathmandu last week. Cosmic Yingyang is the first motorcycle to be manufactured in Nepal. The rally was also an opportu-



nity for the fans of actor Rajesh Hamal, the brand ambassador of Cosmic Yingyang, to test ride the bike and rally with the cine star. The rally took off at three different points: Patan Trade Center in Satdobato; Raju International in Teku; and RabRen International in Nagpokhari. Hamal visited the 3 showrooms and met and offered encouragement to the test riders. Twenty lucky riders from each showroom got the opportunity to rally with the star. The riders were presented with a poster calendar of Hamal and a Cosmic Yingyang t-shirt. Customers who booked the bikes before 25 July were eligible for a special scheme.

IFB WASHING MACHINE AND DRYER

Sagtani Axim organized a free trial exhibition of washing machines and dryers at the Bhatbhateni Supermarket. According to Rama Shah, Marketing Manager of Sagtani Axim, IFB washing machines and dryers have economical features like minimum usage of water, detergent and power consumption. IFB has introduced six front-load models in the market. Customers who purchased the product during the trial period were given free 10 kilograms of Surf Excel.



PARK AVENUE PRODUCTS

Exim International introduced personal care brands of Park Avenue and PREMIUM from J.K. Helene Curtis (India) in Nepal recently. Announcing the launch at a function held at Hotel Annapurna, Rajesh Srivastav of J.K. Helene Curtis gave a brief presentation on the brands.

SENIOR ADVISOR AT MOF

Govinda Bahadur Thapa, Director of Nepal Bank, was appointed to the post of Senior Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) at a Cabinet meeting held last week. According to the Ministry, the post will be equivalent to that of a member of the National Planning Commission. Thapa holds a Ph.D. in tax systems of developing countries. He also was an active member of the team formed by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari to prepare the newly announced budget for the fiscal year 2004/05.

NEW MENU AT GARDEN TERRACE

The Garden Terrace Restaurant and Coffee Shop at Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel introduced a new menu recently. The new menu comprises of unconventional preparations like Grilled Prawn Wasabi, Funghi Di Sherry Alpino, Tex-Mex Burger, Focaccia Melt, Grilled Salmon Livornese and plenty of Nepali and Indian selections. According to Chef Pawan Sharma, eating habits have changed over time and the new menu attempts to satisfy the taste of almost anyone. For the first two weeks of August, the Soaltee is also offering a complimentary soup or dessert for every main course ordered.

Comfortably
safe in reliable hands....



We are second to none when it comes to comfortable journey, punctual operation and high quality service. Our friendly staff are always at your service.

Buddha Air is the first and only private airline in Nepal to operate brand-new, straight-out-of-the-factory and currently in production **Beech 1900Ds**, each worth US\$ 5 million.



Buddha Air

Sales Hattisar: Ph# (977-1) 4436033, 4437677 Fax# (977-1) 4437025 **Reservation** : 5542494 Fax# (977-1) 5537726
Email: buddhaair@buddhaair.com ~ **Website:** <http://www.buddhaair.com>

Widespread use of lotteries to select workers for overseas positions could plug the loopholes both government officials and employment agencies use to make big money. No surprise that the idea has provoked strong reaction.

ence to the government decision to enforce the lottery system without their consent. "We dare the government to issue a similar illegal lottery system in public and police services," he adds, insisting the government is violating Article 11 of the Foreign Employment Regulations.

The article requires a government presence during the selection process of the prospective migrant workers but does not specify that the selection takes place through a lottery. Labor Minister Raghuj Pant says the Commission

for Investigation of Abuse of Authority suggested the lottery system be introduced to correct past wrongdoings and avoid corruption. For their part, employment agencies say things have changed with the appointment of the new labor minister and government officials are still willing to revise their decision for a price.

Officials, however, dismiss the charge, insisting that the lottery is a conscious policy decision. The Department of Labor says it has registered over 12,000 complaints from victims

TICKET TO KOREA

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

THE FLOOD OF NEPALIS heading abroad for work has buoyed the nation's foreign exchange reserves as well as the bank accounts of officials and agents who broker the jobs. On July 22, the government took a first big step towards rationalizing the process and preventing rampant abuse of job seekers: It ordered that 480 job openings in South Korea be filled by a lottery among those who met all the job requirements.

If the Labor Ministry sticks to its guns and expands the system, the dirty business of manpower recruitment could change for good. Unfortunately, insiders say as much as good intentions it was politics that gave way to the lottery system. There are widespread worries that the dispute between the government and the employment agencies over the selection process of the workers could seriously jeopardize Nepal's growing overseas job market and the poor Nepalis could be the needless victims.

The Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFA), which has about 360 member agencies, has denounced the government move to stick to the lottery format. "This is not Tiananmen Square of China where a minister can give orders in a *Jangabhadur Saile*," says the association's First Vice President Ganeshman Lama, in refer-



who have over the years been cheated by employment agencies. Last year, some of the 160 workers sent by Moondrops Overseas complained they had been made to pay anywhere between Rs. 400,000 to Rs. 500,000, much higher than the figures the company quoted or government rules allow. Applicants for the current 480 positions in Korea have been paying Rs. 180,000 according to Lumbini Overseas, the agency brokering the jobs, even though the ceiling is Rs. 96,000.

It's not only the agents who play loose with the rules. Tax authorities had suspended operations at Lumbini Overseas over allegations that the company owed millions in back taxes. Three days after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

took office, Lumbini Overseas was mysteriously reinstated.

The manpower business has become so lucrative that there is every possibility that officials are happy to maintain the status quo since everybody gets their palms greased, according to an employment agency boss. NAFA First Vice-President Lama says the lottery order "was rushed at the last moment to mask corruption scandals taking place between various parties in government." Kul Bahadur Karki, the managing director of Lumbini Overseas, says, "I cannot divulge all the details, but I will tell you this much: There were a few requests from the UML to include some of their party workers in the quota."

An aide to Karki told Nation Weekly that a top government official had asked

for Rs. 10 million for himself and another Rs. 20 million for his party. "Sir (Karki) will never admit this; he will get into trouble with the government," he adds.

Amid all these allegations and counter-allegations, Lumbini Overseas says they are well behind the schedule to meet the demand for Nepali workers made by the Korean employers. Agencies fear this failure may have a multiplier effect as a number of other Korean employers will assume that Nepalis are not reliable to do business with. This, they say, may lead many other countries to slash quotas for Nepali workers.

"The quota is given to the agencies," says Jun Young Soo, the Korean middleman between Korean Federation of Small and Medium Business and Lumbini Overseas, through an interpreter. He is here along with four of his colleagues and has already interviewed the applicants.

"It is not only a matter of reputation and trust but also government support that determines the quotas to be provided in the near future," he adds. Soo claims to have managed Nepali workers in South Korea since 1993. He has a list of selected Nepali candidates on a CD, he says. The South Korean Embassy in Kathmandu refused to make any comments on the controversy.

"The labor market brings in huge remittance to the country," says Nirmal Gurung, president of NAFA. "It would be sad if the government resorts to such unilateral decisions also in cases for workers heading to Saudi Arabia and Qatar." Agencies estimate that about 200 to 300 Nepali workers head for foreign destinations daily, mostly to Arab destinations and Malaysia. Even a short interruption of the current kind will make the foreign employers nervous and could have serious implications on Nepal's image as a reliable labor market.

If the government is serious about cleaning up the manpower business, then it should get on with it. But, many believe, if the lottery order is just about the politics of money, there certainly are hard times ahead in the foreign employment scene. **N**



nm/ss



NOT ABOVE THE LAW

The outcome of the Wagle case could break the culture of impunity that is pervasive in our society

Former Minister Chiranjivi Wagle
Photo by Ravi Manandhar

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

THERE IS SOMETHING cathartic about watching the fall of Chiranjivi Wagle, a senior Nepali Congress leader, who according to many was destined to be the prime minister. After a Special Court convicted him on July 22 on charges of corruption, a small group of people took to the streets to celebrate.

The demonstrations seemed carefully choreographed and no one seemed overly anxious to hide the design. The President of Transparency International Nepal (TIN), a watchdog agency, Kul Shekha Sharma, said, "We have an allegiance with the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to ensure transparency in the society."

The verdict in the courtroom in Anamnagar on July 22 and the street demonstrations a day later may have substantially lifted the spirit of the CIAA. "We are happy that people have come out to express their support," says an official with the CIAA. "But it makes no differ-

ence as far as our responsibility goes. We will continue our job as provided by the law, regardless."

After a long delay, the Special Court finally slapped Wagle with a two and half years of imprisonment and Rs. 27.2 million in fines. Even though Wagle has 50 days to appeal, many consider the verdict a major victory in the battle against corruption and abuse of authority: Wagle is the first former minister to be convicted on charges of corruption. He has said that he would appeal the verdict at the Supreme Court but had not done so by the time we went to press.

The CIAA has an unhappy history of losing face on high-profile battles, although it claims an overall success rate of 83 percent. Cases based on the Dhamija scam in 1994 against former Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, the Padma Sundar Lawati fertilizer scam in 1997 and a telephone scam against Chiranjivi Wagle didn't have a happy ending as far as the CIAA was concerned.

If the Supreme Court does uphold the conviction against Wagle, it will be a major victory, one that could go far in

breaking the culture of impunity in Nepal. It could substantially change perceptions of the justice system in the country.

After the restoration of democracy, the country had a golden opportunity to establish a new value system through decisive actions against the guilty. The attempt to hold accountable people in high places, however, failed because the report of Malik Commission was buried. After the regime change in 1990, a three-member commission was formed under Justice Janardan Mallik to probe atrocities committed during the Panchayat regime to suppress the democratic movement. The Mallik Commission report was put into a cold storage by successive governments, mostly notably by the Koirala government in 1991—the first one after the restoration of democracy.

Many still believe that was a lost opportunity, a colossal failure. If the report had been publicized and its recommendations duly implemented, it would all

**See
Last Word
pg 58**



DEFACED: An official booked by the CIAA

OPINION

Deuba In The Dock

R.K.REGMEE

What the Wagle case has exposed is in line with most corruption scandals involving powerful politicians the world over. The punishment he received from the Special Court has also drawn attention of international observers. They believe that politicians find comfortable by-passes to evade punishment and continue the chain of corruption infinitely. Transparency International has not only analyzed the political corruption in the world but announced through "Global Corruption Report 2004" a list of top 10 corrupt rulers and the amount allegedly embezzled by them.

Wagle is not in the list, but could well represent the wrong spirit of political corruption that the list seeks to disseminate. The international body does not counsel tolerance for such vice.

The present case has one unique dimension—a senior politician-turned-convict describing the court's final word as "unfair and prejudiced" and other sea-

soned multi-partyists not uttering even a word against it despite their continued lip service to anti-corruption movement. Various corruption scandals of the past—ranging from carpet, snake skin cases in Panchayat times to Red Passport, Lauda and Pajero scandals of multiparty era of the 90s—saw their actors escape without losing face and name. Should this case meet a similar fate, the public faith in the institutional mechanism to control corruption would erode for good.

Already, the present government, in not jailing the convict, has failed: It goes against the high norms of good governance. It has acted more as a savior of Wagle the convict than as a facilitator in the fight against corruption. The convict's attempt to mobilize support for him in the public and display himself as a victim of political vendetta would not have been possible had the government stood by the value of justice.

The political proximity between the prime minister and Wagle, because of their long association in the Nepali Congress and subsequent comradeship in founding a

parallel party—Nepali Congress (D)—may have prevented Deuba from taking a prompt action against Wagle. Wagle's political past that indicated high prospects may also have deterred the premier. It is true that Wagle contributed handsomely to the restoration of democracy. But this cannot justify the tolerance for a criminal. That Wagle could not maintain the positive traits in character while in power is a reality and cannot be overlooked.

Have the two NC veterans then forgotten the great democratic lesson—when politicians fail in parliament, they are entitled to go to the voters for their support but their failure to avoid conviction in court cannot be a topic to be referred to the people? All those in government should realize that the verdict of a court is always honored; it can of course be challenged legally in appeal courts. Challenging the verdict publicly and politically could prove suicidal for the practice of good governance. "Political corruption," the Transparency Report 2004 mentions, "is the abuse of entrusted power by political leaders for private gain."

In the saga of fight against corruption, Wagle's story could be dubbed a test-case. The Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority following the report by the Property Probe Commission charged the former minister and moved to court registering a corruption case against him. The circle becomes complete with the jail term, and the confiscation of Wagle's property standing at 27.3 million rupees as earned through undisclosed sources. This is quite a pleasing score. This has given anti-corruption workers some hope and strength. But the implementation of the court order has been blocked and this might have a chilling effect on the very movement against corruption.

The Integrity Perspective, a concept developed by anti-corruption cadre over the years, demands that Wagle serve the sentence, pay the fines and not obstruct confiscation of his illegal property. This could re-establish faith in the rule of law and could in a way pave the way for his political comeback once he completes the two-and-a-half year jail term.

Salvaging Wagle at this point of time is not easy. He might drag down even the rescuers.

(Regmee is the author of "Firing the Corruption.")

have been a different story today: Society would have been purged and the resultant catharsis might have helped Nepal move forward. Unfortunately, the culture of impunity that flourished during the Panchayat era has expanded. The specter of corruption has grown.

In a democratic society, justice is largely a public affair. Unless it is exercised in full public view and fairly, cynicism over the rule of law will grow. "The conviction against Wagle has instilled a sense of fear (among those who are corrupt)," says Transparency's Sharma. "This will discourage others." The argument is: Corruption is now so widespread and impunity so blatant that everybody feels tempted to accept bribes.



GETTING THERE: CIAA Chief Surya Nath Upadhyay

nw/ss



CLEARED FOR NOW: Former Minister J. P. Gupta just received a clean chit

nm/ss

In 1991, Wagle's property amounted to Rs. 90,000 and some land in rural Gorkha. A decade later he and his relatives have amassed millions in real estate and bulging bank accounts.

Most of the corrupt are still flying high. Allegations of scams involving high-ranking leaders, policemen, judges and bureaucrats are too numerous to list. Koirala was implicated in the infamous Dhamija scam involving the appointment of a General Sales Agent for RNAC on the lucrative European routes. The CIAA gave Koirala a clean chit following the report of the Rayamajhi Commission.

In 1997, the Chase Air scam siphoned \$783,750 from RNAC's coffers. RNAC sent the advance to Chase Air in a shady deal to lease a Boeing 757: The aircraft never came and the money never returned. CPN-ML leader Yam Lal Kandel, then the minister for tourism,

No Running Away

Kul Shekhar Sharma is at the helm of Transparency International Nepal, which is campaigning for a corruption-free society. Sharma talked to Nation Weekly about corruption in Nepal and ways to curb it.

How do you describe the state of corruption in Nepal?

It is pervasive in our society. It is the result of a distorted sense of values and growth of consumer-oriented culture. Corruption, no doubt, is deeply rooted in our society.

How has corruption affected Nepal?

It has hampered the pace of development. It has undermined democracy and the rule of law.

The state of impunity in Nepal?

During our surveys we have found that people resent the fact that only a small percentage of those involved in committing crimes are

brought to book. People also seem to resent the fact that only those involved in petty crimes are punished while the big fish are never netted. Largely, people are angry that the corrupt are having a field day.

Has the conviction of Chiranjivi Wagle helped change that?

Wagle's conviction has certainly given a much needed warning to public figures. But prompt actions must be taken against the corrupt to underscore the point that no one can run away from law.

What must be done to effectively curb corruption?

Two things are necessary. Vigorous prosecution against the corrupt and administrative reforms with a built-in mechanism of monitoring and inspection to nip corruption in the bud.

Reforms like?

Like cutting down red tape and excessive regulations, reviewing the role of government and limit-

ing it to strategic policy-making, monitoring and evaluating, and providing certain key services to citizens and reducing the size of government.

Talking of administrative reforms, you served as the Chief Secretary (1966-69). How was it different then?

I find a fundamental difference. Now civil servants have grown more

materialistic. Perhaps that may be due to the growth of consumer-oriented culture in the society.

How do you assess the CIAA's role?

The CIAA is working hard to create a corruption-free society. But it would be wrong for the government to leave everything to CIAA and consider the job done. The Cabinet is accountable to the people for bringing about integrity in government officials. If the government remains alert and watchful, corruption can be curbed.



nm/ss

The Everest Experience



The Everest Hotel has been Nepal's symbol of luxury for years. Spacious & grand, it exudes the warmth of a rich Nepalese tradition that heralds the guest as a god. The Hotel offers everything that a discerning traveler would seek. Luxuriously & aesthetically designed rooms.

A myriad of business & meeting facilities. A sizzling dining experience with a choice of **Indian, Chinese, Continental & Nepalese** cuisine. Impeccable service. A lively and alluring casino & a sparkling discotheque. An experience that is a delight to behold and savor.



The Everest Hotel
KATHMANDU • NEPAL
everesthotel.com.np

Hong Kong Rana and two RNAC board members were booked but Kandel was never tried in a court of law.

In 1999, yet another aircraft leasing scam was uncovered. CPN-UML leader Bhim Rawal was accused of underhand dealings while leasing a plane for RNAC from South China Airlines. The Parliamentary Public Account Committee (PAC) recommended action against Rawal and the RNAC chief. The CIAA eventually let them go because the cases weren't established.

It is after August 2002 that the watchdog agency started being more assertive. The CIAA Second Amendment Bill shifted the burden on the accused to prove himself innocent once booked by CIAA. Now CIAA started making daring raids arresting scores of leaders and bureaucrats. On the night of August 16, CIAA raided the houses of 22 tax and customs officials—16 of them were arrested. One customs official whose normal monthly income was Rs. 5,000 was found to possess millions. Since then the

watchdog has implicated many big names.

But Wagle is by far the biggest fish in the net. Former Communications Minister Jaya Prakash Gupta's final trial began late last month (and was acquitted on one case by the Special Court by the



time we went to the press); Khum Bahadur Khadka, former home minister, is awaiting his final trial. CIAA officials understand it is these high-profile trials that will best serve the notice: Public officials should mind their code.

Could the high-profile trials and the CIAA's greater powers be used to target opponents? It is a charge Wagle makes vociferously. "The verdict is a part of strategy to put an end to my political career," Wagle told reporters days after the Special Court announced the conviction against him. He said he would appeal to the Supreme Court within 35 days.

"Wagle's conviction has certainly given a much needed warning to public servants," says Transparency's Sharma. "But prompt actions are needed against others who are corrupt to underscore the point that the you can't run away from clutches of the law." Wagle's conviction, if upheld, will underscore an important lesson for the dirty few while giving a bit of hope to many. **N**



HEAVYWEIGHTS: Khum Bahadur Khadka (left), Govinda Raj Joshi (above) and Girija Prasad Koirala, all have been investigated for charges of corruption

Whether there are Maoists in the Bhutanese refugee camps or not, another round of allegations has further dimmed hopes for repatriation and made refugees wonder if they actually want to go. The Bhutanese side's decade-long tactic of procrastination may have paid off.

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

AFTER A HIATUS OF SEVEN months, Bhutan finally appears willing to resume the bilateral process. But there are no reasons to believe in Bhutan's sincerity this time around either. How can the impending repatriation of nearly 12,000 refugees of Khudunabari camp take place in the absence of monitoring? More importantly, will the refugees sign up for voluntary repatriation under dubious circumstances?

Three days after Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat returned home from the SAARC meeting in Islamabad with a characteristically optimistic reading of Bhutanese intentions, sentiments turned sour again. The Bhutanese National Assembly made another round of serious allegations of Maoist infiltration among the Bhutanese

Abraham Abraham, Resident Representative of UNHCR in Nepal says, "Protracted refugee situations are prone to give rise to increased frustration, and this can easily give ground to anti-social behavior and, in extreme cases, militancy." A Foreign Ministry official denied having any information about Maoists in the camps but added that it could become a reality if the refugee stalemate drags on for long. An American diplomat hinted last month that these reported Maoist infiltrations were offshoots of the prolonged refugee crisis. U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty, who recently arrived in Kathmandu, says the issue "underlines the necessity for repatriation to take place."

Refugee leaders accuse Bhutan of using the issue to complicate matters and causing further delay. Many fear such complications could slam the door shut on the possibility of repatriation. Outgoing Indian Ambassador Shyam Saran



NO COMEBA

refugees. The speaker of the National Assembly, Dasho Ugen Dorjee said that about 2,000 refugees have joined the Maoists and entered India.

Nepali security officials on the ground admit that some young refugees may be attracted by Maoist ideas. But the estimates provided by security officials to us (Nation Weekly Vol. 1, No. 10) were far fewer than the figures alleged by Speaker Dorjee. Refugee leaders contend there are no Maoist refugees in the camps, though some admit that Maoists might have infiltrated the camps.

If there are Maoists in the camps, a decade of delaying tactics by the Bhutanese side is the likely cause.

declined to comment on the repatriation calling it a bilateral process, although he did express concern about the reports on Maoists infiltration.

Though Bhutan has now agreed to return to the bilateral process, the backdrop of harsh rhetoric and calls for discontinuation of the bilateral process by Bhutanese leaders puts a question mark on Bhutan's self-acclaimed commitment.

"We are always committed to the bilateral process," said Khandu Wangchuck addressing the National Assembly early last month. "The agreement reached during the [Thimphu] meeting is clear confirmation of our seriousness in seeking a lasting solution to the problem." Not everyone is





nm/ss

CKS



BR

willing to buy his argument. A diplomat said the Thimphu agreement was full of “hollow assurances” and hedged on issues like providing resident permits, access to health care, education and welfare facilities to returnees. More importantly, the deal skips the provision of third-party monitoring. Much like the diplomat, refugees have grown pessimistic about a meaningful repatriation.

Refugee leaders doubt if a meaningful repatriation will ever take place. “We don’t imagine going back to Bhutan through this process,” says Bhutanese human rights leader Tek Nath Rijal. Refugees over the years have lost faith. “Bhutan is not going to take us home,” says Rakesh Chettri. Most respondents appear non-committal about jumping on the repatriation bandwagon. “I am not sure if I will apply for the voluntary repatriation,” said Shanti Ram Acharya (to this reporter in Khudunabari camp in October, last year). Acharya, who has 12

dependents, was categorized in category I—for refugees who are recognized as bonafide Bhutanese—by the Joint Verification Team (JVT).

There is again renewed talk in the official level about the resumption of the bilateral process; Nepali officials are hoping that the impending repatriation of refugees from Khudunabari camp will resume soon. But even before the calendar for repatriation is announced, concerns have started to emerge about the numbers of prospective returnees. “I don’t think any one will go to Bhutan under such circumstances and I won’t encourage anyone to go,” says Tek Nath Rijal.

Perhaps Rijal’s comment sums up the general mood of the camp inhabitants living in the seven camps in eastern Nepal. Finally Bhutan’s years of delay might have produced precisely what they wanted: repatriation with no returnees. **N**

The Tenth Plan target to promote condoms to 35 percent of the population between 14 and 50 years of age looks impossible

BY SUNIL POKHREL

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION and exponential rise in the number of HIV infections in Nepal should be making everybody very nervous. The latest UNAIDS report on the global HIV epidemic estimates that at least 61,000 people in Nepal are infected with the deadly virus. Since most of these infections are due to sexual contact with an infected partner, clearly using condoms could cut down the high rate of transmission. But the campaign to raise awareness to widen the effective use of condoms is deeply flawed.

In a country where people are squeamish about discussing sex habits, the conventional methods of condom promotion have been largely useless. The civil conflict offers a good excuse for the authorities and the donors to camouflage their failure. The national target stated in the Tenth Plan to take condom use to 35 percent of the population between 14 to 50 years of age looks impossible to achieve, though no empirical studies exist on nation-wide patterns of condom use.

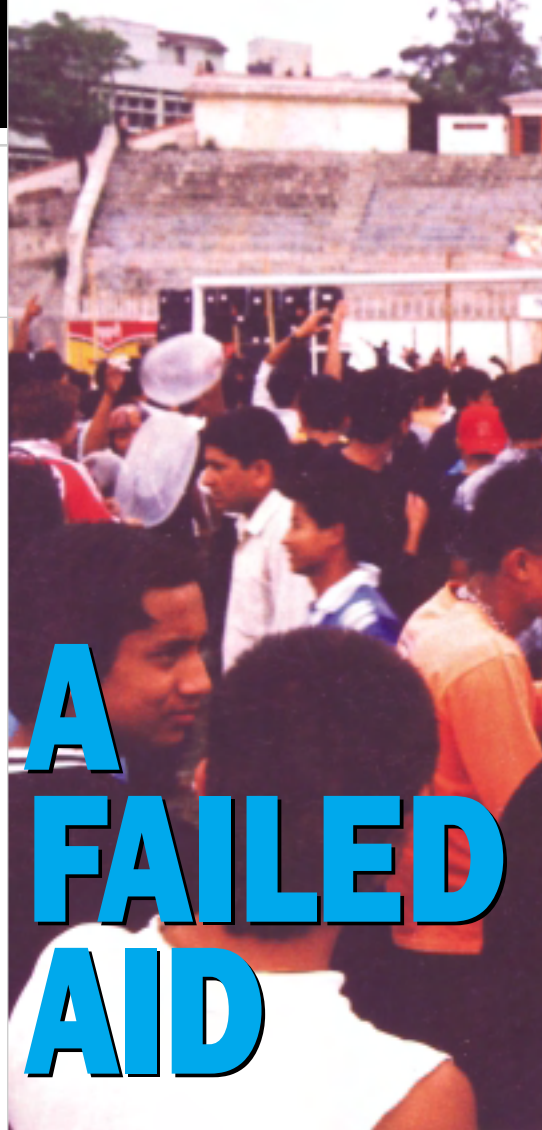
Records show that six million condoms were dispatched in 2003 to the health agencies and the market but experts say the demand-and-supply dynamics seem to have gone off the rails. Dr. Giridhari Sharma Poudel, a consultant at Family Planning Association of Nepal, believes that the demand in the country continues to remain very low. News reports also suggest that a large number of the condoms get smuggled across the border to India.

Instead of recalibrating their strategy amid new challenges, the officials are happy to voice the common refrain: Make condoms available so readily that increasing numbers of men start using it. "Condoms should reach communities beyond health posts and sub-health posts," Sharma urges. "We should take condoms to the people and not make people come seeking them." He then concedes, "That is exactly what we have not been able to do."

The reasons are many. One is certainly the unique cultural challenges that the campaigns to promote condoms have faced in Nepal. Thirty years of constant talking and flow of aid money has not produced the desired results. A significant percentage of women do not have control over how they would like to have sex, says an official at FPAN insisting on anonymity. Rural men who are aware of condoms rarely have money to buy them, even if they are available in the market. Storage and disposal problems in rural settings also limit the use.

Though officials make the right noise in seminars in Kathmandu and elsewhere, concerted efforts to break social taboo on discussing sex and condoms are hard to find, and there is no sign of any collective effort involving media, civil society and concerned authorities. "Public education and information can play a vital role in promoting safe sex and condoms, but the utility of the information is seriously undermined," says Dr. Prakash Subedi, a medical officer at B&B Hospital. Dr. Subedi acknowledges that the medical community itself has not played an effective role in promoting condoms. "Even sophisticated looking hospitals in the Valley lack provision for safe sex counseling," he says.

Sex education for high-risk groups—sex workers, migrant laborers and intravenous drug users—is the holy grail. In school, related topics have been in-



A FAILED AID

National Statistics of HIV/AIDS prevalence

FIGURES YEAR	(1988-1998)	YEAR 2003
Estimated number of HIV cases (adults and children)	21,000	61,000
Estimated number of deaths due to AIDS	1,700	3,100
Estimated number of AIDS orphan	750	—

Source: UNAIDS Global HIV/AIDS Report 2004



mw/ss



two million Nepali workers go to work in India every year. A considerable number of them visit sex workers during the long absence from their families. Studies show that seven to 10 percent of male migrants returning from India are HIV positive. A comprehensive effort to promote condoms to contain the epidemic among this population is visibly lacking.

Other than the government, various actors such as UNDP, USAID, DFID, the ILO and UNICEF are on the field vowing to contain HIV/AIDS but experts aren't too happy about the results. "Desirable success have not been achieved," says Dr. Ram Prasad Shrestha, former chief of National Center for AIDS and STDs Control. He attributes the failure to the lack of collaborative efforts between

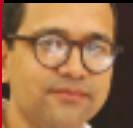
the government agencies and the INGOs. "What we see now is limited to verbal commitment." ■

cluded in Health, Population and Environment in curriculum for grades nine and 10. But lack of training and guidance for teachers on how the topics should be approached has caused many educators to simply skip them. Officials admit that they have not been able to come up with a visionary approach on sex education for children and adolescence.

Ideally, the government should have been able to exploit the vast potential of media, but the commercials on condoms that are broadcast on state television are filled with half-information and are only in Nepali, which makes little sense to non-Nepali speakers in the hills and Tarai.

The influx of economic migrants poses great risk of a rapid rise in the number of HIV infections. Some 1.5 to





PROMOTING MEDIA FREEDOM

The fear regarding one's own security has forced journalists to be very cautious about what they write, say and show in their media outputs. Nepali journalism has taken a severe beating from which it will take a while to recover.

BY PRATYOUSH ONTA

IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, THE incidence of rights violations against media practitioners in Nepal has increased to such an extent that national and international rights bodies have expressed grave concerns about both the nature and volume of such violations. Media institutions, practitioners and their products have been regular targets of suppression and harassment by the security forces of the state and armed members of the Maoists. These violations by both sides have occurred in the form of unlawful killings, abductions, arrests, harassment, threats and forced dislocations of journalists from their primary location of work. Media persons have been routinely denied access to locations they have wanted to visit as part of their professional reporting exercise. Seizure of printed materials, obstacles to circulation of print media or broadcast of programs and the fear of arbitrary interpretations of one's reference materials have all contributed to an atmosphere of fear amongst media practitioners.

Legal instruments such as the Terrorist and Disruptive Acts (Control and Punishment) Ordinance (TADA) that have been made effective by the state since late 2001 and the subsequent practices of the two main protagonists of the present conflict in Nepal are chiefly responsible for creating the present state of affairs. The fear regarding one's own security has forced journalists to be very cautious about what they write, say and show in their media outputs. Nepali

journalism has taken a severe beating from which it will take a while to recover. It has not only lost some of its practitioners by death or desertion, thanks to the excesses of the conflict protagonists, the job of trying to retain its skilful members and recruit new ones in its fold has been made all the more difficult. The dislocation of skilful media practitioners from regional or smaller centers of media production has slowed the process of the decentralization of media capacity.

The violations mentioned above have been recorded by organizations such as the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), Center for Human Rights and Democratic Studies (CEHURDES), Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). The situation is likely to get better only if the present level of impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations decreases drastically. That is only

likely to happen if demonstrably effective measures are taken to prevent or stop unlawful arrests, torture and abductions of media persons and associated rights activists by the protagonists of the conflict. It would also be necessary to punish those who abuse power and hence media's role in exposing these abusers cannot be overemphasized.

The present situation demands many kinds of appropriate action on the part of all who cherish media freedom in Nepal. With that in mind, some ideas, restricted to rights monitoring and activism, are discussed below.

ILLIBERAL LOGIC

A. Record and dissemination work by media rights organizations: With the hope that the illiberal logic of both the state and the Maoists will be defeated in the long-run through certain practices, organizations such as the FNJ and CEHURDES have been documenting rights violations against media persons. They are doing this partially with the support of some international organizations. With help from DANIDA, the FNJ has already published two books, one each in English and Nepali, which document these violations for the pe-

nw/ss



riod 2001-02. It has also recently prepared an unpublished report of such violations for the seven-month period since the end of the last ceasefire in August 2003. CEHURDES has prepared an annual report on the "Status of Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression" in Nepal since the year 2000. These documents in turn have been the bases for reports prepared by international organizations such as RSF, IFJ, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and others who have also sent their own fact-finding missions to Nepal in the recent years.

Such documentation is absolutely necessary to first record the situation of violations against specific individuals and to seek justice on their behalf. Secondly, such documentation is necessary for all kinds of subsequent activism including the preparation of special reports for dissemination or the holding of informed public discussions to raise voice against actions that have curtailed media freedom. This type of documentation is also necessary to build national and international networks that would advocate for the rights of the victims by creating moral pressure against the perpetrators of injustice in Nepal. Such documentation is also part of an active monitoring process of the situation regarding freedom of expression in Nepal, an arena of rights which is larger than those available to the media alone. More rigor could be used in the current practices of documentation.

Beyond textual documentation, other activities are also necessary and some of them are already being done by FNJ. For instance, since fall 2003, FNJ has been running a 24-hour telephone hotline to

promote prompt action on behalf of any of its members who might become victims of state or Maoist excesses. The hotline, established through the financial support of International Media Support (IMS), a Denmark-based organization, has made a difference.

RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

B. Rights activism, legal recourse and law reform: To confront rights violations, it is also important for media practitioners to be aware of their rights and have recourse to legal help. With respect to the first of these items, the newly established Centre for Media Rights (whose office is located in Thapathali) aims to provide help through the setting up of a resource center that would house necessary information regarding the rights of the media. The Centre's work—it remains to be seen what it will encompass—is being supported by the Canadian organization, Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS).

With respect to legal help, CEHURDES had helped about 20 journalists who had been illegally detained to file a compensation suit with the district courts of Kathmandu, Sunsari and Morang. Compensation amounting to Rs. 100,000 each has been demanded citing reference to the relevant legal provisions. One petitioner, Shyam Shrestha, editor of *Mulyankan* monthly was quoted in the 2003 report by CEHURDES as saying, "We want to set a precedent that the state must bear responsibility for violating people's fundamental rights even during the state of emergency." However nine of the cases filed have been dismissed somewhat arbitrarily while the remaining cases are ongoing.

Self-education of the legal bases of restrictions and rights ought to be an integral part of rights activism for the future of media freedom. This will enable the activists to devise ways to continuously challenge existing and future draconian legal measures and illegal detentions by the state. It will also contribute toward the realization of a legal environment where necessary progressive legislation can be passed in the form of a Public Information Act, etc. National

and international networking would obviously be necessary for rights activism to succeed but robust ways of realizing such networks have to be devised.

COLLABORATIVE STUDIES

C. Scholarship: Promotion of good academic studies on the subject of media freedom in Nepal is absolutely necessary. We need studies of the power constellations in Nepali society that have traditionally worked against media freedom. We also need broad and comparative studies that give us the benefit of insights developed from scholarly output elsewhere. For this to happen, long-term collaborative studies between media practitioners, legal



scholars, social scientists and rights activists will be necessary. Such efforts will strengthen the social foundations of pro-media freedom environment in Nepal. I am afraid that the present mode of conflict tourism—whereby Nepali journalists and rights activists are herded for a fast tour of Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland or South Africa—will not produce much scholarship or insights.

D. Resources: Doing all of the above will require resources, both financial and human. Hence it would be necessary to secure financial resources from Nepal's international friends to support the above discussed activities. As I have argued in the past, piecemeal funding support will not work. Also the funding dynamics ought to shift from the individual donor-recipient type to a coalition-recipients model in which discussions regarding comparative cost-benefit advantages of such support become a routine part of the grant-giving exercise.

It would also be important to generate financial and non-monetary resources within Nepal to do a large part of the work described above. For instance, Nepal's major media houses ought to invest resources that can fund activism and scholarship that support a pro-media freedom environment in Nepal. After all they will benefit the most from such an environment. Networking costs between scholars and rights activists could also be internally generated and shared by interested NGOs and informal groups.

Is anybody listening? **N**



UMA'S MANIFESTO

BY SWARNIM WAGLÉ

I AM AN INTENSELY PRIVATE person, except when angry, or in bed. I've been really mad since 1996, so I will tell you all. How and where my crusade to save the nation began, and why. I once took a walk with my father for two hours along River Seine. He didn't utter a word for the first hour. Then when I saw the Eiffel Tower, I said, "Bua, that's a nice view, don't you think?" When we reached home, he said, "That was a foolish remark you made an hour ago." I learnt later that he'd been reading about Benjamin Jowett, a 19th century don at Balliol College, Oxford, who had translated Plato's "Republic." My father modeled his eccentricity on Jowett and I grew up with a man like that in a family with five sisters. Naturally, I dislike anything ordinary. My father used to say that since the unification in 1769, the kingdom had produced just two gentlemen—one was himself, and the other was the present king's older brother, who had appointed him the royal envoy to The Elysée in Paris. The year was 1983. Francois Mitterand was in office, Thatcher hadn't yet won her second term, Jacques Chirac had been mayor of Paris for six years, Nancy Reagan ran the White House, Indira was India and the little Algerian boy who worked in our kitchen had whispered in my ear the eighth day we got into town, "Let's do it." He was cute. But I didn't do it. Some doings are destined, and some are not. The doing proposed by the Algerian was of the latter category—risky and shameful. But as Madame Merteuil tells a virgin in an adaptation of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, "Shame is like the pain. You only feel it once."

After four years, we returned to Nepal and I joined the Gorkhapatra Sansthan. Disgusted with a boss who snored in Sanskrit, I quit to give independent media a try. After 15 years I have become the first female editor of a national broadsheet. I have triumphed in romance, but my first marriage failed. My husband was a wimp. His only claim to fame was that

his grandfather had led a protest against the import of banaspati ghee from India when Koirala II was Prime Minister. The grandfather was later made manager of the Russian-built Janakpur Cigarette Factory. His loot was legendary—the factory itself looked like a cancer patient in two years. These days because of my profession, I hobnob a lot with politicians. They are an interesting bunch in an unflattering sort of way. Thinking to them is as alien a concept as staying mute is to Bill Clinton. Worse, they stink. They stink more than the rest. Yes, venal, most of them are, but here I mean to say, they stink literally. They don't wash, you know. Once, returning from Osaka, I stopped by the Hong Kong Duty Free and bought fragrance by Giorgio Armani. I gave that as a present to a Congressman who visited me with Saptahik Bimarsha in his hand every Friday. After I gave him the gift, he said, "Thanks for this thingy, Uma. But you should really have got me some Paan Paraag from Japan. You know, the jumbo size in a tin bucket. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai says Paan Paraag is good for making speeches about democracy. When you speak with Paan Paraag in your mouth, you look more stupid than you actually are. So you can surprise people later by coming off as smarter than you appeared earlier."

Leftists in Nepal are even more interesting. They grew up reading a lot of garbage, but there is this innate sweetness about them—they actually believed at one point in their lives that communism actually works. Almost like a Harvard professor believing in UFOs. I took a lover after my divorce, Shishir, a

left-handed Leftist from Dhankuta. He is now my fiancé. He insisted on taking a shower with his under-wear on. I used to tease him if that was to stop him from looking down at the unemployed. He didn't get the joke. Nepali Leftists are too serious. They were apparently punished for drinking Coca Cola, and if you laughed, one of your comrades would report to the politburo saying, "Comrade Jwala laughed like Lyndon Johnson the Capitalist." But women like us are gifted enough to make boring men funny. Like dining table etiquette, humor too is an acquired taste.

Well, it's no secret that my faith in the parties is diminishing. They squandered the moral authority they earned in 1990. But I can't stand the rest either. I hate the extremists, and find active monarchists





as well as Maoists revolting. Water is scarce and toilets don't flush in Kathmandu. But I don't see a point in just bitching about all this. It is time to start anew. The only group that remains untested is that of young women. We are not organized yet. When individual women join mainstream parties, they become invisible. Our movement will be different: men may join us, but the character—our *charitra*—will be defined by values we cherish. I know there's a new group in town called the "Charitrahin Chelis." We will find out who they are in due course, but we happen to have "charitra," and I'm serious about our thing. I am sick of Nepalis resorting to false nostalgia. We never really had a golden phase in our history, you know. Our forefathers built the Changu Narayan, resisted the Brits, translated Ramayana, and walked bare feet at 4,000 meters, but they also had a life expectancy of 37 and burnt women alive. Looking ahead, thus, we can only do better. It is with this belief, dear all, that I am inviting you to join me and my colleagues. Let's start a bloodless revolution next month, beginning on the august date of Gai Jaatra.

When interested women and men from outside Kathmandu (they are healthier) are in Kathmandu, please drop by my house. It's the big red bungalow with a blue gate near Thapathali Bus Stop. We'll talk then. If it takes nine months to make a baby, building a nation will take nine years, or even 90. I don't want to sound pious and all, because "desh banaune" stuff is not so much about religion as it is about physiology, i.e. getting a body to function. But I suggest, comrades, people like us should get started. Definitely bring your spouses along. If your partners keep neat goatees like that of Ho Chi Minh, I would particularly want to meet them. They are always quite a character, and are always great players of Volleyball.

Faithfully,
Uma Chand (Ms.)

P.S. All you folks above the age of 29 can call me by my first name. ■

(This is a modified version of one of the episodes of the author's 10-part humor series, "Gaunthali and Bhurtel," first published in 2002.)

Gossip Sells

Director Mira Nair has jumped on the “gossip is the web of life” bandwagon. Her new film, “Vanity Fair,” gives homage to Thackeray who turned gossip into high art.

BY SUSHMA JOSHI

Think of the most famous Victorian novelists, and who do you get? Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot (the *nome de plume* of Mary Ann Evans). Get it? They were all women. And guess what held them together? What held them together and keep them being read by adoring fans from Japan (there’s a whole society of George Eliot fans in Japan) to Kathmandu (where the British Council library stocks them in generous measures to enlighten young Nepali minds) is—gossip. That’s right—uh-huh, gossip. Women are good at that, aren’t they? And poor Dickens really had to write a lot of words and draw a grim picture of misery to keep up with their sales. The other gentleman who was a giant in scandal-mongering was William Makepeace Thackeray, and his skill not just kept him abreast with the ladies, but also passed him on to us to enjoy for posterity. His tour de force “Vanity Fair” is a book chock-full of larger than life characters brimming with backbiting chitter-chatter.

Director Mira Nair has jumped on the “gossip is the web of life” bandwagon and gives homage to this inquisitive gentleman who turned gossip into high art in a movie, also titled “Vanity Fair.” The film stars Reese Witherspoon (of “Legally Blonde”) and opens this September. Becky Sharp, the anti-heroine, connives, calculates and manipulates her way up society’s ladder. The film was shot entirely on location in Britain and India.

Period remakes are all the rage after Merchant-Ivory broke ground with such movies as “Howard’s End” and “Room with a View.” And increasingly, the post-colonials seem better poised to re-imag-

ine that era. The influence of Bollywood doesn’t seem to hurt either in staging big panoramas. Colorful costumes, song and dance and absurd comedy—all the elements high-art snobs flinch at Bollywood masalas are making a triumphant return in the period dramas. Giving Broadway musical fans a run for the money is “Bombay Dreams,” a song-and-dance spectacle that draws straight into the rags-to-riches basic urge of human beings. (Note: this musical is one of two Broadway shows about the world outside the west—along with Julie Taymor’s “Lion King.”) And who better to envision the Victorian world rife with drama and intrigue than Mira Nair?

Nair is the internationally acclaimed director of “Monsoon Wedding,” which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival. The movie showed the travails and triumphs of a middle-class Delhi family arranging a wedding, during which extra-marital sex, incest, class dynamics and financial problems all get

subtle play in a background saturated with bridal finery and monsoon rain. She made her feature film debut with the nuanced and moving “Salaam Bombay!” in which children from the streets of Bombay played themselves. And long before Anuradha Koirala dreamt of appearing on Oprah, Mira Nair had already shaped a sensitive and non-exploitative portrait of a Nepali girl trafficked to a Bombay brothel. That realism got somewhat lost in her later films. “Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love” was critiqued by many for its cheesy lesbian eroticism and blatant exploitation of exotic sensuality, but this paradoxically may also have been the reason why Nair got separated from the crowd of indie filmmakers and got such a warm hug from Hollywood in her later projects. Her other projects “Mississippi Masala” and “The Perez Family” have also gotten mixed reviews.

Nair, who also authored “Bringing Thackeray’s Timeless Novel to the Screen,” a pictorial moviebook brought out by NewMarket Press, has this to say about “Vanity Fair”: “Thackeray’s gloriously entertaining saga offers an enormous panorama of themes familiar to us steeped in Bollywood: a woman who defies her poverty-stricken background to clamber up the social ladder, unrequited love, seduction through song, a mother’s sacrifice for her child, a true gentleman in a corrupt world...the catalog of human stories remains the same. Moreover, it is a story that comes down to the basic question: Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or, having it, is satisfied?”

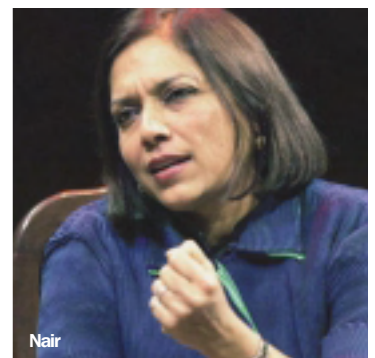
Let’s hope our desires to get a slice of Victorian melodrama will be satisfied by Nair’s new confection. **N**



PENGUIN CLASSICS

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Vanity Fair



Nair



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.



Hitler with a Harmonium

Joshi Sir ruled the high school with an iron hand; Hitler was his hero

BY SANJEEV UPRETY

Mohan Joshi, headmaster of Sanischare High School in Jhapa for 29 years, retired in 2000. During his tenure, Joshi—or “Joshi Sir” as he was popularly known—was both respected and feared by his colleagues and school children alike. He was respected for his sharp wits, his decisiveness and his talent for administration. He was feared, and sometimes despised, for his authoritarian ways. Joshi Sir had an irritating habit of jumping stealthily upon his students to kick their backsides. Even his marks of appreciation, expressed through hard slaps upon the shoulder or sharp pinches upon the cheek, were sometimes too abrupt and disorienting. In the view of some senior students he was too much of a dictator, too fixed in his opinions and practices to be considered a democratic leader of men, women and children. Some of his students—the present author included—secretly spoke of rebellion and nicknamed their headmaster “Hitler” during their whispered conversations in the school corridors.

Revisiting the memory lanes, however, Joshi Sir remains unfazed, unapologetic. “Hitler is my favorite historical figure,” he told me during a recent meeting. “I don’t agree with everything that

he did and I condemn the violence he perpetrated upon the Jews. However, I still respect and revere him because he was a true nationalist.”

Joshi Sir complained that the feelings of nationalism are on the wane these days. “The younger generation is motivated by personal greed rather than by the feelings of nationalism,” he said. “It was not so when I first came to Nepal from Assam. A Nepali born in Assam, I decided to come to Nepal because it was the motherland of my ancestors, their spiritual home.” He paused for a few seconds to recollect his memories—“People in this village welcomed me with open arms. They really valued good English teachers at Sanischare which was a really remote village then. It was surrounded by thick forests and was perpetually threatened by both malaria and poisonous cobras called *gobans*.”

Apart from ruling the high school with an iron hand, Joshi Sir has an added distinction. He was the first person to own a television in the village. This happened when he first got an opportunity to visit Thailand and other South Asian countries in the early 80s to attend a teacher’s exchange program. He brought back with him not only an expanded awareness of the South Asian region but also a black and white television set. The television was later displayed publicly at Joshi Sir’s

courtyard, and a *puja* was performed with a sprinkling of flowers, purified water and holy ash upon the television before it aired its first performance. Ironically the first show that the people of Sanischare and Arjundhara saw was the much acclaimed, Oscar-winning “Gandhi.” Gandhi’s pacifist world view was an exact opposite of Hitler’s, Joshi Sir’s idol.

Apart from history and English, the subject he taught at Sanischare High School, Joshi Sir’s other two passions are spiritualism and music. He is currently a priest, of a community of people who worship Thakur, a holy man born in India. “Bhakti of Thakur has given me inner peace,” he says, pointing to the photographs of his spiritual mentor as he played his harmonium. “Now that I am retired from the school, Thakur and music are my major passions.”

Joshi Sir then elaborated how he learnt music at Banares for a short stint before entering Nepal on his way from Assam. “I hummed the tunes of Kundan Lal Sehgal and Talat Mehmood during a six-hour bullock cart ride that brought me from Mechi river, the border of Nepal, to this village that has become my home,” he said. “Times have changed. The world since then has become too materialistic. The schoolchildren no longer respect their teachers. They go to the cities, get educated and then forget their old gurus,” he eyed me doubtfully with piercing eyes as if to ascertain if I was one of those who revered the memories of his old teachers or someone who was corrupted by the ways of the city. His gaze was intense and piercing; it made me think once again of the punishments I had received as a rebellious student. Joshi Sir’s expression changed quickly, however, and the next moment he seemed kind and immensely wise. Was my old headmaster going to kick my backside or was he about to mark my cheek with a painful pinch? Neither happened. Now in his late 60s, Joshi Sir had become too mellow to administer either kicks or pinches; at 40 I was too old to receive such intimate attentions. Times had indeed changed for both of us. Then, after gazing at me steadily for a couple of seconds, Joshi Sir just turned to the harmonium in front of him to play and sing an old Rafi hit. The master and his pupil had finally arrived at a truce. **N**

Why Panchakanya TMT Bar only ?

Because of ...

... Consistency in Quality

Panchakanya


TMT

Steel Bar

Fe-500

- *Better yield/Tensile and Bonding Strength*
- *High Ductility/Elongation*
- *More than 10% saving*
- *Suitable for earthquake prone areas*

FIRST TMT Bar Manufacturer in Nepal.

 **Panchakanya Steel (P) Ltd.**

Krishna Galli, Lalitpur, P. O. Box 2743 Kathmandu, Nepal.
Ph: 977-1-5548235, 5526551 Fax: 5526529
Bhairahawa: Ph: 071-560571, 560368, Fax: 071-560574
email: steel@panchakanya.com.np
www.panchakanya.com.np

*Always First
Always Ahead*



Manufactured only from Prime Rawmaterial



Cold Comfort

If the checkpoints are meant to prevent the Maoists from smuggling arms into the citadel of Kathmandu, the strategy is definitely flawed

BY DEEPAK THAPA

A few days ago, a newspaper published a photograph of a line of bus passengers clambering up a muddy path cutting across the Tribhuvan Rajpath rather than wait for their buses to inch forward to the security check-post at Nagdhunga, the main entry point into the Valley. The idea probably was to reach the top and then hop onto another bus that had passed through the checking. Smart thinking. A wait of a couple of hours is quite normal as one tries to enter Kathmandu from the western side.

The point of recounting this is to question the motive behind putting up a checkpoint at Nagdhunga and all the other *naka* into the Valley at the cost of the hapless passengers. If it is to prevent the Maoist rebels from smuggling in arms into the citadel of Kathmandu, the strategy is definitely flawed. For one, despite the heavy security presence everywhere, the Maoists seem to be able to bump off almost anyone or blow up almost anything at will.

Secondly, it would have to be a really dim-witted Maoist who would wait quietly for two hours or more for a police search if he or she were carrying anything that could be compromising. There are numerous trails that strike off the highway and into the Valley for anyone considering something drastic. This also leads one to ask what use are the checkpoints that spring up at certain city intersections at night. Apart from the one at Narayan Gopal Chowk in Maharajgunj, all the others tend to be around only for a few hours. What one begins to wonder: are our security forces privy to information that the Maoists are known to move around only during those hours in the evening? Or, as is more likely, is it all just a sham? The sham is also necessary, I'm sure, since the citizens would like to believe that the streets are well-guarded and they can all get a good night's sleep. Except that the news the next day does not always reflect that. Every time I pass one of these barriers in a taxi, I ask the driver—believing, as I read somewhere, that taxi-drivers are the eyes and ears of a city—if anyone has been nabbed during these checks, and so far the answer has always been a firm “NO.” Expectedly so, since again it would have to be yet another dimwit Maoist who would try anything knowing fully well that there would be cops and soldiers crawling all over Kathmandu at that particular time. Why not wait until later in the night, or better still, do it during the day when there is no one to question your movements?

I am sure there must be a more effective mechanism to ensure the security of the city that does not involve interrogating any and everyone who happens to take certain roads at a certain time of the evening. This takes me to a conversation I had with a former British Army officer soon after the Royal Nepal Army came out on the Kathmandu streets. Asked about his views on the security checks, he had pooh-pooed the Army's efforts as most ineffectual, and his prognosis has proved right over the years.

I had also asked how they had tackled the situation in Northern Ireland. He said that about the only thing that works in such situations is mobile checking. In his words: put a corporal in charge of a squad with two vehicles; the two vehicles work at tandem and at any random place they “box in” a line of cars (buses, motorcycles, whatever) with one in the front and the other flanking the rear; the rest of the traffic is allowed to continue while the ones that have been blocked are subjected to a most thorough check unlike the “Kehi chha?” variety we get here. This happens all day and all night long, in the city and on the highway. Not everyone is forced to undergo the routine security check at fixed spots, which anyone can bypass by taking a different route, but then anyone is liable to be pulled over at any time and at any place.

It sure does not take a military strategist to figure out that this makes eminent sense. If I were a Maoist, I would definitely be much more wary of traveling if this were the case in Nepal as well. Wonder why our security guys still believe that the best way to prevent the Maoists from moving around is to advertise openly that they are waiting for them—should they come their way. **N**



TECHMEDIA HOUSE



Presents

The 1st IT-based T.V. Program in Nepal

INFOTALK

For Contact

e-mail: info@techmediahouse.com.np

Web sites: www.techmediahouse.com.np

Techmediahouse Pvt.Ltd.

P.B.No. 21685

Chabahil, KTM, NEPAL

Cell: - 9851063178

Nepal Television, every Tuesday at 8:00 AM.
The repeat telecast can be viewed on
Image Metro, every Sunday at 2:00 PM.



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

Unrealistic Expectations

Are Nepalis waiting for a Gandhi or a Mandela to one day surface and make things better for everyone? In authoritative regimes such as in Nepal, “good leaders” will remain in the darkness

BY DANIELA A. PONCE

The Nepali Congress’s dismissal of the elected body of its student wing, the Nepal Students’ Union (NSU), not only depicts the undemocratic and nepotistic practices within the NC’s headship. It is also symptomatic of a more serious illness: a social system that encourages civil society’s high expectations in leaders’ personal traits which in turn lead to disappointment and blind compliance.

Every time I talk to Nepalis from all walks of life about the situation of the country, I’m certain to find deep-rooted skepticism about the political leadership. Pessimistic political forecasts naturally follow a diagnosis where the leaders’ lack of vision and credibility becomes responsible for the current state of affairs. As expected, they advise that the solution to the quagmire is simply the emergence of a “good leader”—somebody with vision and selfless interest who can bring peace and prosperity to the country.

The treatment they prescribe might be correct, yet it always strikes me as profoundly idealistic. Are Nepalis waiting for a Gandhi or a Mandela to one day surface and make things better for everyone? Let me argue why the idea of a “good leader” is unattainable in undemocratic systems, why it is necessary to redefine good leadership as a social system rather than to a person or group, and how despite this, a strong civil society that demands accountability could lend a much needed hand.

In authoritative regimes such as in Nepal, “good leaders” will remain in the darkness. Individuals with aspirations in political careers (regardless of their motivations) would invariably need to comply with the views of those on top—views which are generally distant from the interests of the general public. Anybody who does not obey poses a threat. The sacking of prominent student leaders Gururaj Ghimire and Gagan Thapa illustrates this point. The NSU’s political analysis and thus its recommendations were surely different from the ones held by the Koirala leadership. They were different in part, because Ghimire and Thapa witnessed and led a historical moment of mobilization where new opinions and frameworks were shaped. As leaders, they had the choice to either voice these new views or replicate the speeches of the NC. They chose the former. In my interviews with university students for my thesis research, I consistently found that Ghimire and Thapa were well-respected, even



STIFLED: Dissenting leaders like Thapa (above) and Ghimire are shown the door

among leaders of other student organizations, because the students felt they would not refrain from voicing their opinions.

It is sad but not surprising that the anti-regression movement failed to achieve the structural reforms it demanded. Unlike the 1990 movement, leaders were unsuccessful in establishing credibility and thus failed to attract important segments of the population. Though it is an understatement that the leadership lacked vision and true commitment to democracy as illustrated by the CPN-UML move to join another hand-picked government, it was ultimately civil society’s failure to make their political parties more democratic and accountable.



Yet it is the civil society’s unrealistic expectations about their leaders what continues to cause disappointment. Confining good leadership to a person or a group, rather than demanding a democratic system that “produces” accountable leaders and elevates the price of peace and democracy. Nepalis need to realize that these leaders will continue to fail them until democracy reaches their political parties. In various parts of the world, even in developing countries with dark pasts such as Chile, leaders are able to better provide for people’s needs

not because of their supernatural morality but rather because they lead in a new democratic polity which has inbuilt mechanisms of checks and balances. Hence when a leader makes a flawed decision it is the people, either through contentious and non-contentious politics, that “make” the leaders accountable. The ballot box performs the ultimate miracle as it usually votes bad leaders off. Democracy, even in its most precarious form, is the voter’s insurance policy against deficient leadership.

Those who claim to be fighting for peace and democracy in Nepal need to make their parties narrow the gap between rhetoric and practice from within. What is the difference between a King who dissolves an elected government and appoints a new one and the NC leadership who dissolves its elected student leadership and appoints a new committee? The Palace, which holds a long history of monarchy, has set the precedent for authoritarian and undemocratic leadership to develop yet it has been the Nepali civil society who has allowed their political parties to continue the dreadful practices. Unfortunately, the few who dare to question the old establishment and build an alternative through accountability will be silenced and pushed to the side just as Gururaj Ghimire and Gagan Thapa were. **N**

(Ponce, a Chilean national, is conducting her thesis research on the student movement of Nepal for a Masters degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the American University, D.C.)



Green Tara Hotel

Lakeside, Pokhara
 Tel: 977-61-524526
 Fax: 977-61-524526

SALES AND RESERVATION OFFICE
 Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal
 Tel: 4258191, Fax: 977-1-4263143
 E-mail: nepaltour@hons.com.np

Beauti & Boutika '04

World of Beauti Fantasy.....

9th -13th Sep 2004

Birendra International Convention Center
 New Baneshwor, Kathmandu

Free **HABES** Hair cutting and counselling
 Free Mendi painting everyday
 Free Tattoo painting everyday
 Fashion Show
 Yafley Cosmetic Show
 Free counselling from well known Dieticians
 Free Stone prescribe from Stone specialist / Astrologer
 Free NIVEA baby products for your healthy KIDS-
 (Come with your baby to win NIVEA baby of the day title)

Organized by:



Kathmandu Exhibitions
Exhibitions
 काठमाण्डौ एक्जिबिषन्स

G.P.O.Box: 11198, Kathmandu, Nepal, Ph.: 20110043, Fax: 4254692,
 E-mail: info@kathmanduexhibitions.com.np
 electrica@wlink.com.np
 www.kathmanduexhibitions.com.np

The Hand With The Scalpel

BY SIDDARTHA BASNETT AND YASHAS VAIDYA

MEEETING DR. PALESWAN Joshi Lakhey is like watching a blossom open. Her name, *paleswan*, means “lotus” in Newari. More and more of her personality comes to light as one talks to her. But it still takes quite an effort to make her talk

about herself. Quiet and almost shy, she prefers to limit herself to questions she is asked.

One is about her achievements. She maintains that she is at best “a simple person.” She is one of the first two Nepali women to become a general surgeon. But she remains hesitant, even reluctant to accept it as an achievement. “I am just a general surgeon,” she says with a stress on “just.” “That is something I will always cherish.” To her, there were women who were surgeons in Nepal before her—in gynecology and ENT—and being the first woman general surgeon is really not such a stellar achievement.

Dr Joshi Lakhey knew very early in her life that medicine was her goal, and surgery “was where my interest lay.” But, it was for the challenge that she chose surgery as her career: general surgery is still considered a male bastion and she would have none of that. To her, if there was something men could do, so could women. All these years, be it her studies or her chosen line of work, she has been motivated by “a single-minded desire” to excel. And she has got the results too: She was among the toppers first in SLC and then in I.Sc.

Where does all this motivation come from? Maybe from St. Mary’s High School, Jawalakhel, where she came in contact with the convent sisters who instilled in her early on the value of hard work. Or maybe it was during those vacations with her mother, a medical doctor herself. She would spend hours listening to her mother interact with doctors and wanted to be one of them.

“When I was interviewed by the Nepal Television and the Gorkhapatra after my SLC results (she was second among girls), I remember saying I wanted to become a doctor,” says Dr. Joshi Lakhey recalling the moment with clinical precision. “I hadn’t really thought about it that much.” But studying medicine seemed the natural thing to do.

mw/SS



2001 was big year for her. She finally earned her Master in Surgery (MS) from the Institute of Medicine, Maharajgunj. Little surprise that she also won the Gold Medal in the bargain.

Has life been all easy thereafter? Hardly. Her mother, an obstetrician and gynecologist, had always warned her “a doctor’s life was a hard life.”

“After earning my MBBS degree, I had to struggle to get a job at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital,” she recalls.

Starting with 1996, she worked as an unpaid volunteer at the hospital for 18 months. Bureaucratic red tape got in the way as her appointment lingered on, even though the department of surgery needed new doctors.

The times were difficult for her. “I thought I would give up and work at some other place...” she recalls as her husband completes the sentence for her. “She at least didn’t have financial worries as I had already established myself,” says Dr. Sanjay Lakhey, a consultant physician at B & B Hospital.

Teaching Hospital, he says, is one of the most prestigious hospitals in the country. “So I encouraged her to stay on, keep trying.” Now, as a member of the faculty at Teaching, she feels her perseverance has started to pay off.

She now talks about how she is training to sub-specialize in gastrointestinal and laparoscopic surgery and pauses to see whether the terms are understood. Laparoscopic surgery, she explains, “is a minimally invasive surgery, where instead of making large wounds, small incisions are made when performing complex operations,” she says with uncharacteristic passion. And “subspecialization” is a little world of super-specialists among the “specialists.” That probably was the only time she volunteered more information about herself than she had to. **N**

CITY ThisWeek

EVENTS

Miss Nepal 2004



The countdown to the Dabur Vatika Miss Nepal 2004 has begun. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of Miss Nepal pageants. The contestants have reached the final week of an extensive five-week training program in confidence-building and personality development by the best professionals in the country. Dabur Nepal and The Hidden Treasure for the first time this year have launched the "Viewer's

Vatika My Choice Contest," to help the general populace pick their choice amongst the 18 contestants. Information on the contests is being aired by Nepal Television in the run-up to the pageant to assist the viewers. The pageant takes place at the Birendra International Convention Center on August 7.

Watch the grand finale, live on Nepal Television. Time: 4:30 p.m.

ART EXHIBITIONS

SERIES OF SITUATIONS

Pilaiporn Pethrith Lisborg is a Thai student from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art, Copenhagen, Denmark. Her upcoming exhibition entitled "Series of Situations" (SOS) is a continuation of her previous work, "Elf Land," which was featured in the Siddhartha Art Gallery earlier this year. Her work is a form of "mixed media," painting

on acrylic photos and is, what she calls it, a new pop art. The title SOS is derived from seemingly serious photos, mostly on war to which she has given an ironic twist with her out-of-the-world character, Google—an elf-like creature with just one eye. This exhibition will be opening on August 6 at 6:30 pm at Gallery Moksh, Club Hardic, Jhamsikhel. It will continue till August 12. For information: contact Ragini at 2113339, 6630335.



Tibetan Craft



Antique and replicate fine exquisite Tibetan boxes on display. Susan's Collection, Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. Till August 31. For information: 4700632, 9851055435.



LAJANA RESTAURANT

"The Perfect Place for the Exotic Experience you ever had"

LAJANA RESTAURANT
Near Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat,
Kathmandu, Nepal tel.
4413874

Serving Indo-Nepalese Cuisine
Specializing Newari Delicacies



Parking facilities available

Films @ Lazimpat Gallery Café

Free admission. All profits from food and drinks will go to PA Orphanage Nepal. Time: 7 p.m. For information: 4428549.

August 3: Love Actually

The directorial debut by Richard Curtis, screenwriter of "Four Weddings and a Funeral," "Notting Hill" and "Bridget Jones's Diary," is a romantic comedy that boasts a jaw dropping line up of A-list British and Hollywood talent, including Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. "Love Actually" is a delightful mess, which inter weaves 15 stories of love and heart break, and is unpretentious about what is—cute, fluffy and utterly charming.

Cast: Hugh Grant, Liam Neeson, Emma Thompson, Rowan Atkinson, Keira



FAHRENHEIT 9/11

One of the most controversial and provocative films of the year, "Fahrenheit 9/11" is Academy Award-winning filmmaker Michael Moore's examination of the Bush administration in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11. With a whopping \$21.8 million in its first three days, the movie has become the first documentary ever to debut as Hollywood's top weekend film. It has also become the highest-ever grossing documentary with box-office collections going over the \$100 million mark. Michael Moore tends to make his point with a sledgehammer and his latest anti-Bush administration documentary is no exception. But, this time around he uses more delicate instruments as well and the result is a powerful film. The documentary has already won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.



It is an uproariously funny film but, at the same time, thought provoking. This two-hour flick is a must watch for an in-depth view of a brilliant piece of political filmmaking and showmanship.

Showing on August 7 and 8 at The Film Club, Baggikhana, Patan Dhoka. Time: 2 p.m. Tickets: Rs.50, available at the venue itself. For information: 5542544.

Knightley. Director: Richard Curtis.

August 5: Anita and Me

Anita and Me, written for the screen by Meera Syal from her best-selling novel of the same name, is a coming-of-age film

about Meena, an British-born Indian girl, and her 14-year-old blonde neighbor, Anita. Each character in the film is well developed without seeming to rely on stereotypes and caricature. Dawdling around these two main characters "Anita and Me" is hilarious, thoughtful and in the end quite touching.

Cast: Max Beesley, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Anna Brewster, Kathy Burke, Ayesha Dharker. Director: Metin Hüseyin.



Training by Fair Trade Group Nepal

A five-day training on "Export Marketing Management for SMEs and Micro Enterprises." Organized by FTG Nepal, Bakhundole. Date: August 3-7 For information: 5542608, 5549848.

Cine-Club

Movie: *Une sale affaire* (Director: Alain Bonnot). At Alliance Francaise de Kathamandu, Tripureshwore. Date: August 8. Time: 2 p.m. Free admission. For information: 241163, 242832.

Dunga Daud

As a part of the ongoing Bagmati River Festival, Nepal River Conservation Trust (NRCT) and Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) are organizing the "Dunga Daud Media Challenge". This event will be a rafting race consisting of media entities. The race to be held on August 7 will start at 7 a.m. from Sundarjal.

ONGOING

Ladies' Night

Exclusive Ladies' Night. Swing to the beat of the live band, The Cloud Walkers, or DJ Raju. At the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency. Every Wednesday. Time: 7 p.m., happy hours from 6 to 10 p.m. For information: 4491234.

Executive Lunch

Executive Lunch available for Rs. 170. At Bhanchha Ghar Restaurant, Kamaladi. For information: 4225172.

Dwarika's Thali

Enjoy Nepali cuisine, hospitality and heritage. At Dwarika's Courtyard, Dwarika's Hotel, Battispatali. For information: 4479488.

Summit BBQ

Barbeque with vegetarian specials. At Summit Hotel. Every Friday. For information: 5521810.

Farm House Cafe

Explore nature with pleasure and delicious meals. At Park Village Hotel. For information: 4375280.

Reduce Your Medical bill. Plan For Your Good Health Now.



Our Health Schemes are designed to give you just what you want.

We are experts at designing managing and administering customized health & benefit plans through insurance & self-funding schemes.

This supports your unique health objectives and addresses one of your toughest health care challenges (both at corporate & individual level).

We provide quality health care services through network hospitals while containing the bottom line impact of skyrocketing health care costs.

Our Services:

Cost Control, Telemedicine, Call Center Service, Ambulance Assistance, Cashless Hospitalization, Discounts in Doctor's Consultation and Pharmacies, Discounts in Diagnostic Services, Health News and Camps, Preventive Health Checkups, Lifestyle Counseling and Stress Management, Health Insurance, Claim Administration of Health Insurance Bill.


MEDICOVER
C o n s u l t a n c y

Radha Bhawan, Saraswoti Marga, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal ,P.O.No.2463
Tel. No: 4227793,4227791, Mobile: 9851078058, 9851078059, 9851078060, 9851033393

UPWARDLY MOBILE

When mobile phones arrived in Nepal in 1999 a few thousand sold quickly to businesspeople, who truly needed the service, and to gadget-loving trendsetters. The vast majority of the 180,000-plus mobile phones today, however, are in the hands of ordinary people who are living the mobile lifestyle.

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

Twenty-four-year-old Rashmi Lama is at the Himalayan Java in Thamel with a glass of iced tea. She's trying to hold the sofa in the corner while she waits for two of her friends to turn up. She types an SMS to her friends: "Wr r u, me hre." After a while, there's a reply: "Cumin...." Lama puts her Nokia 2100 mobile phone back on the coffee table and sits back, relaxed.

She quickly picks the phone up again. "Technology has made it so easy," she says, as she prepares to call home to tell her mother that she's having dinner with her friends tonight. "Even Muwa at home knows where I am."

A mother's touch was the key for recently married Anu Bajracharya. Her mobile helped her over the "first two or three days when all was new around me, missing my home so much." She continues, "Since I had a mobile I could just dial home and share the private feelings, espe-



nm/ss

cially with Mom whenever I wanted.”

Many mobile phone users like Lama and Bajracharya feel that the mobile has made some difference in their lives. Since Nepal Telecom introduced pre-paid services in August 2003 and decreased the price of post-paid services by about a third in May, more and more people are turning “upwardly mobile,” a term even telecom officials are using to explain the mobile lifestyle.

“Our pre-paid service has been able to extend our mobile phone reach into middle-income households and even to students,” says Surendra P. Thike, a Nepal Telecom spokesman. Nepal Telecom is the only provider of mobile phone services in Nepal right now. Though the government brought Nepal Telecom under the Company Act last April and announced plans to float shares to the public, the government still retains the lucrative monopoly.

That has had little impact on the mobile craze, though. “The demand has suddenly increased after we offered free receiving charges [during the evenings and nights],” adds Thike. Lower one-time investments have sparked the demand too. Pre-paid service costs only Rs. 1,700 plus the price of handset. Nepal Telecom has so far sold 67,500 post-paid lines and 116,000 pre-paid lines across the country, including 97,852 pre-paid lines in the Kathmandu Valley alone. Distribution of additional lines has been

halted again for two more months as Nepal Telecom frantically adds infrastructure to catch up with the demand.

While Nepal Telecom upgrades its infrastructure, so do the consumers, it seems. Nisha Amatya from Patan opted for a mobile phone and dropped her pager service. She decided to shift to pre-paid mobile services when she realized that it cost only a few hundred rupees more than her pager. There has been massive pager-to-mobile shift and paging companies are suffering; many are already lobbying for a cut in their five-year licensing fee. Some have closed branches outside Kathmandu to focus on niche market in the capital. A one-time booming business looks ready for a drastic cut.



“Mobiles are the in-thing. Pagers are turning into a dying technology,” says Ram Aryal, who works in an insurance company as an accountant. “At the workplace, it has become necessary to have a mobile number so your clients can reach you immediately.”

Instant access has its downsides. Movies, meetings and dinners are increasingly interrupted by mobile phones as the number of mobile users shoots up. People seem reluctant to turn off their phone and relinquish the mobile lifestyle, even for a few minutes.

“It’s intruding into others’ privacy,” says Deepak Bhattarai, a television journalist. “It’s such a nuisance when you are together with a friend and he is busy talking on the mobile phone with someone else as you wait for him to finish his conversation.” He complains, “Why can’t we learn to be more social like before?” Just then he gets an SMS from his office, smiles politely, and gets ready to read the message.

Such interruptions are only bound to grow and mobile etiquette has to be developed and mastered over time, both by companies and individuals. For now, the mobile lifestyle is here to stay and is certain to grow over time. Anu Bajracharya sums up the mixed blessing: “Most of the time it has made life easy, but sometimes I wish I could have a mobile-free day.” **N**



Fair & Lovely



presents **the boss
VOW**

VOICE OF WOMEN

A platform for discussions, debates, seminars, talks,
enhancing communication skills, leadership, hobby clubs,
personality development and more....



The event will also
celebrate the achievements of

**THE 10
MOST
INFLUENTIAL
WOMEN
OF NEPAL**

Register for your exclusive pin

Launching
August 7, 2004

For details
call **Yeju : 4780394**

Not Sporting!

The country's two main sports bodies are in the news again and for all the wrong reasons. Nepal's participation in the Olympics is sure to get tarnished.

BY RAMAN SHRESTHA

The curse of Nepali politics, ego-driven factionalism, is at work over Nepal's participation in the Olympics. The National Sports Council (NSC) and the National Olympic Committee (NOC) are locked in a bitter dispute. Both are headed by heavyweights and neither is budging an inch. On the one side of the battlefield is the Member-Secretary of the Sports Council Kishor Bahadur Singh, a relative of Princess Himani. On the other side is Olympic committee President Rukma SJB Rana, son of Nepali Congress stalwart Subarna Shumsher. Rana also has close ties with highly placed Olympic officials outside the country.

"To someone not terribly familiar with politics of Nepal's sports," says a long-time employee with the Sports Council, "this may all look like a battle on plain sports terms. It's not. It's only a reflection of our deeply fractured national politics."

Rana and Singh were once buddies, say sports officials, and Rana still maintains he enjoys "close personal ties" with Singh. That hasn't stopped them from fighting for supremacy over who gets to control the Olympic purse. Nepal's Olympic committee gets at least \$30,000 from the International Olympic Committee each year to cover administrative costs, plus thousands more through a "Solidarity Fund."

Hopes were high last March when Singh and Rana shook hands in a move initiated by the Nepal Sports Journalists' Forum (NSJF) on the eve of the 9th South Asian Federation Games. Many expected that the move would bring the

two warring camps together. It was not to be. "Sadly for the Nepali sports fraternity, the two have resumed their fight from where they left off," says Niranjana Rajbansi, president of NSJF. The long-running dispute, which started with the NOC elections in May 2003, has taken a nastier and more personal turn.

The athletes are caught in the middle. Rajbansi says the fighting almost cost Sangina Baidya her participation in the Olympics because neither of the sports bodies would fund her. "Fortunately for Baidya, the private sector intervened just in time, pledging her the support required for her participation." She is likely to be the flag-bearer of a six-member Nepali team when the games open in Athens on August 14.

After controversial elections to the National Olympic Committee last spring, the government repealed NOC's registration and gave a green light to the Sports Council to hold fresh elections to the committee.

Rana, never short of friends and allies in the international arena, mounted pressure on the then Thapa government to restore NOC's registration. In their letters addressed to then Prime Minister Thapa, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its

Asian chapter, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), expressed surprise over the government move to dismiss the NOC.

The strongest statement came from IOC: "This [suspension of the NOC] might severely harm the Nepalese Olympic Movement as a whole and the participation of the athletes of your country in various regional, continental and international sports events, including the next Olympic Games to be held in Athens in August 2004." The ongoing fight between the country's two most important official sports bodies is unlikely to prevent Nepal's participation in the Olympics, say officials, but it is sure to give Nepal a very bad name, if it already hasn't.

It's business as usual with the sports fraternity. "We have duly advised the IOC of these developments," says Rana, "but even at this juncture we are prepared to discuss and come to an amicable resolution on this matter." The Sports Council, however, is unrelenting: This dispute can only be resolved through fresh elections to the NOC, it says.

With all the support Singh now garners from a majority of national sports associations, he believes that getting support from the IOC and OCA is just a matter of time. NOC president Rana offers his own solution:

"This problem will be resolved in two hours if we stand on our legs rather than stand by our egos," he says. "Obviously, it requires a certain give-and-take process. Hopefully we'll get out of this deadlock once and for all, soon." How soon? **N**



NEAR-MISS: Baidya was rescued by the private sector

if you publish

TRY WORDSCAPE



<< These books were designed by WordScape for UNDP, World Bank and Save the Children.

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

WordScape
CROSSMEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

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



Among millions of websites your website has to stand out in the consumer's eye. It is imperative that in addition to information it is visually striking, easy to use, made secure by the latest technologies and promoted thoughtfully. We help you do just that!

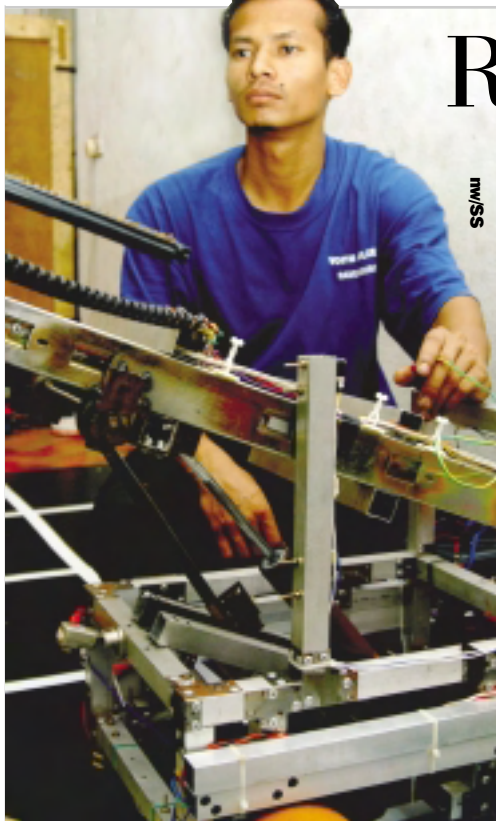
Find out more at

www.dreamsandideas.com



Service Provider of Web, Print & Multimedia

Kathmandu, Nepal
 Call: 981047447, 981052708
 Tel: 4260989 Fax: 4266821
 Email: info@dreamsandideas.com



Robot Man

SS/MS

Call it soccer fever. Just a week after Will Smith's "I, Robot" hit the silver screen, Nepal's own homemade robots took the field at the Covered Hall in Dasrath Stadium. Unlike the vicious metal men in the movie, these Ronaldos and Beckhams of the robotic kind were cheered on by an excited Nepali crowd. The mastermind behind Robo Soccer-2004: **RAMESH CHAUDHARI**, head of the robotics department at the Institute of Engineering, Pulchowk. "If given a chance," says Chaudhari, "I want to make my mark in robotics." He already has. Chaudhari, along with two other colleagues, is making his presence felt in the international arena. They have competed in ABU Robo Con 1 and 2 held in Japan and Thailand. His team even finished third at the International Robotics Competition in Mumbai last year.

Long, Winding Road

Sur Sudha is not Nepal's only music ambassador. Lend your ears to the fast-rising star of Nepali music, **ANIL SHAHI**. The Crity Awards 2061, on July 12, featuring Shahi and his Maya Mantra group as the star attractions, was an evening to be remembered. Blending raag and fusion, Shahi has been steadily expanding his fan base far and wide, up to far-off countries. He already has five concerts in England under his belt and several others in Malaysia. A composer and guitarist, Shahi's journey to stardom, however, began rather humbly. Eighteen years ago, he started as a performer in a hotel in Kathmandu and has come a long way since. Hard work certainly does pay.



SS/MS



www.cybernepal.com.np

BEAUTY, NOT SKIN DEEP

Actions speak louder than words. At least, **NUMA RAI**, the second runner up at Miss Nepal 2003, believes so. Last week, she donated a sum of Rs. 21,000 to the Mahalaxmi Lower Secondary School in Patan. Talking about her effort to better the children's lives, Rai says that she wants to live a meaningful life herself. Indeed, she is on the right track. At 20, this vivacious lady has done it all—from the ramp to television, and now philanthropy.

Vacancies

A Luxury Hotel based in Kathmandu requires the following positions to be filled:

Asst. Sales Manager:- 1

The Candidate should be a graduate of a recognized institute and have strong sales background. Preference would be given to the candidates who have a prior work experience of Four years in the hotel industry.

Sales Executive:- 1

The Candidate should be a graduate of a recognized institute. Preference would be given to the candidates who have a prior work experience of Two years in the hotel industry.

Apply in the following address:

The Personnel Manager
GPO Box: 655
Kathmandu

Vacancies

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.

Marketing Executive

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

Yeti Airlines

Proposed Revised Flight Schedule
(Covering remote sectors)
Effective from 25 JUN-15 SEP'04

From	To	Flight No.	Days of Operation	Dep. Time	Arr. Time	Rupee Tariff One way	Dollar Tariff One way	Remarks
Kathmandu	Lukla	YA 111	Daily	0630	0705	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Lukla	YA 101	Daily	0635	0710	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Lukla	YA107	Daily	0810	0845	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Lukla	YA113	1,2,3,4,5,7	0815	0850	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Rumjatar	YA 221	2,4,7	0950	1025	1245	61	DHC-6/300
	Phaplu	YA 181	1,3,5	0955	1030	1480	85	DHC-6/300
	Manang	YA 601	6	0815	0915	2995	122	DHC-6/300
	Simara	YA 147	Daily	1135	1200	970	55	DHC-6/300
	Simara	YA 141	Daily	1300	1325	970	55	DHC-6/300
	Simara	YA 143	Daily	1430	1455	970	55	DHC-6/300
	Bharatpur	YA 173	Daily	1115	1140	1160	61	DHC-6/300
	Bharatpur	YA 175	Daily	1400	1425	1160	61	DHC-6/300
	Biratnagar	YA 151	Daily	0700	0740	2585	85	SAAB 340B
	Biratnagar	YA 153	Daily	1040	1120	2585	85	SAAB 340B
	Biratnagar	YA 155	Daily	1620	1700	2585	85	SAAB 340B
	Pokhara	YA 131	Daily	0905	0930	1710	67	SAAB 340B
	Pokhara	YA 135	Daily	1530	1555	1710	67	SAAB 340B
Bhadrapur	YA 121	Daily	1200	1250	2950	109	SAAB 340B	
Nepalgunj	YA 177	Daily	1245	1345	3500	109	SAAB 340B	
Bhairahawa	YA 163	Daily	1425	1500	2220	79	SAAB 340B	
Biratnagar	Kathmandu	YA 152	Daily	0800	0840	2585	85	SAAB 340B
Biratnagar	Kathmandu	YA 154	Daily	1140	1220	2585	85	SAAB 340B
Biratnagar	Kathmandu	YA 156	Daily	1720	1800	2585	85	SAAB 340B
Pokhara	Kathmandu	YA 132	Daily	0950	1015	1710	67	SAAB 340B
Pokhara	Kathmandu	YA 136	Daily	1615	1640	1710	67	SAAB 340B
Bhadrapur	Kathmandu	YA 122	Daily	1310	1400	2950	109	SAAB 340B
Nepalgunj	Kathmandu	YA 178	Daily	1405	1505	3500	109	SAAB 340B
Bhairahawa	Kathmandu	YA 164	Daily	1520	1555	2220	79	SAAB 340B
Lukla	Kathmandu	YA 112	Daily	0720	0755	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Kathmandu	YA 102	Daily	0725	0800	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Kathmandu	YA 108	Daily	0900	0935	1665	91	DHC-6/300
	Kathmandu	YA 114	1,2,3,4,5,7	0905	0940	1665	91	DHC-6/300
Rumjatar	Kathmandu	YA 222	2,4,7	1040	1115	1245	79	DHC-6/300
Phaplu	Kathmandu	YA 182	1,3,5	1045	1120	1480	85	DHC-6/300
Manang	Kathmandu	YA 602	6	0930	1030	2995	122	DHC-6/300
Simara	Kathmandu	YA 148	Daily	1215	1240	970	55	DHC-6/300
Simara	Kathmandu	YA142	Daily	1340	1405	970	55	DHC-6/300
Simara	Kathmandu	YA144	Daily	1510	1535	970	55	DHC-6/300
Bharatpur	Kathmandu	YA 174	Daily	1155	1220	1160	61	DHC-6/300
Bharatpur	Kathmandu	YA 176	Daily	1440	1505	1160	61	DHC-6/300
Nepalgunj	Dolpa	YA 717	1	0630	0715	1315	85	DHC-6/300
	Simikot	YA 711	4	0630	0730	1800	96	DHC-6/300
Dolpa	Nepalgunj	YA 718	1	0730	0815	1315	85	DHC-6/300
Simikot	Nepalgunj	YA 712	4	0745	0845	1800	96	DHC-6/300
Surkhet	Jumla	YA 713	2	0705	0740	970	63	DHC-6/300
	Rara	YA 715	3	0705	0745	1800	96	DHC-6/300
Jumla	Surkhet	YA 714	2	0755	0830	970	63	DHC-6/300
Rara	Surkhet	YA 716	3	0800	0845	1800	96	DHC-6/300

Monday 1, Tuesday 2, Wednesday 3, Thursday 4, Friday 5, Saturday 6, Sunday 7

■ Subject to change without prior notice.

Corporate Office:

Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Ph. No. 4411912 (Hunt. Line)
Fax: 977-1-4420766

Reservations:

4421215 (Hunt. Line)
Fax: 977-1-4420766
Email: reservations@yeti.airwlink.com.np

Tribhuvan Airport Office:

4493901, 4493428

Luzhou Medical College Sichuan-PR China

Founded in 1951, WHO, CMC recognized, English medium course based on TU syllabus course, taught by South Asian Teachers.

5.5 years MBBS. Internship in Nepal. International exchange and co-operation with 9 countries such as Japan, Germany, U.S.A. etc.

39 teaching hospitals 500 research programs 15500 patient's bed 17000 students have graduated from LMC.

- You don't want to make wrong choice!
- You don't want to waste your precious time!
- You don't want to spend more than necessary!
- And you want the best and we shall give you our best!

PRACTICALITY

INITIATIVE

HARMONY

DILIGENCE

SPEED INTERNATIONAL PVT. LTD.

(SOUTH ASIA REPRESENTATIVE)
Churchill Complex, China Town Market, Bagdurbar
Tel/Fax: 977 1 423 2896
E-mail: speedinternational@consultant.com

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

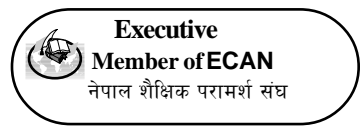
- * Intensive German course (20h/wk)
- * International study groups
- * Recognised by all German Universities
- * University application support
- * Conditional letters of admission
- * Free tuition at all German Universities
- * Accommodation with local Host families
- * Individual support for students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



**FREE TRIAL CLASS BEFORE
ADMISSION**



Languages
GRE, GMAT, SAT
Abroad Counselling
Visa Preparation
Abroad Counselling
TOEFL
IELTS

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 of even a single student who joined Axis Int'l Education became desatisfied from our services.



AXIS
Int'l Education

Putalisadak (opp. Share Market)



MIGLIT SIGN

for all kinds of digital signboard
&
computerised vinyl stickers

P.O. Box: 8975 EPC 5588
Bagbazar, Kathmandu
Tel: 424 67 52 / 981043401
email: migma@enet.com.np

KATHMANDU INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE
CELEBRATES!



The Middle States Association Commission on Secondary Schools has announced that KISC is FULLY ACCREDITED. Accreditation:

- Encourages and facilitates school improvement
- Provides a reason for public accountability
- Ensures that KISC meets Middle States twelve internationally recognized professional standards for schools
- Enables KISC to issue High School Diplomas

ACCREDITED BY
THE MIDDLE STATES
ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES AND
SCHOOLS



For information or registration a fee is required:
The Principal, Kathmandu International Study Centre
Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977-1-4786664, 4781776
Email: admin@kisc.edu.np

KISC is also a UNIVERSITY of COLOMBIA International Education Centre.



Belle Momo

ROYAL SAINO

RESTAURANTS & BAR KEYMAN
Dubar Marg, Tel: 4230890

More than 25 Varieties of momos



Wonderfabs

The Enchanting World of Fabrics

FABRICS • SALWAR KAMEEZ SETS • SAREES • ACCESSORIES

The widest range of fabrics to simply change your wardrobe

Handloomed cottons and silks in amazing weaves & prints

Linen- The fabric of the millennium in various blends.

Salwar Kameez sets- The ultimate collection.

Exquisite Silks, Brocades, Chiffons, Satins & Crepes in a kaleidoscope of colors and prints

Embroidered, Hand painted and innovative fabrics with shawls, stoles and scarves thrown in.


Come and Create Your own Style



384, 3rd Floor, Super Market (Bishal Bazar), New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4242250 Fax: 977-1-4258678 E-mail: wonderfabs@yahoo.com

AKARSHAN

Wrought Iron Furniture



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

The Tibetan Furniture Warehouse

A collection of the finest authentic Tibetan furniture. Only original pieces - nothing repaired.



Everything is guaranteed and has been carefully cleaned & expertly restored, ready for your home.

Also available old Tibetan rugs, Tibetan & Himalayan objects.

Open: Sunday-Friday or by appointment
Tel: 4405602
www.kachalintia.com
info@kachalintia.com

above KALINIA
PICTURE FRAMING
East side of Royal Palace
Nag Pulaha, Kathmandu



KISHOR KAYASTHA

PHOTO CLUB ☎9851052778

NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY



Main Showroom: Soaltee Mode (On the way to Hotel Soaltee)
Thamel Showroom: Opposite Sanchaykosh building
Tel: 4-273292, 277023, 283644 | Fax: 4-270092
Email: npi@mos.com.np | Web: www.Nepalpashminaindustry.com

NPI

A professional INTERIORS & EXCLUSIVE SUPPLIERS



- ❖ Foam Carpet
- ❖ Curtain
- ❖ Mattress
- ❖ Bed Cover
- ❖ Wall Paper
- ❖ Drapery Rod

❖ Exclusive Furnishing Fabric
❖ Venesing & Vertical Blind

Royal Securities

P.O. Box: 21914, Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Tel: 4421756 Fax: 977-1-4420517
URL: www.royalchoice.com
e-mail: roliquor@ntc.net.np

Old Habits Die Hard

Few people wear so many hats and with as much ease as Rajendra Sharama, popularly known as Robin Sharma. Over the years, he has made his mark as a singer, announcer, news reader, university teacher—you name it. At the pinnacle of his career now, the Deputy Executive Director at the state-owned Radio Nepal thinks those at the helm of affairs in the government media still



SS/MS

carry the ghosts of the Panchayat days. Sharma talked with **Satish Jung Shahi** of **Nation Weekly** about the changing face of Nepal's media, political pressures at Radio Nepal, media ethics and about public service broadcasting.

How do you view the current state of the media?

It has been phenomenal. We are enjoying great freedom. There is so much variety, even among broadsheets. Kathmandu has 10-11 FM radio stations currently operating; there are already 56 FM stations registered nationwide and 32 or 33 have already started operation.

What was it like when you first joined Radio Nepal?

The media was centrally controlled then and it wasn't even necessarily by the Ministry [of Information and Communications]. We used to call the place where instructions came from as "Naxal Durbar." Later on, it was more of a self-censorship and fear than political or bureaucratic pressure that made us to refrain from performing our duties as journalists. We still carry part of that system in the government media. It has stuck to us like a really bad habit.

How has it been since the restoration of democracy?

The situation is actually worse in certain ways, as we have to take orders from student leaders whose affiliated parties are in the government. Half of the employees are political activists and the rest of us don't have the guts, as we are all *jagires*. We have a huge army of employees, 750 people just to run daily 16 hours of transmission.

But the private media is booming...

Nepal is finally practicing media pluralism but I am skeptical about who'll actually follow all the upcoming media. Advertisement revenue has dwindled even in the government media. It is high time we aim at specialization and look for niche viewership and become audience specific. The positive development is that people have started reading newspapers and the radio has emerged as a strong medium of communication.

What ails Radio Nepal?

Radio Nepal was established in 1951. The priorities and objectives of that period no longer hold today, but we haven't modified them. I thought Radio Nepal was a public national service broadcaster. But, in 1987, it was converted into a *Bikash*

It is heartening to see young people choosing journalism as a profession

Samiti, which meant less control by the government and greater autonomy. The darling child of the government and the Royal Palace was suddenly fending for itself. In the early stages of euphoria that was fine, but now we have adopted a dual system to live by. We have been directed to promote issues such as *Lok Geet* and *Krishi* but we also had to make money by going commercial. It's like a horse tethered to a pole. Now there are so many players already in the market; the green pasture we enjoyed solely is no more.

Do you think deregulating Radio Nepal would help?

It depends on the government's priority. Personally speaking, Radio Nepal, like similar others in the South Asia region, should be developed as a public service broadcaster. There are three options available: develop it as a public service broadcaster with total government funding but grant editorial independence; allow private writers to underwrite it as public radio; or allow complete autonomy to develop it as a commercial radio station.

What are other requirements?

We need a media monitoring authority to establish a code-of-ethics and guide the media within the parameters of the country's laws. We have to realize that news stories have also created an adverse impact in the society. There is no standard language and pictures of bloodshed and death have been used blatantly. The influx of private media came when there wasn't sufficient infrastructure and human resources. There is no proper training center for journalists. We need to focus on that too.

How has the entry of young people changed the media?

It is heartening to see young people choosing journalism as a profession. It has given the media new vigor and a facelift. The old guard definitely has to make way to let the younger lot create a greater impact through innovation, experimentation and creativity. I would like to advise the young to shoulder their responsibilities well, as popularity is the greatest stimulant in the media. You have to sustain it. Make sure you don't strike just once and then disappear. **N**

Three Musketeers

An IITian's first-time book tells the story of three unlikely heroes aspiring to make it big at India's prestigious institute

BY MEENA KAINI

Five point someone – What not to do at IIT” is by debutant author Chetan Bhagat, an alumnus of IIT Delhi. Set in his alma mater, the book, as the author says, is not a survival guide but is about how things can go terribly wrong if you don't think straight.



The book is about Ryan, Alok and Hari, who have just joined IIT, the most prestigious Indian institute. After achieving the seemingly impossible—getting through the IIT entrance—the three musketeers go on a four-year rollercoaster ride with plenty of thrills and spills.

Ryan, his friends think, does clever things but at the wrong place and at the wrong time. Alok comes from a family of “limited means,” a polite way of saying he's poor, and has an ageing unmarried sister. Hari is kindhearted, confused, physically unappealing and hopelessly in love. The story is told from his perspective.

In the institute, the trio realizes that though getting through the entrance was tough, surviving academically at IIT is even tougher. After achieving below-average GPAs (five on a scale of 10) in their first semester exams, they find themselves loitering way down in the merit list. To redeem themselves, their self-esteem and, of course, their grades, but



FIVE POINT SOMEONE
Author: Chetan Bhagat
Rupa (Paperback)
Price: INR. 95
Pages: 270

without the hassle of studying, they embark on a foolhardy journey—in search of higher grades and good jobs—through a series of Ryan's theories and experiments called C2D (cooperate to dominate). Amidst all the chaos, Alok tries to commit suicide and Hari finds time to fall in love with Neha, the Dean's daughter.

An ordinary story told extraordinarily, this book is a delightful read. It's a refreshingly simple tale, humorously told and has no pretensions of being a “great work of art.” Bhagat's humor is direct and contemporary that will appeal to all, especially youngsters. It has its patches of black humor (“Alok was poor but not those World Bank ad types”), which some readers may find unsettling. But in the context of the story and its characterization, it perfectly jells and does not seem out of place. “Five Point Someone” will surely remind the readers of their bohemian college days.

Some have termed Five Point Someone as “Dil Chahata Hai Part II.” However, apart from three youngsters, lots of humor and a fresh idea, there is nothing similar between the two.

“Five Point Someone” has all the ingredients of a typical Bollywood masala movie. It has a paralytic father, a crying mother, an ageing sister yet to be married, friends falling apart, coming back again, a dash of suspense, sex and plenty of humor. Incidentally, the film rights for the book have been taken by a Mumbai filmmaker. I certainly just hope the images are as delightful as the words. With the book sales doing well, Bhagat who is an investment banker by profession, must be literally laughing all the way to the bank. **N**

NEW RELEASES

MY LIFE

By: Bill Clinton
Hutchinson (London)

Pages: 957

Price: Rs. 1432



An exhaustive, soul-searching memoir, Bill Clinton's “My Life” is a refreshingly candid look at the former president as a son, brother, teacher, father, husband and public figure. Clinton painstakingly outlines the history behind his greatest successes and failures, including his dedication to educational and economic reform, his war against a “vast right-wing operation” determined to destroy him and the “morally indefensible” acts for which he was nearly impeached. My Life is autobiography as therapy—a personal history written by a man trying to face and banish his private demons.

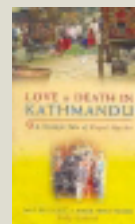
LOVE AND DEATH IN KATHMANDU

Amy Willesee and Mark Whittaker

Rider (London)

Pages: 320

Price: Rs. 632



The Narayanhiti Royal Massacre on June 1, 2001, not only brought Nepal to a standstill but also fascinated and appalled the whole world. Award-winning journalists Amy Willesee and Mark Whittaker set out to understand what could have led to such a devastating tragedy. Exploring Kathmandu and other parts of the country, the writers have conducted interviews with everyone from Maoist guerillas to members and friends of the royal family. An effort to understand the chain of events leading up to the tragedy, which will forever leave a mark upon the country's history.

INDIA- NEPAL RELATIONS: THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Collection of Nepali and Indian writers.

Rupa & Co.

Pages: 325

Price: Rs. 695



This book is a compilation of the papers presented at a seminar on “India-Nepal Relations – Perspectives for the Future,” organized by the Observer Research Foundation, an institute for Asian Studies in New Delhi in February last year. (Books available at Pilgrims Bookstore, 4700942)



Raising The Bar

The Special Court deserves a special pat on the back for convicting Chiranjivi Wagle, the first-ever former minister to face a jail term for charges of corruption. And the CIAA too for doggedly pursuing the high-profile case despite the attendant controversy and political pressure. We consider the action against Wagle a huge milestone in context of where we stand as a society, state and regime that hopes to establish a rule of law.

We however would like to qualify at the very outset that Wagle still holds the right to appeal the conviction; the Supreme Court still reserves the right to overturn the conviction; and we hope that the conviction has not been politically motivated. Our purpose here is not to get into the specificities of the charges. Nor is it to question their veracity. We would like to believe that those things have been well taken care of. Indeed, as a senior leader with a proud history behind him, Wagle deserves every single benefit of doubt.

The point we are trying to make here however is very much related to Wagle's conviction. We believe it is the culture of impunity that has over the years been responsible for the widespread abuse of public office. When officials don't fear punishment, their personal morality stands as the only deterrent against vices. And personal morality, as history attests, can take a beating in face of material temptations. Ironically, the Panchayat at least would keep officials on a leash with fears of *mathiko aadesh*, if not the rule of law. The post-1990 period, on the contrary, has seen a gradual erosion in the authority of public offices; the morality of public officials has been in free fall. We are not arguing that the Panchayat was a golden era of good governance. People in high places, a select few, were always beyond the reach of law. But law enforcement agencies such as the police force, and the bureaucracy largely remained immune to changes in the government (which became too frequent) and to direct, and petty, political meddling.

In this context, Wagle's conviction offers a historical opportunity to re-define our value system as a society. South Africa did so with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It helped the South Africans deal with the pains and atrocities of the apartheid era. It also helped them to come to terms with their past without losing their moral fiber. We never gave ourselves that opportunity—as a nation, as a society. Unlike the Panchayat, which relied on individual whims for order, we now have to diligently set up a rule of law. Then everyone should agree that we would play by the rules. There would then be a competent legislature. And a sound justice administration system. Which will both then be supported by strong law enforcement agencies that are blind to one's political leanings and family connections.

We missed a golden opportunity to set up such a regime in 1991. The Mallik Commission, named after the lead investigator Janadran Mallik, had found that 45 people had been killed and 23,000 injured during the 50-day Jana Andolan that restored democracy. The commission named names, including those in high places, who were involved in "containing" the movement. But the government of Girija Prasad Koirala decided to pardon, for instance, the guilty police officials, "in order to keep the morale" high. The Supreme Court fared no better. It refused to entertain a petition that called for action against those named in the commission's report. The court, instead, decided "the petitioners had failed to elaborate as to which of their fundamental rights had been infringed by the non-execution of the Mallik Commission report." In doing so, they committed a historical wrong. The Wagle saga, if handled well, is our second chance to raise the bar for good governance.



Akhilesh Upadhyay, Editor

PIONEER IN
NEPALI & NEWARI
CUISINE

Established Since 1989

EXPLORE 45
MINUTES OF
CULTURE &
ETHNICITY
EVERY
EVENING
7:00 PM
ONWARDS

Bhanchha
KEYMAN,

For Details:
4225172,
4228723(T),
E-mail:
keyman@wlink.com.np

Borderland Resorts the ultimate adventure playground

rafting
kayaking
canyoning
trekking
chilling
retreats
workshops
kids rock climbing

Nepal's Natural Himalayan splendor, just three hours drive from Kathmandu, at the banks of mighty Bhote Koshi river, there lies - **The Borderland** ... A perfect ambience of Nature & Adventure.

The Borderland
Resorts Pvt. Ltd.

Thamel, Kathmandu, Tel: 4425836, 4700894
Fax: 4435207, info@borderlandresorts.com
www.borderlandresorts.com

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

ONLINE BANKING

www.laxmibank.com

Net Benefit.

Laxmi Online, the effective way to bank via the internet. Keep in touch with your banking activities from anywhere in the world. Log in with your password and you're ready to do business. Check account details, transfer funds, inquire on the rates, get product information and much more with just a few strokes of the keyboard.

Laxmi Bank takes every effort to ensure maximum security and comfort of conducting financial transactions on the net. Enjoy true bank freedom with Laxmi Online. Please call us for further details.



लक्ष्मी बैंक लिमिटेड
Laxmi Bank Limited

Passion for Excellence

Kathmandu: 01 - 4444684 | Pokhara: 061 - 533580 | Birgunj: 051 - 526195, 530394 | Jeetpur: 053 - 520991 | Banepa: 011 - 663425, 663426

Email: info@laxmibank.com | URL: www.laxmibank.com

Club Himalaya

Windy Hills

"Chiso Chiso Hawama"

(Nepalese and Expatriates Package)

Ktm/Nagarok/Ktm+Room+Dinner+ Breakfast: Rs. 2800 For Single
Rs. 3400 For Double

चिसो चिसो हावामा, हिमालको काखमा, नगरकोटको डाँडाँमा.....

ACE HOTELS & RESORTS

e-dress: acehotels@acehotels.com.np

www.nepalshotel.com Tel: 4410432 / 4414432

CLUB HIMALAYA

N a g a r k o t

Tel: 668-0080, 668-0083

e-dress: club@mos.com.np

