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COVER STORY

20 America Beckons

By Satish Jung Shahi

The Friday crowd at the USEF is made up of typical U.S. bound Nepali students—young, urban and middleclass. Most of them are from Kathmandu. Their numbers are growing.

Reborn In The U.S.A.

By Aditya Adhikari

Young students arrive in the US without any plans. After initial hiccups, many of them soon find themselves absorbing American values

Interview: Mike Gill, the executive director of the Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal

OPINION: That Big *Bhoot* by Sushma Joshi

The Second Sex by Rajani Thapa

COLUMNS

11 Watching The Watchdog

By Jogendra Ghimire

38 Swagger Vs Analysis

By Samrat Upadhyay

40 Save A Little Prayer For Me

By Kunal Lama

PROFILE

42 Steely Scholar, Fr. Stiller

By Satish Jung Shahi

Posterity will perhaps best remember Fr. Stiller as the author of half a dozen books, including "The Rise of the House of Gorkha," "Planning for People" and "Nepal: Growth of a Nation." All have contributed significantly to our understanding of Nepal.



18 Ceasefire Conundrum

By John Narayan Parajuli

The government is under pressure to send out immediate peace feelers or declare a unilateral ceasefire

31 The Art Of Insurgency

By John Narayan Parajuli

History of armed insurrections shows that insurgents rarely win outright victories, but are also rarely defeated outright

LIFESTYLE

47 Fashion Fad

By Satish Jung Shahi



Even ordinary Nepalis have started to pay attention to nation's growing fashion industry

SPORTS

50 Let Them Be

By Sudesh Shrestha



It's not fair to expect our players to follow the footsteps of legendary footballers such as Zidane and Figo and take early retirement

DEPARTMENTS

6 LETTERS

10 PICTURE OF THE WEEK

14 CAPSULES

16 BIZ BUZZ

17 MILESTONE

34 WEEK IN PICTURES

44 CITY PAGE

52 SNAPSHOTS

56 KHULA MANCH: MANJU KARKI

57 BOOKS: "RULE BY FORCE"

58 LAST WORD

CONGRATULATIONS!

on
Being Awarded



NABIL BANK

nation
WEEKLY



“Peace is the only acceptable weapon to unify the people”

KARUNACHETTRI

A question to Onta

PRATYOUSH ONTA HAS A POINT when he says young Nepali journalists writing in English time and again fail to get a handle over issues despite their beautiful mastery over the language (“Ersatz Nostalgia,” Oct 3). The reason is simple enough; they lack rigor. People like Onta, however, will do well to keep this in mind: What are *you* doing to help



overcome this handicap? Over the years, how many young researchers have you mentored at Martin Chautari, for example? I ask this question not just to Onta, but to all bright young men and women—in their 30s and 40s and many of them with an excellent education. Are you doing anything for the larger good of society? Are you conscious about leaving something substantive for posterity, besides expensive consultancy reports for INGOs?

SHUVANEUPANE
KATHMANDU

Ordinary virtues

I HAVE ONE WORD TO SUMMARIZE Akhilesh Upadhyay’s Last Word (Oct 3)

on “Ordinary Virtues”: Sensitive! Rather than politicize the act of compassion expressed by the mourning mass, he has focused on the basic ingredient of what it means to be human in the face of tragedy. The mention of Todorov brings to mind Victor Frankl (1905-1997) of the founder of Logotherapy. It was during his arrest and time spent at the concentration camp of Bohemia that Frankl, a professor of psychology and philosophy, discovered the meaningfulness of life. He observed three amazing characteristics among his fellow prisoners despite their horrifying circumstances: Life has meaning under all circumstances; people have a will to meaning; people have freedom under all circumstances to activate the will to meaning and to find meaning. The “ordinary virtues” that Todorov observes are none other than the simple peaceful rituals at the Mandala where the mourners had congregated to light a candle for each life unceremoniously snuffed out in the last eight and a half years of conflict.

The candle-lit vigil was a refreshing change from the daily sloganists, demonstrators and rioting mass. Can the battle be won by peaceful vigils and protest rallies? Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. have both proved that peace is the only acceptable weapon to unify the people. Indeed, we live in paradoxical times; while our children are being exposed to “democratic” anarchy and violence, they are simultaneously learning the meaning of every life, and the value of every death.

KARUNACHETTRI
WASHINGTON DC

House in disorder

Kudos to Saubhagya Shah for his article ("Delhi Runs And Strong Men," Oct 3). Shah hits the bull's eye when he says that there's no national consensus on foreign policy, i.e. every party has its own foreign policy and that is what makes the "strong" elected prime ministers less powerful than the "weak" appointed prime ministers. It is no secret that Nepal's "strong" political leaders who criticized Prime Minister Deuba's visit, and who display their concerns over sovereignty, independence and foreign influence in Nepal, themselves go to Delhi to get advice from Indian leaders when they face the slightest of problems. Have any of the opposition leaders who made the Delhi rounds recently submitted the transcripts of their talks with the Indian leaders to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or reported in detail their conversation with the Indian leaders to the media? No. They don't see any harm in their conduct of secret diplomacy with India. And now they are the ones who scream their throats off in Ratna Park, talking of Indian influence in Nepal. Yes, India will keep on influencing the turn of events in Nepal as long as our leaders treat their Indian counterparts as their advisors.

If they are really concerned about India's intentions and "grand-design" on Nepal, they should first back the government unanimously and support its efforts to solve the Maoist problem. They also have to do away with the culture of "criticism for the sake of criticism." Once we start resolving our intra-party feuds ourselves, we will give that much less leeway to foreign powers to play police in our domestic politics.

NAME WITHHELD
VIA EMAIL

Business of Bush-bashing

Does publishing a couple of books guarantee Samrat Upadhyay a permanent space in your magazine? All I have read from him so far are his rants against George Bush. It's irrelevant to the general Nepali readership and it's getting repetitive. Stop taking the easy way out and give fresh writers with fresh ideas a chance.

KUMAR
VIA EMAIL

Insightful writing

Aditya Adhikari's essay "Identity Crisis" was brilliant (Sept 19). As a non-Nepali, it gave me a great insight into the past and present which has shaped the Nepali psyche, whilst presenting a view for the future.

GIRISH
VIA EMAIL

All the king's men

We have been suffering Jogendra Ghimire's columns for many months now. In his last column "Useful Idiots" (Sept 26), he talks about dictatorial regimes and dictators and their spin doctors. The sweep included Lenin, Stalin, and our home grown Maoists. However it is intriguing that he never mentions our own dictator who is in power now and his spin doctors, including himself, Jogendra Ghimire.

BHASKAR GAUTAM
MARTIN CHAUTARI

For the record

Thank you for featuring me in your magazine ("A Good Doctor," Oct 3, by Dhriti Bhatta). The article has enabled me to share my views with your readers. I would, however, like to point at some inconsistencies in the article. I am the Chairman of the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology and not the Managing Director of Medicare National Hospital. I perform hip and knee transplantations, and not spinal transplantations. Yes, I did face economic hardship as a school kid. However, my uncle and aunt were very supportive and I am enormously indebted to them for their support during my lean years. As a small child, it was never easy staying away from my parents and the pain of separation still haunts me. I had no intention to hurt anybody's feelings, least of all my uncle's and aunt's who I grew up with, when I said that I had a rough time as a child. There seems to have been some misunderstanding over what I was trying to explain and what your reporter seems to have understood. For the record, I am grateful to all the people, who have contributed to my development.

CHAKRA R. PANDEY, MD
CONSULTANT ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

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THE NOTION
OF NATIONHOOD



APPLICATION OVERLOAD: 17,000 people came to submit job applications at the Kathmandu Metropolitan Office last week. The office had announced 386 vacant positions

nation weekly/Sagar Shrestha



Watching the Watchdog

Koirala's contempt of the Supreme Court was unwarranted. But it is time we questioned whether the CIAA has the unfettered right to compel suspects to answer questions.

BY JOGENDRA GHIMIRE

Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala is in the news again, thanks to his infamous outburst against the Supreme Court last month. The criticism from the octogenarian came immediately after the apex court declined to entertain his call that the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority be stopped from summoning him to furnish his property details. The CIAA had asked the former prime minister to appear before it to answer questions on his property holdings—allegedly disproportionate to his known sources of income—in light of the report of the high level Judicial Inquiry Commission on Property.

There are two very distinct, albeit closely related, legal issues in this controversy. Unfortunately, it is just the issue of contempt of court that seems to have hogged the limelight. Going by the words that Koirala used to demean the Supreme Court, it is difficult to see how any judge can pronounce that he was not contemptuous—unless Koirala takes a 180-degree flip or his lawyers come up with some fantastically creative interpretation of his language: “The Supreme Court has come under the influence of the King and it took the decision at the behest of the monarch,” he said. That’s what caught the attention of the media and the court.

What has received far less attention is Koirala’s assertion that he would not go to the CIAA to testify about his property details, even if that means going to the jail. Koirala, in fact, has every right not to testify. There are some pretty strong reasons for any accused to not cooperate with an investigating agency.

Koirala’s justification for his decision against honoring the CIAA summons does not necessarily mean that he is taking a principled stance in defying the constitutional body. The defiance seems politically motivated: He has been able to energize the Congress mass.

There is, however, a very compelling constitutional and legal argument that high-profile public figures like Koirala could use to decline CIAA summons. Enunciating it clearly would clarify for the CIAA and the public that public figures need not meekly appear before the commission every time it summons them, purely out of fear that their failure to do so could result in imprisonment.

When CIAA writes to “public servants” both past and present to appear before it for questioning, what the anti-corruption watchdog is doing is essentially inviting a potential accused in a possible criminal prosecution to confess before it or to assist it with the investigation: to prepare a case against himself. Under the law, the CIAA

has all the authority to investigate an official on charges of abuse of authority or press charges against him, but it cannot force any individual to be a witness against himself. Any accused—or potential accused—can decline to make any statement that he deems will ultimately go against his defense. Compelling that would be a violation of that individual’s constitutionally protected right against self-incrimination.

Conceptually, this protection of right against self-incrimination is available to any person who is accused or is likely to be accused of an offence and against whom there is, or is likely to be, a criminal prosecution. Such protection does not start only after a case has been filed with a court, but from day one of an investigation or questioning, because the statements before an officer could be entered as evidence against the individual in court.

The philosophical underpinning of this widely adopted Anglo-American common law principle comes from another core principle of criminal law: Every individual shall be presumed to be innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The logic is that presumption of innocence cannot be effectively exercised if a person who should be presumed to be innocent is instead forced into speaking and assisting the prosecution.

The CIAA tends to use its authority to compel suspected offenders to appear with a vigor that may violate the constitutional protection against self-incrimination that every individual is entitled to. In fact, any public servant who is summoned by the constitutional body can appear before it and choose to remain quiet.

The wide leeway that the CIAA is enjoying in course of questioning suspects—essentially by unspoken pressure to speak or face imprisonment

during investigation—needs to be questioned. Not because controlling corruption is undesirable but because it is important that we watch the authorities of our state organs to prevent them from abusing their authority. It’s time we watched the watchdogs.

Koirala’s case provides a good opportunity to put the CIAA to greater public scrutiny and set a precedent for the future. The former prime minister should, therefore, honor the letter from the CIAA, appear before the constitutional body and tell his investigators that he wishes to assert his constitutional right against self-incrimination. In case of any other public figure, the most likely reaction of the investigators would be to put him behind bars for his failure to cooperate with the investigation. With Koirala, they will be forced to think twice. This should have a far-reaching impact on individual rights by expanding our due process protections against unchecked state powers. If nothing else, the whole Koirala episode will then have had at least one positive result. **N**



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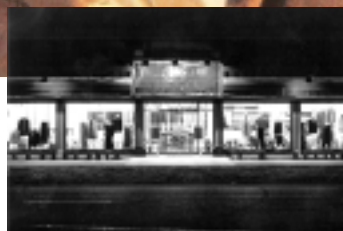
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SAFE HOME: A group of Nepalis returned from Iraq last week

Ceasefire tactic

The Maoists forcibly sent over 1,000 relatives of security personnel to demonstrate at the District Administration Office in Surkhet to call for immediate ceasefire from the government side, reports said. Many of them staged a two-hour-long sit-in at the office. They carried placards with slogans such as “send our sons back” and “declare ceasefire” and submitted a memorandum to the Chief District Officer to pressure the government for long lasting peace in the country.

Banda again

The two-day banda called by the Maoists on Tuesday and Wednesday in six eastern zones—Mechi, Koshi, Sagarmatha, Janakpur, Narayani and Bagmati—affected normal life. The “Eastern Command” of the CPN-Maoist called for the banda to protest the killing of two of its central leaders few weeks ago while they were returning from a central committee meeting in Dang. Despite the ban, a few vehicles with terrorism insurance coverage operated in Kathmandu. The government on the eve of the banda had announced up to 90 percent compensation for vehicles damaged or destroyed during the banda. Security forces guarded roads in large towns and patrolled the highways. Some vehicles were even manned by undercover Security personnel, unverified reports said.

Downsizing bureaucracy

The government has decided to limit the strength of the civil service to 80,000. As part of the good governance roadmap, the government will institute a voluntary retirement policy, sometimes called the golden handshake, to downsize the civil service and to make it more efficient. The cabinet, according to Ministry of General Administration, approved the policy prepared by the administrative reform committee a year ago. At present there are 78,715 personnel, including 10,000 gazetted and 14,356 non-gazetted officers. There are 30,977 clerks and 26,000 peons. Seven thousand positions have already been scrapped, and about 9,000 posts are still lying vacant.

Gurkhas win

Retired British Gurkhas won a partial victory in their campaign for British citizenship. British Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a “new immigration policy” allowing Nepali Gurkhas who have served in the British Army to become British citizens. British Gurkhas have been fighting for the right to citizenship for the last three years. However the new immigration rules will apply only to those Gurkhas who were discharged from service after July 1, 1997, a statement issued by the British Embassy in Kathmandu said. British Ambassador to Nepal Keith Bloomfield briefed the

Nepali government prior to making the announcement. Then Undersecretary of State in the British Ministry of Defense, Dr. Moonie, undertook to examine immigration arrangements for Gurkhas in March 2003. The statement said that there are currently 3,400 Gurkhas serving in the British Army. They are based mainly in UK, and regularly serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and the Balkans. Other 700 ex-Gurkhas have already settled in the UK.

Victory and defeat

Pradeep Dangol defeated Vietnam by 1-0 with a penalty kick in the Asian Football Championship in Malaysia. Dangol scored the goal in the 62nd minute. Nepal lost a match to Vietnam during qualifying rounds of the tournament, but was in control over Vietnam during the whole second match. However the Nepali team lost its next match to Malaysia on Wednesday, 0-3.

Ammo from U.S.

A Bulgarian cargo plane belonging to Vega Airlines carrying arms and ammunition landed at Tribhuvan International Airport. The plane was chartered by United States, which is providing more than \$40 million of worth of military aid to combat Maoist rebels in the country. After Maoists detonated a bomb at American Center in Kathmandu on September 10, the United

States had said that it would increase military support to Nepal.

Death sentence

China denied that two Nepali Maoist rebels suspected of smuggling arms across the Himalayan border had been sentenced to death, but it confirmed that they were being tried. AFP quoting foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan on Tuesday as saying that the case is still being heard. In earlier reports a Nepali diplomat in Tibet was quoted as saying that Hira Lal Shrestha and Gyaljen Sherpa, who were arrested last year in a Tibetan border village with illegal arms, were subsequently sentenced to death

Water talks

India has agreed to provide more outlets for water from the Laxmanpur barrage to prevent inundation of Nepali territory. The agreement came after the meeting of Nepal-India High Level Committee of experts. Under the agreement, India has agreed to open waterways on the Kalkaluwa embankment. The meeting also established a six-member committee to calculate the amount of water that needs to be discharged from the Kalkaluwa embankment. The committee will decide how many waterways would be necessary to discharge the required volume. The meeting also agreed to construct an embankment on both sides of the Rapti River to minimize flooding due to the Laxmanpur embankment. Nine Nepali villages in Banke were faced with inundation during monsoon due to the Laxmanpur barrage. The two countries were unable to reach an agreement on the Rasiyawal-Khurdalautan barrage. The next meeting is scheduled for December.

Border skirmishes

Two Indian policemen were killed and three more injured in skirmishes with the Maoists near the bordering town of Aadharpur in the Indian state of Bihar, reports said. No further details had emerged about the incident by the time we went to press. In related news, Indian police in Naxalbari have arrested a Nepali national, Nir Bahadur Chhetri, with 800 kilograms of explosives. Police suspect Chhetri was trying to smuggle the explosives to Nepal. On October 1, the copilot of a Karnali Airways helicopter was injured when Maoist insurgents opened fire on it after it took off from Surkhet. The MI-17 chopper was transporting food to Dunai in Dolpa, reports said.

Rioters in dock

The government filed cases against 77 people, including the head of a Nepali group claiming to be associated with the Shiv Sena in India, at Kathmandu District Court, for their involvement in the September 1 riots following the killing of 12 Nepalis in Iraq. A group of rioters and arsonists destroyed about 300 manpower agencies and vandalized the Nepali Jame Masjid and Kashmeri Masjid in Kathmandu. The police filed charges against Kiran Singh Budhathoki, the president of the Nepal Shiv Sena, for leading and inciting the violence. Property worth over Rs.1.5 billion was destroyed during the riots.

Peace death

A Nepali soldier serving in U.N. peacekeeping operations has been killed, and five others were wounded in Burundi when a grenade they were handling detonated, a military spokesman of the U.N. mission to the Central African country, Major Adama Diop said, according to AFP reports. Soldier Bir Bahabar Gurung of the Nepali contingent was killed on

September 21 at Rugombo camp following wrong manipulation of a grenade, the Major said. Five other Nepalis soldiers were wounded when the grenade went off. Meanwhile another peacekeeping team left for Haiti. The advance team of the first contingent of the Shri Bhawani Baksh battalion left for Haiti to join peacekeeping operations there at the request of the United Nations. The battalion comprises 125 army personnel including ten officers. Lieutenant Colonel Ganga Bahadur Gurung is leading the team.

Spaniard in custody

Spanish national Mayor Seldeveyar was arrested at Tribhuvan International Airport with two grams of hashish as he was trying to board a Qatar Airways flight to Doha en route to Barcelona. He had hidden the hashish inside a bandage in his left leg. Police said further investigation is underway.

Stolen Indra

The statue of Lord Indra was stolen from Chandeshwori temple prior to the Indra Jatra festival. The statue, which normally remains locked up, is displayed once a year in front of the temple

for devotees to offer *pujas*. The statue has already been stolen twice and recovered each time.

In cold blood

An unidentified group killed three members of a family in Lahan, Siraha. According to police, a group of about seven people attacked Shova Kant Chaudhary and his 25-year-old wife with sharp weapons early in the morning. Chaudhary and his wife were dragged about 500-meters away from their home to a nearby school where they were shot dead. The same group shot Chaudhary's seven-year-old son dead at his house. Police said they did not have any clue about the motive behind the murder and that they were probing into the incident.

For a cause

A walkathon organized by the Rotary Club International raised Rs. 2.4 million for poor cancer patients. Nearly 1,000 people joined in the walkathon that started simultaneously from two spots, Basantapur and Dhulikhel, and walked to Bhaktapur. The walkathon that began from Basantapur passed across Thapathali, Kupondole, Mangal Bazaar, Bal Kumari and Thimi and ended at Bhaktapur

Durbar Square. The funds will be donated to the Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital. There are about 40,000 cancer patients who cannot afford treatment in Nepal, the organizers said.

Maoist connection

Maoist rebels are providing training to a section of Bhutanese refugees in eastern Nepal, an Indian newspaper, The Telegraph, claimed. The paper quoted an Indian Border Security Force member. The paper also claimed that the Maoists were providing training in Jhapa to a group of ULFA and BODO militants from Assam. We have conclusive proof that the Nepali Maoists are hand-in-glove with ULFA, KLO and NDFB militants, Border Security Force Deputy Inspector General Sukhjinder Singh Sadhu was quoted as saying. The BSF feel trained Nepali refugees could also help the rebels establish camps in "non-traditional" parts of Bhutan, the paper said. Meanwhile Bhutanese refugee leaders say that Bhutan is trying to blow the issue out of proportion, although they concede that few people from the refugee camps might have connection with the Maoists.



BR

GRANT ME SUCCESS: Bhutanese human rights leader Tek Nath Rizal offering prayers at Bhadrakali before departing for Geneva

JAPAN TRAVEL FAIR

Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) participated in the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) 2004 Fair organized in Tokyo from 24-26 September. NTB found it a good forum to convince prospective tourists of the adequacy of the safety measures adopted by NTP and other tourist related associations. A number of travel-trade operators and journalists visited the Nepal pavilion and received information on the various natural and cultural attractions of Nepal as well as on the measures adopted for tourist welfare during the crisis. Promotional materials were also distributed to the visiting guests.

Similarly, Destination Promotion Night was organized by NTB for Japanese journalists and travel-trade operators on 22 September in coordination with the Royal Nepalese Embassy in Japan. Three other private travel companies also participated in the Fair under the umbrella banner of NTB.

CNI TO ATTEND WB MEET

Members of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) are to attend the annual general meeting of the World Bank to be held in Washington DC on October 2-3.

During the meeting the CNI delegation will provide professional and private sector perspectives on issues relating to financial reforms and global trade.

President Binod Chaudhary and Vice-president Pawan K Golyan are leading the delegation. It is the first time that people from the private sector are included in the official delegation to the US.

PRESIDENTS FORUM NEPAL (PFN)

Presidents Forum Nepal (PFN), a forum of past presidents of various professional associations was formed Monday under the chairmanship of Pradeep K Shrestha. Shrestha is the former president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

The special meeting of PFN also led to the formation of an ad-hoc committee in an attempt to expedite the 'Peace for Development' project, which is one of the major agendas of the forum. PFN has also decided to work on prominent national issues concerning socio-economic advancement. The ad-hoc committee members, besides Shrestha, are Mahesh K Agrawal (Co-chairman), Madhukar SJB Rana (Co-chairman), Rabindra Man Singh (Co-chairman),

Yogendra Shakya (Co-chairman) and Gopal Tiwari (secretary General).

The six-member committee has also established a 'constitution drafting committee' for the forum, which is headed by Mahesh K Agrawal, the immediate past president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC).

The committee has also made provisions for senior presidents of different associations to work for common goals like peace building, policy formulations and advocacy for all Nepalis. The forum is open to all who have gained relevant knowledge through their involvement in various activities and associations in their professional career.

KMTNC SIGNS MOU

The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) and the New Delhi based Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to pledge long-term research and technical cooperation and to establish collaborative projects for the benefit of local communities.

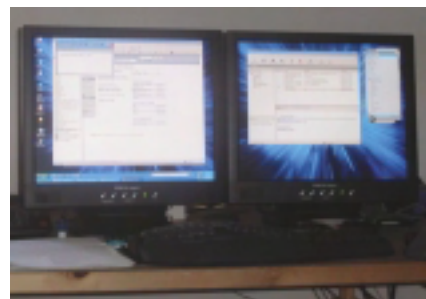
STC TO SELL SUBSIDISED KEROSENE

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has given the responsibility of selling a quantity of kerosene at a subsidized rate to the Salt Trading Corporation (STC). NOC and STC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect recently. According to the regulations, STC will appoint retailers to sell kerosene at the subsidized rate and will take responsibility for the quality and quantity of kerosene sold. The retail sellers will have to display a signboard at their outlets clearly mentioning that subsidized kerosene is available as well as the price at which it is to be sold.



ASIAN APPLIED COMPUTING MEET IN OCTOBER

Nepal Engineering College (NEC), Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), Kathmandu Engineering College (KEC), Worldlink Communications and Nepal College of Information Technology are jointly organizing the Asian Applied Computing Conference 2004 on October 29-31.



The seminar is being organized for the second time in Nepal. Participants from 13 countries are taking part in the fair. System and architecture, mobile and ubiquitous computing, soft computing, man-machine interfaces and innovative applications for the developing world are some of the headings of the 41 papers that will be presented by various researchers, academicians and IT professionals.

NRB TEAM FOR IMF-WB MEET

Dr Tilak Rawal, Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), left for Washington DC to take part in the joint annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank (WB) to be held on October 3. The meeting will deliberate on current economic situations and development issues and also on current challenges, risks and opportunities concerning monetary and financial policy. Tulraj Baral, executive director of the research department of NRB, is accompanying Dr Rawal.

NTB PARTICIPATES IN PATA TRAVEL MART

Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) participated in the Royal Nepal Airlines and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Travel Mart held in Bangkok from September 22 to 24. The focus of the meet was to disseminate destination information to the media and to provide assurance that Nepal was well prepared for the upcoming tourist season. 345 global buyers representing 309 organizations from 39 countries participated in the fair.

Participation at the fair is part of NTB's ongoing effort to reach new markets and invite more tourists from countries in the region, mostly to visit Buddhist sites in Nepal.

Honored

A British nonprofit, Global Ideas Bank, honored **Mahabir Pun** this month with the 2004 "Overall Social Innovations Award" to recognize his work in connecting high Himalayan villages to the Internet. Pun's determination to connect his village, Nangi, and other Himalayan villages has already earned him recognition as a social innovator.

Pun received a good education through the efforts of his father, a retired British Gurkha. His family moved to Chitwan for his schooling, and later, when he finished high school, he took a teaching job to support his family. After teaching for 12 years, he was accepted at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, where he received his Master's degree. It was after an absence of 24 years that he returned to his village in 1992.

Two years ago, Pun brought wireless Internet to his village at the altitude 7,300-feet. With no electricity and no phone service to Nangi, the project seemed impossible, but Pun was determined. Today five villages in the high Himalayas have Internet access, and more than 100 students, teachers and villagers have email accounts. Pun has also started a tele-medicine project, which connects doctors and patients with the help of the Internet and a webcam. A doctor in Pokhara helps Pun run the project.

"I think it was the sheer bravado of what he did [that impressed the judges]," Nick Temple, director of the Global Ideas Bank, said. "How did it even occur to him that this was possible?"



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CEASEFIRE CONUNDRUM

The government is under pressure to send out immediate peace feelers or declare a unilateral ceasefire. The prime minister has said no before, but is obviously feeling the heat. Whose job is it to take the first step?

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

THE MAOISTS RETURNED THE tactical ball into the government's court on September 21 when Prachanda spoke of talks under "conducive conditions" and asked the government to answer six questions. There has been a mixed reaction to Maoist supremo Prachanda's statement, which doesn't really say whether or not the Maoists are willing to talk with this government, after previously declining. But the statement has put the pressure on the government for a response, a peace feeler or a unilateral holiday ceasefire: Witness the lengthy meetings of the High Level Peace Committee last week. The Maoists almost certainly intended their ambiguous statements to increase pressure on their government; so far they have had modest success.

The strongest pressure comes from within the government. The UML, the biggest constituent in the ruling coalition, says the government must act immediately to cash in on Prachanda's statement. CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal called on the government to declare a ceasefire even if the Maoists fail to reciprocate. His statement seems to have served as a rallying cry for others outside the coalition: Many involved in Nepali national life are repeating the UML supremo's line.

Apparently under pressure, the Cabinet and High Level Peace Committee discussed Nepal's proposal last Tuesday and Wednesday. Despite a careful hear-

ing, Prime Minister Deuba and the NCD ministers seem to be against the idea. Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka downplayed the possibility of a unilateral declaration of truce. His comments may reflect the security forces' assessment on the ground. Both seem in tune with the prime minister's own thinking.

Since his appointment for a third in-ning, Deuba has sent a consistent message: I don't trust the Maoists; they have betrayed me. During an interview with Nation Weekly in June, Deuba clearly spoke his mind. "We will negotiate again with the Maoists, but the negotiations will be different from last time." Although he declined to elaborate on the difference, his subsequent remarks were a clear signal of an act-tough approach, unlike the all out peace gestures made during his previous tenure. The lack of trust seriously compounds the problem. But there are others besides the prime minister who find the call for a unilateral ceasefire unwise.

"Ceasefire is two-way traffic," says former Foreign Minister Bhek Bahadur Thapa. "It must be total, based on mutual respect." Technically there can be no ceasefire without a similar commitment from the Maoist side. Many fear that calling a unilateral truce would just give the Maoists an opportunity to regroup and revamp their organization. The Army still laments the last two ceasefires: They say Maoists used them to buy time and strengthen themselves. Army officers avoid direct answers to questions about the prospect of declar-



nw/ss

LOGJAM: So who will bell the cat?

ing a unilateral ceasefire. "It is for the government to decide," says Brigadier General Rajendra Bahadur Thapa, the Army's spokesman. "We will implement whatever the government orders." But the Army's apprehension about a one-way truce is obvious. "What was the value of the last two ceasefires," says an Army officer, "and who benefited from them?" The Maoists only expanded their organization and made effective use of the truce period for tactical advantage.

Many see similar motives behind the present Maoist drive. There are reasons to believe that the Maoists are desperate for a ceasefire and that they are behind the pressure on the government. Reports from Surkhet say that Maoists there forced hundreds of families of security personnel to attend a sit-in protest to pressure the government for a unilateral cease-fire. If that's true, Madhav Nepal and the protesters are, presumably unwittingly, doing the Maoist's bidding.

The government agrees that the Maoists are using the issue. "The Maoists are driving a wedge between the mainstream political forces," Minister Hom Nath Dahal told reporters. After Prachanda's latest statement, the four parties have suddenly found Maoists us-



say is expected to “act responsibly” regardless of what the insurgents do or say. And as the countdown to Nepal’s biggest festival Dashain ticks off, there are high hopes. All eyes are now set on the government and the moves it makes.

The issue bears every bit of discussion and scrutiny. A bold, positive action by the government could set the nation on the road to peace. But the risk that the Maoists’ ambiguous “offer” is just a tactical move to give their forces a breather before the “final battle” is high. So are the stakes. “Nobody can question the desire of people for

ing language similar to their anti-“regression” rhetoric to question the government’s legitimacy and ability to call a truce. This should give pause to Comrade Nepal and the opposition NC leaders, but they seem unfazed.

“It is a question of who is supposed to be more responsible,” says senior

Nepali Congress leader, Narhari Acharya. “The government or the Maoists?” To a nation yearning for peace, almost any ceasefire would be welcome. Those calling for a ceasefire are counting on that for political support. They present the problem as a moral conundrum for the government, which, they

a cease-fire,” says former Foreign Minister Bhek Bahadur Thapa. But desires do not necessarily translate into good strategy or good politics. “If the Maoists are ready for a negotiated settlement and durable peace,” says security analyst Karna Bahadur Thapa, a retired Major. “It doesn’t matter who calls it quits.” **N**

nm/ss



Is U.S. Study Appropriate

1. Adequate Funding. \$15k - \$45k. School
2. Strong Academic Background.
3. Strong English skills – written and spoken
4. Entrance examinations. TOEFL, SAT.
5. Student Visa

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE U.S. IN 2003

Country	Numbers	% Growth over 2002
Nepal	3,729	23.5
India	74,603	11.6
China	64,757	2.4
Bangladesh	3,596	-8.6
Sri Lanka	2,094	1.2

[Source: Institute of International
Education, New York]

AMERICA BECKONS

The Friday crowd at the USEF is made up of typical U.S. bound Nepali students— young, urban and middleclass; most of them are from Kathmandu. Their numbers are growing.

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

10 a.m. Friday: The air-conditioned meeting hall on the second floor of the two-story United States Educational Foundation, (USEF) building in Gyaneshwore is filled with 27 young Nepalis. They are attending a free information session on studying in the United States. Most are dressed in jeans and sneakers; some even wear baseball caps, much like American kids their age. A map of the United States hangs on the wall, and there is a U.S. flag in the corner, complete with a bald eagle topping the flag post.

The hall is abuzz with excitement and anticipation, like the U.S. college campus at the start of a new academic season.

The educational advisor, Gaurav Katwal, gives a PowerPoint presen-



LUCKY NINE

Schools supplying most applicants for higher studies abroad:

Brihaspati School, Budhanilkantha School, Kathmandu University, Lincoln School, Modern Indian School, Rato Bangla School, St. Mary's School, St. Xavier's School and Shuvatara School.

Outside Kathmandu: Amiko Boarding School in Biratnagar and Gandaki Boarding School in Pokhara.

[Source: Based on our interviews]

tation on the do's and don'ts of applying to colleges in the United States. His colleague Selena Malla is writing the names of reference books and web sites on a whiteboard after distributing brochures to the attendees. The two take turns with the presentation.

Questions keep coming. There are no bad questions here; anything goes—other than visa enquiries. How does the SAT help you get scholarships? How are TOEFL and GRE scores evaluated and what kind of scores will get us scholarships? Is the SAT required for graduate studies? What about community colleges? Do we have to give all these examinations, Sir?

Katwal and Malla, both educated in the United States, come up with instant answers for anything hurled at them. The types of students who come each Friday are similar, and their questions too. The day we attended, the room wasn't full.

"The turnout was quite low today. Maybe it was last week's two-day banda and the rain this morning," says Malla, who has an accent that would be mistaken for an American's. The USEF allows a maximum of 60 students in a single session, which is mostly full. Downstairs, the USEF library records 200-300 visitors a day.

The crowd at the USEF is made up of typical U.S.-bound Nepali students— young, urban and middleclass, most of them from Kathmandu.

The number of Nepali students in the United States is growing at a rapid clip, say USEF officials, and is among the highest in the world. Nepal sent 3729 students in 2003, as opposed to 3019 in 2002, a 23.5 percent increase. The growth rate of countries like India and

China, which send many more students, was 11.6 percent and 2.4 percent for the period.

According to the U.S. International Institute of Education, 71.5 percent of Nepali students currently in the United States are enrolled in undergraduate studies.

"An average undergraduate student applying for a visa these days has a profile of a typical kid from Kathmandu," says Mike Gill, executive director of the Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal: "The student comes from a private school and the family has money."

The students we met seemed to match that profile. "I am giving it a try, as a relative in the States told me I should try for a scholarship if my academics were good," says Mikesh Raj Shivakoti, who has just completed his Class 12 from Chennai, India. Shivakoti, who studied up to his S.L.C at Adarsha Vidya Mandir in Lalitpur, has already taken the TOEFL exam and is planning to take the SAT in November.

More and more students like Shivakoti have received a good English education. According to USEF's Katwal, their TOEFL scores are much higher than that of most Nepali students 20 years ago. This has made them more competitive for admission to U.S. colleges. Easy access to information (thanks to the Internet) means they are also more aware of what is in offer there and what they want.

Madhur Lamsal, who completed high school from Nepalgunj and received his B.Sc. from ASCOL, is interested in taking another undergraduate degree in insurance policy. "The subject

I am looking for isn't available here," he says. "That is why I want to go to the United States."

The major attraction of studying in the United States, alumni of American schools told Nation Weekly, is the quality of education and the marketability of American degrees. Almost every single student we interviewed told us that U.S. colleges and universities had a lot more choices in terms of subject selection than they had imagined possible while in Nepal. Many of them said well-stocked libraries and easy access to enormously rich documentation (both electronic and print) were the best part about studying in the United States.

But all that comes at a price.

Undergraduate studies in the United States cost anywhere between \$12,000 to \$40,000 per year. That includes tuition fees, living expenses, health insurance, books, supplies and travel expenses.

Katwal says an "average Joe" that comes for counseling at the USEF expects to pay only for the first semester and then work to pay for the rest of the semesters. "I always tell them education in the U.S. is expensive," he says. "They are allowed to work only 20 hours per week on campus. That won't be enough to pay for their studies."

The Fulbright Commission's Gill says some 75 percent of international students in the United States are self-funded; statistics for Nepali students are similar. Only about 30 percent of students from Nepal are able to get scholarships. And because they're coming

TOP 5 DESTINATIONS IN 2003

University and State	Number of Nepalis enrolled
1. University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma	50
2. Wichita State University, Kansas	44
3. Ferris State University, Michigan	33
4. University of Southern Alabama, Alabama	26
5. University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska	16

[Source: Based on forms voluntarily filled out by students who received student visas]

STATES WITH HIGHEST NEPALI STUDENT CONCENTRATION: California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington DC

[Source: USEF]

from Nepal, most tend to go to cheaper schools that are not necessarily of high quality.

Still, many Nepalis manage to get into prestigious colleges and universities. A few of them got over 90 percent waivers last year from the University of Pennsylvania, Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, Grinnell College in Iowa and Bates College in Maine.

But the quality of schools and scholarships are not the only thing that goes into the selection. Nepali students of-

ten apply to colleges where there already are many other Nepalis. That makes the experience of being in a foreign land that much more comfortable, but it may also reduce their chances of winning a scholarship.

And hanging out with other Nepalis also means less cultural interaction. "Why not go to the States to increase your understanding of other cultures? It is not only books; there are lots of other things to learn," says Katwal, perhaps suggesting that students should keep away from

MORE STUDENTS EVERY YEAR

Nepali students enrolled in

Year	US colleges	% Growth
2003	3,729	23.5
2002	3,019	15
2001	2,618	8.6
2000	2,411	2.3
1999	2,358	38.9
1998	1,697	N/A

[Source: Institute of International Education, New York]

'They're Getting Younger'

Interview with Mike Gill, the executive director of the Fulbright Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal.

Has the ongoing Maoist conflict increased the number of students going to the United States?

I don't know. But what I can tell you is that since 9/11 the numbers of international students from India and China as well as some other significant countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Pakistan have all decreased. But in Nepal, the numbers of applicants for student visas and the number of students to whom visas have been issued have increased quite a bit. The figures come from the International Institute of Education, which keeps track of these things. The percentage increase of students coming from Nepal is among the highest in the world. The actual number is still quite small. Last year there were about 1,500 student visas issued in Nepal. The number has been going up steadily in the last several years. This year is the highest as far as I know. It is logical to assume that the current situation in Nepal is one factor in that increase, but I doubt that it is the only one.

In your last interview with Nation Weekly (Vol. 1, No. 6) you

said that the liberal arts education is extremely good in the States. What makes it so?

The most attractive thing about undergraduate education in the United States, and what is almost uniquely American, is what we call the four-year undergraduate liberal arts curriculum. In parts of the world that follow the British education [students] specialize very early. In Nepal, even in the SLC, students start specializing, and the best and brightest students are pushed by their parents into sciences. Yes, of course, any country's economy needs lot of trained people in the technical fields. But you also need people who have the big picture, who can assess policy. Anything we do as a human being takes place in a social context, whether building a building or developing a vaccine.

What academic disciplines are Nepalis studying in the United States?

The most common fields are engineering, computer science, business, agriculture and other technical fields. And those are precisely what you expect from Nepal.

Is it because job opportunities are higher in those fields?

Sure, that is a major part of it. I hope in two or three years ... that

there would be more opportunities for people [in] social sciences and humanities streams as well.

What is the broader trend of students leaving for higher studies?

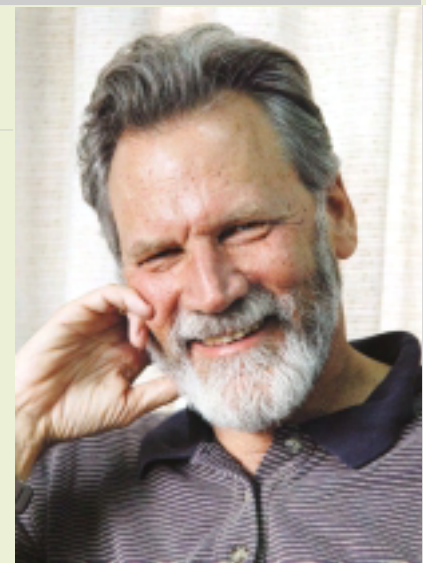
Over the last 20 years there's been a shift. There are now 70 percent or more going for undergraduate studies; that's almost the reverse of 20 years ago. Now you have younger people going.

What do you think it will be like 10 years on?

I hope that there will be more people with better, solid educations coming back to Nepal. One of the things that I hope for Nepal is that those who have gone out in technical fields will come back and start a Nepali Infosys or even a Wipro.

What do you think is the strength of Nepali students?

Extreme level of motivation. People who are coming from the middleclass or lower middleclass in Nepal know when they have an opportunity, and for the most part they take it. Nepalis are unique, especially in the technical fields. They have been instilled with the value of education at young age,



and those who leave here know they're on a gateway to something else.

On the other side, what do you think are the weaknesses of Nepali students?

One of the reasons why I think there has been an increase in undergraduate students [going to the U.S.] is that English education has become stronger. But the other big challenge ... is their inability to work independently and ask questions of the teachers, to disagree with the teacher and to do independent research.

Why do Nepalis want to go to the United States for higher studies?

The U.S. system is the most flexible and varied, and the quality is as good as anywhere in the world. The range of choice and quality is unparalleled anywhere. **N**

such schools like St. Cloud University, which has over 100 Nepali students, or Bellevue College in Nebraska, with over 200. Katwal says there is another important reason why one should avoid schools with large Nepali student populations: The chances of getting a visa approved is likely to go down with a

high concentration of Nepalis in one college.

The U.S. student visa, or the F-1 visa, is one of the “iron gates” Nepalis have to pass through. Last year about 1,500 Nepalis got the student visa. Many are already in America, specializing in liberal arts, business administration, engi-

neering, medicine and information technology. “The visa is always a concern but I am fairly confident of getting one,” says Neer Shrestha, 25, a final year student at Institute of Engineering at Pulchowk. “To me, U.S. means opportunities for new experience, greater knowledge and better opportunities.” **N**

OPINION

That Big *Bhoot*

America, in spite of its limitations, welcomes people into its fold with its original myth—everybody is a pioneer in a new continent. My own story with America is a mythic one.

BY SUSHMA JOSHI

Another of our children has been taken by the *bhoot* of America,” my mother complains every time she hears about a young cousin who makes off to that continent. “What is there? *Kay cha tya?*” she asks. “I couldn’t live there with all those ugly buildings.”

Skyscrapers and fast cars, chain stores and mega-malls. These are the outward manifestations of a culture that fascinates and draws hundreds of thousands of students from all parts of the world to America every year. But contrary to popular understanding, people go not just for the amount of money they can earn, or the pile of things they can buy. If money were everything, then all those foreign students would have ended up in Saudi Arabia, or Japan. But they end up in rural Alaska and in the inner city neighborhoods of New York not because money is easy to come by, most often it isn’t, but because America promises something radically different—a new beginning, a place where one can remake oneself based not on one’s gender, caste or ethnicity, but on one’s ability to work and accomplish in a seeming meritocracy. I say “seeming” because even America has its hierarchies, its closed doors, its glass ceilings. But America, in spite of its limitations, welcomes people into its fold with its original myth—everybody is a pioneer in a new continent, breaking new ground, surviving on their own merit and labor. This is an exhilarating concept, especially to those who come from places in the world where their roles and opportunities are already restricted by birth- by gender, by caste, ethnicity, race, religion or other defining factor.

My own story with America is a mythic one. At thirteen, during a fit of adolescent rage with my mother, who had threatened to marry me off so she wouldn’t have to deal with a hormonal teenager, I sat down and wrote to Emmanuel College, a small liberal arts college in Boston. The catalogue I found in a pile that my brother had collected to go abroad. What was surprising was not the long letter I sent off requesting the college admissions board to admit me at age thirteen—the surprising part was the courteous and professional reply that I received, signed by the director of admissions, telling me that I was slightly too young to apply but they would take me into consideration as soon as I finished my high school education. That letter was the first sign of a culture where even thirteen-year-olds undergoing hormonal temper tantrums had

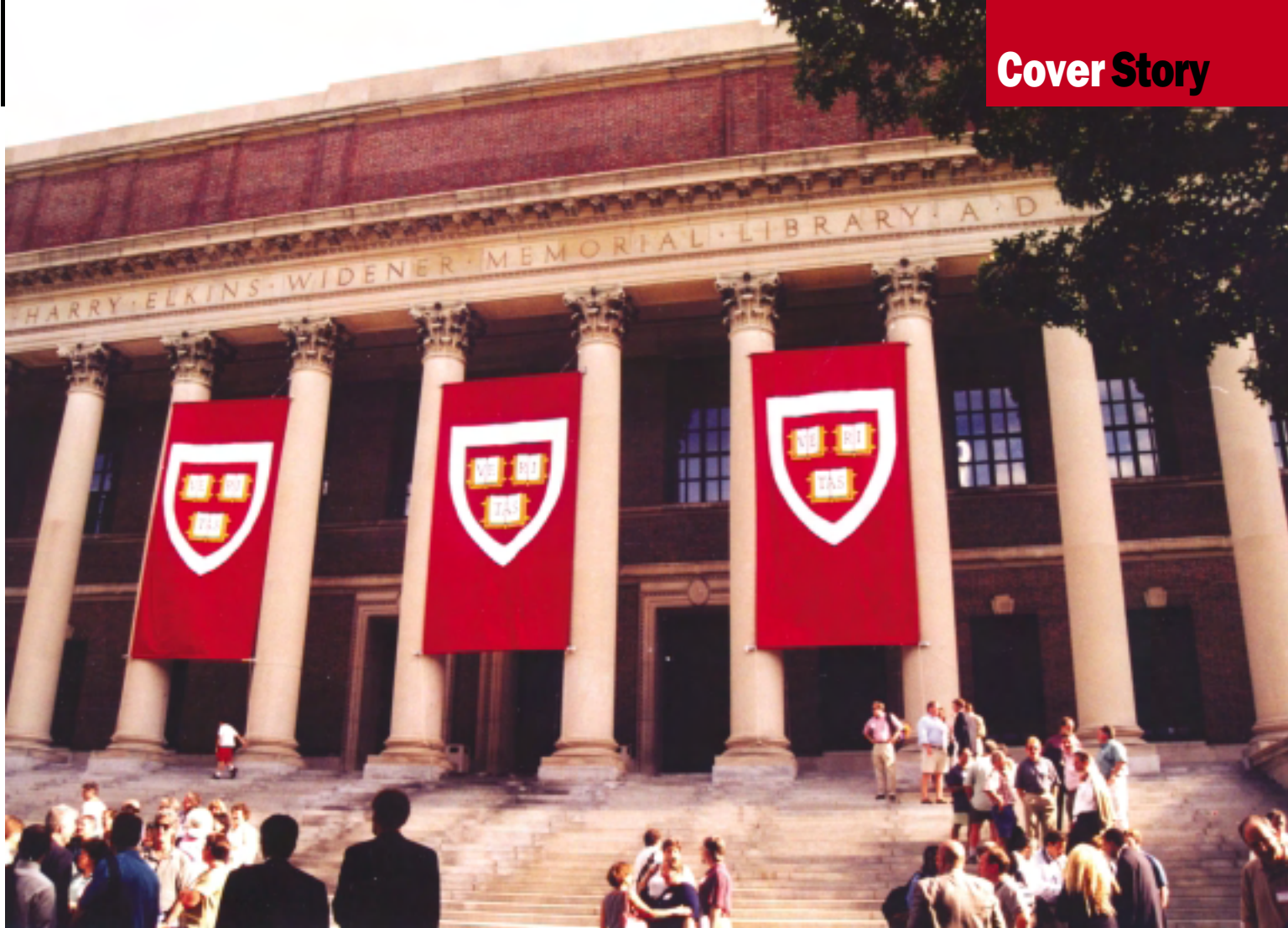
rights—gasp!—to a response. That, to me, was the first indication of democracy in action, the first signs of (extra-terrestrial?) beings who believed in treating underage girls in Nepal with the same respect they gave to anybody else.

LIBERAL EDUCATION

America’s democratic culture is one reason why people are drawn to study there. The other is its liberal education system. A liberal education draws on the old European ideal of the Enlightenment, one where boundaries between different disciplines are dissolved and people seek knowledge from all fields while being equally adept in all. A liberal education makes a person equally comfortable conversing about philosophy and the sciences, and the linkages between the two, or talking about a painting or new technology. I was fortunate enough to attend an institution where this ideal was actively encouraged. Of my college friends, many ended up doing cutting edge work in fields very different from what they studied—philosophy majors became computer programmers, computer programmers went on to make films and videos, math majors did PhDs in literature. And indeed, many of the most innovative thinking and research, the most entrepreneurial ideas have come from individuals who have received a liberal education.

In Nepal, people interested in arts and culture are relegated to low-quality institutions with Third Division students. An original idea is often considered silly, irrelevant, condescending to the teacher, or worse—wrong—as those of us who have experienced the Nepali educational system know so well. Trying to learn two fields of knowledge, or two skills, is a sure sign that that person is wilful, non-committed or “all over the place.” Making linkages between different skill-sets, or different fields of knowledge, is not encouraged. Leonardo Da Vinci would be considered a madman, or a liar, in Nepal.

I am convinced that the elevation of the sciences to a godly realm in Nepal, at the expense of creativity and original thought, is at the heart of the political gridlock we are in today. How can people imagine new worlds if their faculties to create new possibilities were never encouraged? That free reign to dream—whether it is an American dream or some other dream—has always been the defining feature of the American educational system. That is the *bhoot* that continues to draw people in the thousands to that far-off continent. **N**



REBORN IN THE USA

Young students arrive in the US without any plans. After initial hiccups, many of them soon find themselves absorbing American values.

BY ADITYA ADHIKARI

WHEN DIWAS KC WENT TO college in the United States four years ago, he had no clear academic plans. On his application form, KC had written that he hadn't decided on a major yet. Before leaving for Sarah Lawrence College in New York, he was "too preoccupied

thinking about being in the U.S. itself. All I wanted at that time was to be happy."

During his first semester at Sarah Lawrence he decided to take up dance as his chief pursuit. He had made a lasting impression on his friends at Budhanilkantha School as a dancer, but had no formal experience. In the United States he enrolled as a dance student.

This led him to the discovery that dancing could be an intense joy, but the novelty eventually wore off. By the end of his sophomore (second) year of college, the pleasure of dancing started to wane. There were more important things in life.

Events like the insurgency in far-off Nepal and the destruction of the World Trade Center in the United States filled him with an urge to understand the world better. It led him to the realization that the pursuit of happiness was not enough. He started to read about politics.

In his junior (third) year he took a class titled “Marx and Marxisms” to learn more about Maoist movements. Reading Marx was an experience that changed KC completely. “Marx did not merely change my world, he shattered it,” he says. “He did not merely inspire me, he kicked my ass.”

Reading numerous books on the Russian, Chinese and Latin American revolutions changed the way he understood history and gave him an acute sense of the injustices of the world. Sympathy for the downtrodden and the oppressed led him to study subjects like labor movements and feminism. This past August he began a master’s degree program at

U.S. GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIP

Fulbright
Hubert Humphrey
East West

TYPE

Two-year masters program, postgraduate program
Non-degree program for mid-career professionals at policy level.
Funding by University of Hawaii, includes technical fields.

[Source: USEF]

Sarah Lawrence in women’s history, something that he had never imagined he would do when he left Nepal four years ago.

As the profile of Nepali students heading west gets younger, many young Nepalis, particularly those who went to the United States for undergraduate studies, speak of similar life-shaping experi-

ences . Until the 70s, an average Nepali student would head to a graduate school or was a professional, often married. Most students now leave home while they are in their teens and early 20s. They are mostly single and at a very impressionable age.

These students find themselves immersed in a world freer than they have ever encountered; the possibilities are endless. Most only have a vague notion of fields of study they will pursue. The undergraduate education they receive serves more as an exploration of themselves and to develop their personalities,



CAMPUS LIFE: Harvard Yard



CAMPUS LIFE: Pleasure of doing nothing





TIME OUT: The dorm life

the most fulfilling aspect of being at an American college.”

Bennington is a unique college that grants students great freedom to design their own course of study—there are no compulsory classes and no grades are awarded. Niranjan Kunwar, who graduated from Bennington last May, found that he could pursue his own projects without any kind of pressure. “For the first time in my life, studying and going to classes became a routine that I looked forward to,” he says.



LONE RANGER: Early days in U.S. can be difficult

That the intellectual quest can be both fun and rewarding is immensely empowering for young students. There is an emphasis on independent thought, and students find, again for the first time, that their ideas are valued. “The curriculum in Nepal tells you what to think,” says Yubraj Acharya, who will be graduating from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania this May. “An American liberal arts education is mostly focused on how and why to think.”

The intellectual tools that students acquire enable them to question things that they have always blindly accepted as fact. With the feeling that they as individuals have something to offer to the world comes also a sense of responsibility that goes well beyond the aspirations they initially had when heading to the United States.

To Biswonath Poudel, a Ph.D. student at the University of California at Berkeley, the future was always associated with financial security. That led the Chitwan resident to take a bachelor’s degree in engineering in China. In the United States, he encountered various people, including some of his professors, whose work had far-reaching implications on society. This led him to think of more abstract matters than financial security. “I started to think of my

CHANGING COLOR: Hundreds of Nepalis left for U.S. this fall



THANK YOU: "I learned to appreciate difference"

legacy, my contribution to mankind," he says.

Not every experience in the United States for these students is as ennobling. Adapting to American social norms and customs can be overwhelming. While there is always an urge to mingle with people from one's own background,

many Nepalis feel that the most fulfilling part of living in the United States is being able to adapt and in accepting the new surroundings.

"I've met several Nepali students in the U.S. who still want to surround themselves with Nepali people," says Kunwar. "This can be more detrimental to your personal growth than you might think." Happily, since there are relatively few Nepalis at most schools in the US, students are generally forced to adapt.

America's diversity is an opportunity to interact with various kinds of people, and most Nepalis, after an awkward phase of adjustment, find their world-views sig-

nificantly broadened by exposure to different cultural backgrounds. Personal contact with people who are different makes Nepali students grow fast. They begin to recognize the importance of co-existence.

Karuna Chhetri, who left Kathmandu after finishing a B.A. degree, went on to get a graduate diploma in Montessori pedagogy.

She currently teaches in a primary school in Maryland. Her greatest challenge in the United States has been to discard the ethnocentrism she grew up with and to internalize cultural relativity. "It has been a slow but a rewarding process," she says.

A broader acceptance of differences also leads to a greater appreciation of others. "In the U.S. I learned how to value even the small contributions that people make," says Dharan native Tika Rai, who studied electrical engineering at the University of Norman in Oklahoma. Currently he sets up wireless Internet connections at the Magnus Consulting Group in Purano Baneshwore and tries to implement work strategies he learned in the United States. He believes that showing appreciation for the work of employees is important for a healthy work climate. He's happy he went to the U.S. right after high school.

Leaving home at an early age means that new values, even those alien to Nepali society, are more easily accepted. The knowledge, discipline and ethics learned in American colleges remain central to students for the rest of their lives, and most Nepalis cherish their education. Writer Samrat Upadhyay, who teaches at Indiana University, says, "My exposure to U.S. academics has been the crux of who I am today." **N**

OPINION

The Second Sex

Nepali students find themselves confronting their sexual naiveté when they arrive in the US

BY RAJANI THAPA

When I was first preparing to leave home to go and study abroad, my mother decided to talk to me about sex. Actually, she asked my older brother to talk to me. My mother, apparently, was conservative enough to feel too uncomfortable to talk to me directly, yet open enough to the prospect of discussion—as opposed to rigid denial. My brother—admitting sheepishly that my mother had put him up to it—told me that the conventions of the west would be very different from what I was used to in Kathmandu. He told me that men could get certain ideas that I might not necessarily be trying to convey, and that I should be careful to make myself clear in certain situations.

No one in my family had ever talked to me about sex before, and while this seems somewhat incredible to me now, it is not at all uncommon. So when young Nepali students travel to the west, where sexual mores are famously lax, they may be confronted with much more than academics, work, money, homesickness and so on. Even though my mother did not feel the need to have a similar conversation with my brother when he was the one who was going off to college, both men and women find themselves confronting their own sexual naiveté and inexperience when they come to the United States for the first time. This kind of experience is, I believe, one of the most common and most interesting—yet least talked about—phenomena facing Nepali students abroad. Sexual inexperience, needless to say, is something everyone goes through at one point in their life, but going through it in the United States—where one imagines, accurately or not, sexual permissiveness imbedded in the very culture—can be deeply overwhelming. Women may find themselves in even more unfamiliar territory than men, because we don't seem to traditionally have a culture of discussion and information sharing about sex within our own gender that men seem to have from a rather early age. One of the few times I have heard sex discussed among women—of different generations—is at *rateuli* ceremonies during weddings. But these occasions are always boisterous and comic; too public and awkward to be of any educational value.

What happens, then, when we go out into a world that many of our mothers never saw, in many cases equipped with very little? During one *rateuli* ceremony I was at, my older married relatives made a figure of a penis from flour dough and left it on the bridal bed as a prank. While it was certainly done in the spirit of mischief and fun, it is quite conceivable that many women leave home for the first time with little more than such glimpses into the world of sexuality—when they are old enough to know much better. I myself acquired all of my sexual information from women's magazines that were helpfully lying around at home, and encyclope-

dias. The result of this ignorance can often be comical, but it can also be difficult, alienating or disastrous.

Other women in the United States can be just as inexperienced as us when they first leave home for college, but they probably do not have traditional notions of honor and shame tied to a woman's body and sexuality ingrained in them in the way that we do.

It is not enough—as I have found—to expect women to adhere to traditional values and abstain from sexual experimentation. This is certainly what our mothers expect and hope for from us with their non-discussion of sex and sexuality. However, the very act of encouraging women to go and study abroad and make a life and career for themselves—which an increasing number of parents do—serves to stretch the reach and boundaries of tradition and societal standards. Moreover, while our mothers—even the more educated of that generation—got married while they were barely out of their teens, Nepali women nowadays increasingly confront their sexual awakening while they are still unmarried.

This was on my mind when I did a presentation in a class in Kathmandu for students who were planning to leave for the United States soon. My presentation focused on safe sex and sexual health resources for students on campus in American colleges. Afterwards, a classmate came up to me and remarked that he felt that I was encouraging people to engage in pre-marital sex during their college life. I answered that in keeping with the theme of my presentation, I hardly had anything to say to people who would decide to abstain from sexual activity. My presentation was supposed to deal with sexual health and contraception—subjects pertinent to those who decided to engage in sexual activity.

Now that I have been in the United States for several years, it strikes me that many students do not make a premeditated decision to become sexually active. To put it bluntly—sometimes it just happens. This is the experience of countless Nepali students in the United States, both men and women. Which is not to suggest that these situations do not occur in Nepal; but the combination of the freedom of being so far away from home and the college atmosphere of carefree enjoyment which often includes experimentation with alcohol and drugs, can mean that even the most cautious, even the most resolutely conservative among us, can find ourselves in situations that we are not prepared for.

What I have learnt as a student in the United States is that we are in unknown territory; most of our parents are unable to counsel us adequately because what we experience is alien to them. Most of us are not thwarting traditional values deliberately as much as inevitably growing in our perceptions of the world and of our own identity.

As it turns out, my brother's conversation with me about sex turned out to be incredibly valuable. It made me, at least, open to unexpected situations and helped me deal with some of the overwhelming feelings that were in store for me. **N**

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THE ART OF INSURGENCY

History of armed insurrection shows that insurgents rarely win outright victories, but are also rarely defeated outright.

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS Maoists have run a relatively successful guerilla campaign against the state. The speed with which the rebels expanded their influence over the territory and their ability to influence events is astonishing. A small group of ragtag rebels operating in the remote Midwest in 1996 barely made news: Now there's hardly any other news but the Maoists. So what exactly is guerilla warfare? What are the chances of success for a counter-insurgency operation, and what do the security forces need to do?

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Guerilla warfare is, traditionally, the response of a small indigenous group combating a powerful force, such as a state or an occupying power. It is asymmetric warfare, unlike most formally declared conflicts. Guerilla warfare involves mobile, small and flexible units, fighting without a distinct front line. Though most insurgencies never achieve much, except death and destruction, two prime examples from the 20th century show that they can actually win. Mao Zedong and Ernesto Che Guevara, a Cuban revolutionary of Argentine origin, were spectacularly successful using the tactics. Mao ran a successful guerilla war against the Kuomintang government in China and replaced it with communist rule in 1949. Che helped Fidel Castro overthrow the dictator Batista in Cuba and to found a communist state in 1959.

Ambush and sabotage are typical tactics of guerilla warfare; the aim is ultimately to destabilize the state by means of a prolonged, low-level confrontation.

The Nepali Maoists have adopted the same tactics.

At the beginning of the insurgency in 1996, progress for the Maoists was slow but still steady. The Maoists, following the Chinese leader's strategy, declared their struggle a "people's war." At the beginning they attached great importance to winning the "hearts and minds" of the people to establish base areas. At the same time they found terror an indispensable tool to command obedience from the residents of the same base areas.

MAOISTS IN ACTION

The Maoists moved to a full-fledged guerilla war in November 2001, with a major offensive against police stations and military posts. Professor Thomas A. Marks, a military strategist at U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, describes the warfare scheme of Nepali Maoists in the

following words: "Terror facilitates or establishes the 'space' necessary for the insurgent political campaign eliminating societal rallying points [creating a vacuum.]"

As the Police responds to the new situation the Maoists would attack the Police in guerilla actions with small patrols— as a consequence they retreat and consolidate their forces, exposing larger swaths of the population to insurgent domination, according to Professor Marks.

Much to the rebels' delight security forces overreacted, causing human rights violations. The government attempted a crack down on the Maoist activities twice. Operation Romeo (1997/98) investigated and arrested suspected Maoists. Operation Kilo Sierra (1998/99) was a search-and-arrest campaign in the Midwest. This caused the state forces to lose the hearts and minds of villagers, which the Maoists cleverly exploited. From the beginning, the Maoists appear to have successfully translated their thinking into action.

In 1996 they fought with the civilian police force that was largely unarmed or ill equipped. As the Maoists organized themselves into rough guerilla formations, they began to target police posts. Their tactics then were guided by their need to organize and equip themselves as a unified force. They captured a substantial amount of weapons in the attacks, and trained their cadres and officers. As their firepower grew, they began



READY FOR THE BATTLE: Maoist guerillas parade during a function in Sindhupalchowk to announce 'people's government'

PHOTO: AP/WIDEWORLD

to make long-term war plans—as espoused by Mao.

Mao Zedong's theory of guerilla warfare divides conflict into three phases. It talks about establishing base areas, strategic defense, strategic balance or equilibrium, strategic offense, and finally capturing the cities. In the first phase the insurgents gain support of the population and attack government offices and officers. They also disseminate propaganda that targets government institutions. In the second phase insurgents widen attacks on security forces and vital institutions, and take effective control of more territory. In the final phase, conventional and psychological attacks target major cities and take over the country. But there is a difference between Mao's China and Nepal today.

The key difference: No external force is involved in Nepal. The anti-Japanese sentiments served as a rallying cry for both the Kuomintang and Maoists in 1930s in China. The same is not true about Nepal today. Analysts say the Maoists are trying to lure India into the fight precisely to fill the Japanese role. They say their recent exhortation against New Delhi is designed to achieve their goal. Despite Maoists claims about inevitable victory, the difference: The absence of a similar rallying cry will affect their ambition.

The Maoists now claim that they are in the final phase, a strategic offensive beginning 2004 adopting Mao's tactics: Surround the cities with liberated villages. From 1996 to 2001, the Maoists ran a strategic defensive phase. In 2003 they claimed that they had attained the strategic equilibrium. They have some justification to substantiate their claim: The only parts of the country still under full government control are the district headquarters and cities and rest are by default under Maoists control. But the Maoists do not have what Mao had—sufficient forces to take the urban areas or maintain permanent base areas.

“The Maoists have failed in their schemes of things,” says military analyst Karna Bahadur Thapa, a retired major. “They have failed to overrun the state according to their time-frame.” Despite their apocalyptic rhetoric about the final phase and the end of the “old regime,” the Maoists know they cannot beat the

Army if they have to fight a conventional war. But the Maoist weakness doesn't necessarily imply that the security forces, in particular the Army, have succeeded at counterinsurgency.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Army's counterinsurgency operation that began in 2001 hasn't been able to contain the insurgents. Many say it

has been a failure. “You can't even talk about counterinsurgency failure in Nepal,” says Saubhagya Shah, a writer who keeps a close tab on security related issues, “because there wasn't any [counterinsurgency operation] to start with.” What the government forces have been doing so far is passive defense of static



nw/ss

Not a number's game



positions, which hardly counts as counterinsurgency, he says.

Analysts agree that the Army's effort is falling short. They say insurgency is difficult to crush even for a superpower, if the insurgency has external shelter and support. They cite the ordeal the American military is facing in Iraq as an example. Even with the best technology and massive force, the U.S. Army is having a tough time. The Iraqi insurgents get support from sympathizers in Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. "One of the main determinants [of the success of] any counterinsurgency operation around the world is whether the insurgents have safe havens and bases outside the country," says Shah. Counterinsurgency successes have been rare.

Only two counterinsurgency operations after World War II are counted as outright successes: the British campaign in Malaya against the Communist Party of Malaya from 1948 to 1960 and the Philippine operation against the Hukbalahap Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army, a Communist resistance group in Luzon in the Philippines, from 1946 to 1954. The French and Americans failed grandly in Vietnam. There are conflicting opinions about the success of similar operations in Algeria against the Algerian National Liberation Front, and about the Angola conflict. With limited positive experience to draw on, there's no roadmap for how to win a

counterinsurgency campaign, but all analysts agree that information gathered by people on the grounds, human intelligence or "humint," is critical.

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

"Governments that were able to create effective intelligence organizations and use them efficiently were normally successful in their counterinsurgency efforts," wrote Dr. Charles A. Russel (former Chief of Acquisitions and Analysis Division, Directorate of Special Organizations, U.S. Air Force) and Major Robert E. Hildner, a former American counterintelligence officer in their joint essay "Intelligence and Information Processing in Counterinsurgency." Fighting an insurgency means combating an indefinable and shadowy enemy who is intermingled with the local population. It is hard to pin-down who is a rebel and who is not without a reliable humint network. The pattern of attack and counterattack in guerrilla warfare is that a weaker foe attacks a stronger enemy in the place of his choosing, then melts into the population. And for a long time, the Nepali Army had been kept away from the people.

For many years the Army remained isolated, literally within their bases for the most part. Since its deployment against the Maoists in 2001, the RNA has put a lot of effort into revamping its intelligence network by planting informants and deploying regular army personnel undercover. But the key problem seems that it hasn't been quite able to develop relationship with ordinary Nepalis.

"The Army hasn't been able develop as good a humint network as expected, since its deployment," says analyst Thapa, the retired Major. "But even the

civilian intelligence network [the police and the National Investigation Department] has been destroyed by the political leaders in last 12 years." It has become a mere recruitment center for party cadres, he says referring to the National Investigation Department. One serious charge against the military commanders in the outpost is that they don't seem too keen to intermingle with the local population—who can prove helpful for intelligence gathering. But more than poor intelligence constrains the Army.

There just aren't enough soldiers. "The Army is stretched too thin to contain the insurgency," says an Army officer. There are 11 infantry brigades and seven specialist brigades. Most of them are engaged in Kathmandu or are deployed to guard city centers and district headquarters. Only a small force is available for search-and-destroy missions. Only 30,000 Army personnel are available for mobilization: The rest are a backup force, says one retired officer.

But increasing the number is not a solution. The Army has to think out of the box. The Malaya operation succeeded because the British forces successfully learned the tactics from the battle ground and ways to identify insurgents from local population with the help of local Malayan forces—using "psychological operations" at unit level. Military Analysts note that the British forces were highly successful at gathering human intelligence dispersing their forces through a strategy that separated the insurgents from the local population. They conducted their operations using a calculated response, avoiding reprisals and excessive use of force. If this post World War II counterinsurgency

successes are anything to go by, the Army has to realize that more soldiers and firepower may simply not work, if they continue to implement conventional Military textbook manuals and doctrines. The Army hasn't learnt how to fathom the ways the Maoists think, says an analyst. Without that the Army is unlikely to beat the insurgency. **N**



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Trying to build rapport?

SS/NU



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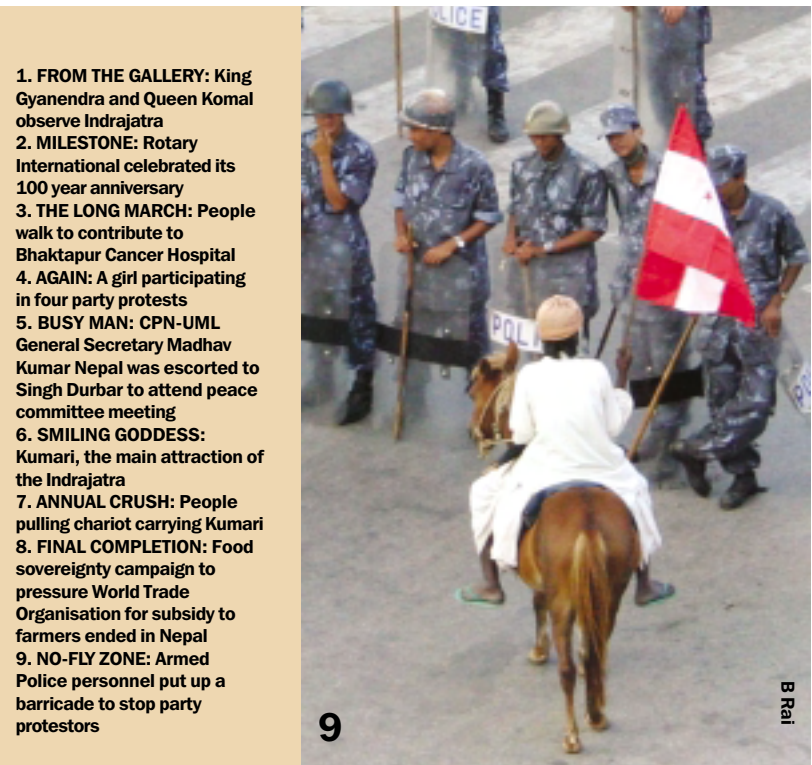
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1. FROM THE GALLERY: King Gyanendra and Queen Komal observe Indrajatra
 2. MILESTONE: Rotary International celebrated its 100 year anniversary
 3. THE LONG MARCH: People walk to contribute to Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital
 4. AGAIN: A girl participating in four party protests
 5. BUSY MAN: CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal was escorted to Singh Durbar to attend peace committee meeting
 6. SMILING GODDESS: Kumari, the main attraction of the Indrajatra
 7. ANNUAL CRUSH: People pulling chariot carrying Kumari
 8. FINAL COMPLETION: Food sovereignty campaign to pressure World Trade Organisation for subsidy to farmers ended in Nepal
 9. NO-FLY ZONE: Armed Police personnel put up a barricade to stop party protestors

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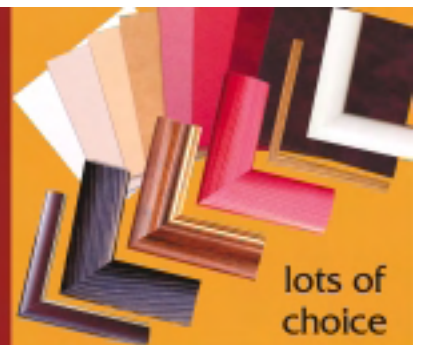
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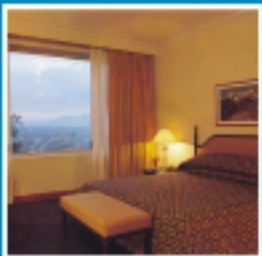
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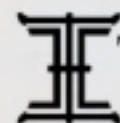
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Swagger Vs Analysis

Corn is not persuaded that a majority of Americans don't favor Kerry because—duh!—the elections haven't happened yet

BY SAMRAT UPADHYAY

Terry McAuliffe, Please Shut Up”—scolds David Corn in his latest column in *The Nation* magazine. McAuliffe is the chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and Corn is irked at emails from DNC about Bush's missing-time service in the National Guard during the Vietnam War. “Whatever Bush did way back then,” Corn argues, “his record in the White House is more critical—particularly what he has done since September 11, 2001.” Corn writes that by constantly harping on the National Guard issue, DNC is not only alienating voters but is also shifting attention away from what Kerry has begun to do in the past couple of weeks: attack Bush on his greatest vulnerability—Iraq.

Corn's annoyance is understandable. Kerry's speech on September 20 at New York University was the most aggressive he's given in his campaign. He chastised Bush for his “catastrophic decisions” in Iraq and for rejecting the United States' old-time allies. The speech has galvanized Kerry supporters. Finally their candidate is tackling Bush head-on on one issue where the voters give Bush low marks. Now Bush is on the defensive, and the Republicans are resorting to the sleaze by saying that a vote for Kerry is a vote for Al Qaeda, a tactic *The New York Times* finds “despicable” and “unAmerican.”

I first watched Corn on C-Span when he debated Richard Lowry of the *National Review*, a right-leaning magazine, at Cornell University. Corn was smart, articulate, and offered succinct arguments as to why Kerry is a better candidate for president. Corn is a sought-after liberal analyst. Apart from being the Washington editor of *The Nation*, the oldest political weekly in America, he's also a regular on many television and radio shows, including Fox News, National Public Radio, The McLaughlin Group, *Hardball*, and a host of other programs.

It seemed natural, then, for me to seek out Corn to ask for some insights on the madness of American presidential election campaigns.

I started off by asking him something I've struggled with. Given how badly things are going for Bush (the Iraq war, the lousy economy, the huge budget deficit) why hasn't John Kerry, the preferred candidate for the rest of the world by a 4-to-1 margin, convinced most Americans that he's a much better alternative to Bush?

Corn is not persuaded that a majority of Americans don't favor Kerry because—duh!—the elections haven't happened yet. “Bush is

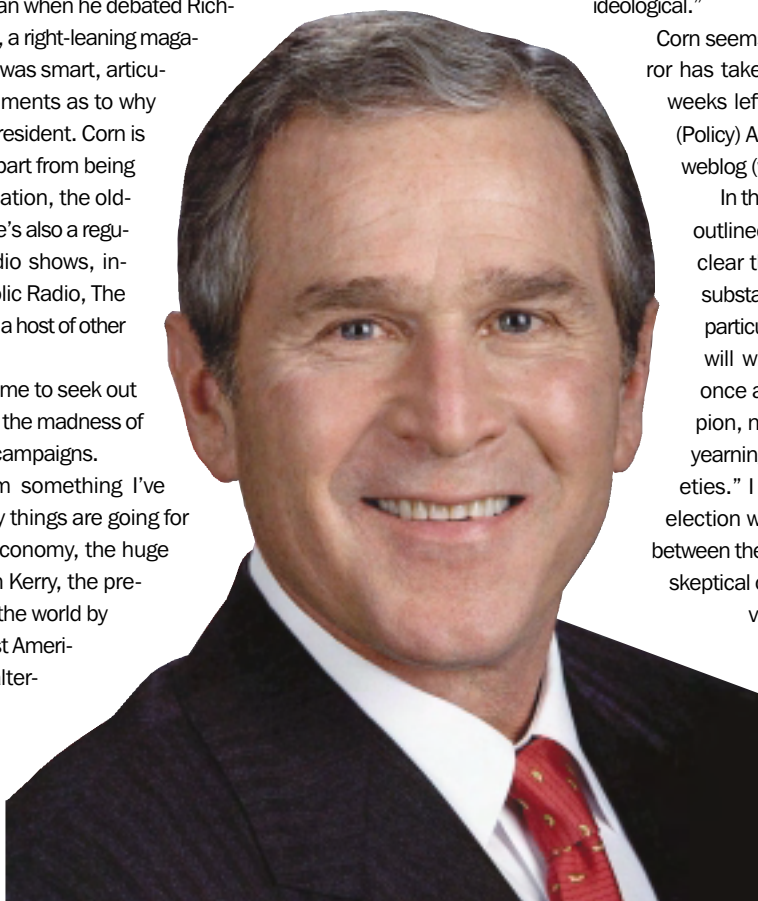
president at this time,” Corn says. “He's been able to give the country an impression of strength. The election is about ‘swagger’ (Bush) versus ‘rational analysis’ (Kerry).”

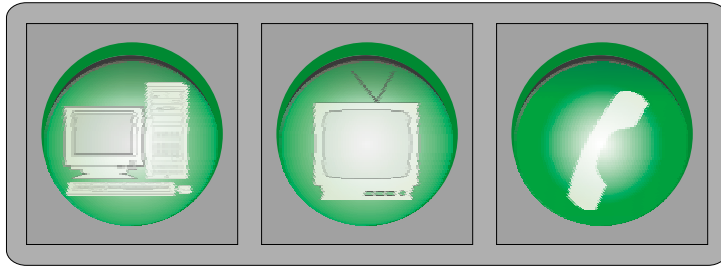
Until recently, however, Kerry's ‘rational analysis’ Corn refers to was not obvious to the American public because the media has focused on Kerry's Vietnam record and more recently, the CBS forged-document scandal. In his September 24 speech at Temple University in Philadelphia, Kerry said that the war on terror is not a clash of civilizations (finally!) but “between civilization and enemies of civilization”—a distinction that trounces the easy “the rest of the world hates our freedom” nonsense that the Bushies have promulgated. The clash of civilizations theory has also led the right-wing religious zealots to couch the war in terms of Christianity versus Islam—a never-ending prescription for worldwide death and destruction. Writes Corn, “The battle between the United States and Al Qaeda and *jihadism* is a geostrategic struggle, not a storybook tale.”

Corn faults the media for ignoring Kerry's specific proposals, which he's had for months now, for Iraq and the war on terror. I asked Corn why he thought the American media easily adopted the Bush administration's talking points. “The American media has a quasi-deferential attitude toward those in power,” Corn says. “It is more sociological than ideological.”

Corn seems happy that Iraq and war on terror has taken central stage in the very few weeks left for the elections. “Kerry Kicks (Policy) Ass,” he titles his latest entry in his weblog (www.davidcorn.com).

In the Temple University speech, Kerry outlined specific proposals that made it clear that his administration would be substantially different from Bush's. One particular line caught my attention: “We will win when they [ordinary people] once again see America as the champion, not the enemy, of their legitimate yearning to live in just and peaceful societies.” I asked Corn how important this election was for normalizing relationships between the US and many countries that are skeptical of US motives and actions. “It's a very important election in terms of our ties with the rest of the world, and how we are perceived,” Corn says. “If Bush wins, the rifts with our friends and allies will continue. If Kerry wins, we'll have an opportunity to start healing those rifts.” **N**





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Save A Little Prayer For Me

Kumari Jatra is still a spectacle, even if it takes a telescope to see it from the public viewing area

BY KUNAL LAMA

We Nepalis love spectacles, and it doesn't get any better than the most spectacular festival in Nepal: Indra Jatra. Combining a festival in honour of Indra, celebrating ironically his capture with a festival in honour of Kumari, Indra Jatra this year fell on September 27th, which also happens to be the World Tourism Day. "Athiti deva bhava," "Guests are Gods", a common refrain when we invoke the magic mantra of local hospitality—presumably not when the Maoists or CIAA officials come knocking—but it was befitting that we also fêted tourists, modern day Gods of the Greenbacks, on the same day as the King of Gods and the Living Goddess.

Well, by the time I got to Durbar Square, the entire population of the Valley appeared to have amassed to witness the annual ritual of the King paying public homage to the Kumari and her two companions, Bhairab and Ganesh, as they were drawn in separate chariots through the square. Needless to say, where there is King, there is security. Lots of them. The public got shooed back, not so politely, as far away as possible from the magic circle that increasingly isolates His Majesty. It is a telling commentary of the present time that this circle is getting bigger, those allowed in fewer, and the ordinary citizens don't pass muster. I got pinned against some shops all the way back at the edge of the square but, luckily, in full view of the ersatz and sloppily lime-washed Hanuman Dhoka palace where the King, his royal spouse, his court and government, his generals, foreign emissaries and other dignitaries assemble as the chariots pass by. I would have needed the Hubble telescope to see anything clearly, but it wasn't as bad as I am making it out to be.

The tourists had it easy. They had the steps of an entire temple reserved for them. The "Press," "Ladies" and "Gents" were also dedicated a temple each, but there were just too many of them. The crowd was in a restive but celebratory mood. And it was in a constant state of traffic. People pressed and surged in and out. As some got inevitably stuck, trod upon or rudely shoved or mangled, there was loud laughter and the most inappropriate, ungodly swearing. I vividly remember a feisty young lady crying vengeance at the youths who must have unintentionally brushed roughly against her. She

was carried away by the moving crowd, still shrieking revenge. A vegetable vendor got stuck with a huge basket atop his bicycle! He was cursed soundly. Then there were those making the most of the festive occasion: singing, dancing or simply making joyful music on their drums. The heat, the still air, the noise and the stench of the sweaty bodies were driving me mad. As I thought to myself, "This is not the place to gurgle with diarrhea", the French windows of the palace suddenly swung open wider, the medals on the chests of the Royal courtiers caught the light of the glittering chandeliers inside the *Gaddi Baithak*, their Majesties descended on to the balcony, the generals' wives arranged themselves to the right of the royal couple in the strict hierarchy of their husbands' positions, the dark-coated cabinet members to the left opportunistically dispensed with the pecking order completely, canon shots rent the air,

the golden top of a chariot was sighted and, a cheer and applause went up, for the King or for the Kumari I could not tell. It was heartening to witness these traditions being received instinctively – and enthusiastically.

The prime minister, on the other hand, is having a helluva time—the High-Level Peace Committee (HPC) notwithstanding—receiving and responding to the six questions put to his cabinet by Maoist supremo Prachanda. The tricky questions should have been asked of someone else really, but Mr. Deuba is the prime minister. With full executive powers. Allegedly. Dear Chairman Prachanda, if you want a quicker response next time, please do take care to posit multiple-choice questions. Even if the queries are not for him to answer, the prime minister will, at least, be able to put a tick next to one of the options available. Actually, on second thought, don't do that. Don't ask any questions at all. Just come out of hiding and talk peace. If Indra could come down from heaven in full human form, why

can't you? Okay, Indra, mistaken for a petty thief, was caught, bound and caged, with his arms outstretched, at the top of Maruhty Tole, but when his mother rescued him and revealed his identity, startled Kathmandu citizens prostrated themselves, released him immediately and even instituted a festival in his honour. Now wouldn't that be grand, to have a festival named after you? Come on, say yes. The prime minister will too. **N**



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Steely Scholar, Fr. Stiller

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

Tall and lean, Fr. Ludwig F. Stiller S.J. comes across as a person of steely resolve and determination. He exudes an aura of authority; his words precise and measured. Not one to indulge in empty talk, he likes to respond in short and direct sentences. Decades of discipline as a Jesuit priest have honed his body and mind.

It is not surprising that many Jesuit priests are famed researchers and educators and Nepal has been a

witness to that. History has it that Portuguese Jesuit, Fr. Joao Cabral visited the Kathmandu Valley in the spring of 1628 and was received by King Lakshminarasimha Malla. For centuries, Jesuits have been the scholarly wing of the Roman Catholic Church, traveling all over Asia, where they would learn the local cultures and teach the locals what they knew.

In Nepal, their institutional involvement started in 1950 with the establishment of St. Xavier's School. Fr. Stiller, who came to Nepal in August 1956 from the U.S. state of Ohio, is a classic example of the compassionate Jesuit scholar, deeply involved in the life of his adopted country.

Like most other Jesuit priests in Nepal in the 50s, Stiller taught at St. Xavier's and in 1966 helped establish the Godavari Alumni Association. It was important that the students felt like family and association with their alma mater continued even after their graduation.

To Stiller, who is now 76, his academic life is as important as his life as a teacher. He earned himself a Ph.D. in Nepali history from Tribhuvan

University and also became a founder-member of the Center for Nepal and Asian Studies, popularly known as CNAS. Later, his work evaluating how Nepalis respond to programs brought by foreign development projects took him to 22 districts.

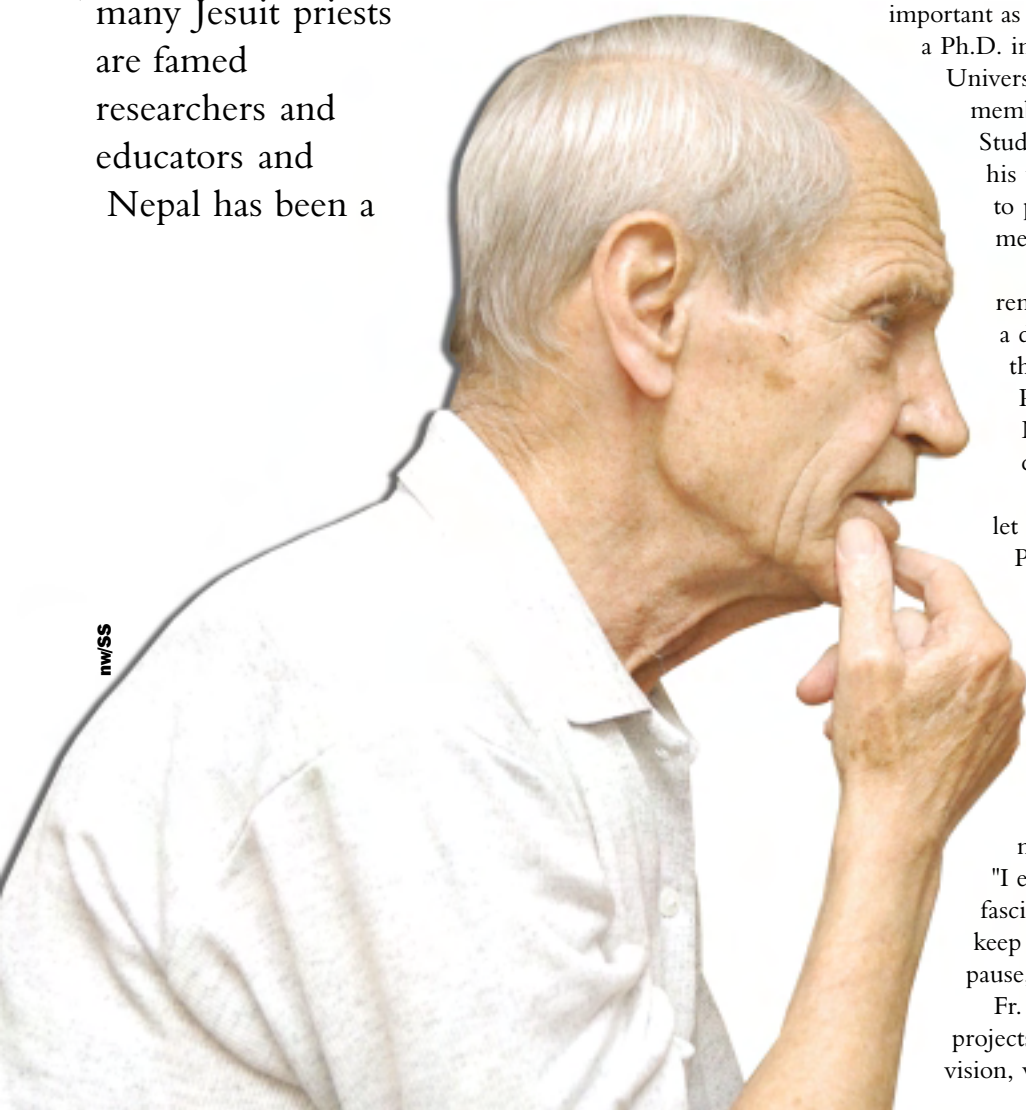
But posterity will perhaps best remember Fr. Stiller as the author of half a dozen books, including "The Rise of the House of Gorkha," "Planning for People" and "Nepal: Growth of a Nation." All have contributed significantly to our understanding of Nepal.

"Nepal is our child and we should let it grow. Nepal doesn't live in the Panchayat, Parliament or political party but in the villages," says Fr. Stiller, who was awarded Nepali citizenship in 1969, the third Jesuit to have received honorary citizenship in Nepal. He has been an ardent advocate of decentralization.

"I found I was getting older, and my superior moved me back," he says.

"I end up walking or riding the bus, I am fascinated by the number of schools and I keep in touch," he says, adding after a brief pause, "with a little political news."

Fr. Stiller feels sad that development projects operate with a Kathmandu-centric vision, which, according to him, ignores the



nw/SS

villagers. "One has to go to Humla to see what the people there think things should be like," he says as he points excitedly to a huge map of Nepal hanging on a meeting room of his residence and shows us the places he has been. He seldom travels beyond the Valley now.

"The strength has always been the people instead of processions down Durbar Marg," he says, obviously disapproving of the daily protests that now mark the urbanscape. Nepali strength and wisdom have saved him personally, he points out humbly.

During his stay in southern Humla, he almost fell off a steep trail. A companion quickly grabbed his rucksack and kept him from sliding hundreds of feet below into a turbulent river. Another time a local fisherman walked up to him and demanded that he come down from a "great big rock," where Fr. Stiller was sitting. The fisherman later told him that he had seen many people sit on the same rock and then end up in the river below. "That's wisdom I didn't know and was totally unaware of," says Fr. Stiller. "It just showed how concerned the villagers were." He learned quickly about life in remote Nepal.

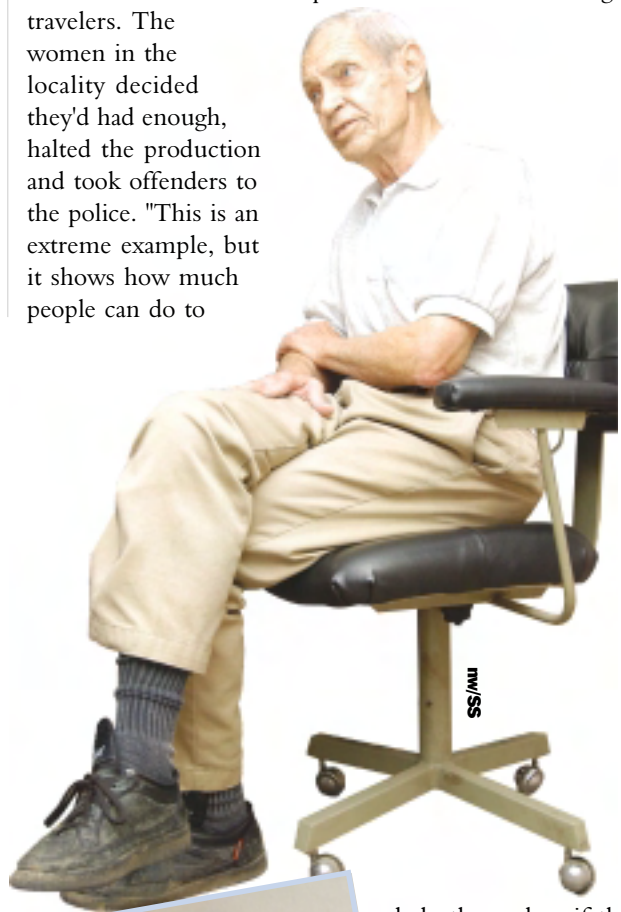
Other than his own near-death incidents, Fr. Stiller has many interesting stories to tell. One is about how well newspapers traveled in those days, when reading daily papers was considered a luxury. In a tiny bazaar in Humla he met a military officer eagerly waiting for a copy of *The Statesman*, the Indian newspaper. "The newspaper was brand new and had come on our plane. And I was thinking how remote this place was as it was so difficult to even move around the country," he recalls.

Another memorable moment came in Dhading in the 70s. He, alongside two other friends, were asked to devise a project for the German development agency, GTZ. It was an exciting offer: Unlike most other projects, the villagers were themselves asked to decide their needs and even manage the project. They were divided equally between all 450 village wards, and procedures were devised for checking expenditure. He still recalls how he stood up to address the local assembly, "thanked the gathering, said namaste, walked back to the highway and went back to Kathmandu on a truck, as there was no bus in those days."

It was a local project; this modest man trusted the villagers to carry it out without his advice. He was right. It was the enthusiasm of the local people, says Stiller, that led to the success of the project. The same project was replicated in other districts, and Fr. Stiller got the Agriculture Development Bank to lend their expert, Chandrakant Adhikari, to train villagers to manage the money so that it would grow.

"The concept worked because of the involvement of the people at the lowest level," he says. "Such projects are not just the responsibility of the government or an aid agency."

Fr. Stiller cites another instance of people helping themselves. A Far Western district headquarter, he says, had banned the local *rakshi* the place was famous for among travelers. The women in the locality decided they'd had enough, halted the production and took offenders to the police. "This is an extreme example, but it shows how much people can do to



help themselves if they are motivated."

It is in keeping with Fr. Stiller's character that he, a man who has spent his life helping others, speaks mostly about people helping themselves. And even though he is now confined to deskwork in his residence in Sanepa, he is still involved in the life of the wider

society. Apart from his research on Nepal's modern political history, Fr. Stiller still teaches occasionally (upon requests) and performs his regular functions as a priest in Lalitpur.

Some years ago, the indefatigable Jesuit produced a series of videotapes on the history of Nepal. He is now busy putting them on CDs for wider distribution. "It is a challenging project," he says, with typical authority. That will be another milestone in the life of Fr. Stiller and Nepal, his home for nearly 50 years. ■

CITY ThisWeek

EVENTS



Stone Age At Hyatt

The Hyatt Regency Kathmandu combines the ancient art of volcanic stone cooking with modern day technology for the preparation of sizzling tender steaks, chicken and fresh seafood at the Rox Restaurant till October 15, everyday from 6 p.m. onwards. Hot stone is a unique dining concept. Hot stone meals are quick, delicious and healthy. The volcanic stones are heated for six to eight hours in a specially designed wood char oven and made to retain heat for

forty-five minutes on stone-ware plates designed to withstand the intense heat. Fresh ingredients are placed directly onto the hot stones, which cook and lock in the nutrients, juices, flavor and a lot of sizzle. For information: 4491234 Extn. 5241.

North West at The Café

Enjoy traditional Northwest frontier Cuisine in a contemporary setting from 6:30 p.m. onwards at The Café in the Hyatt Regency Kathmandu.

Batsayana In Town

ART EXHIBITIONS

Painting exhibition of Durga Baral titled "The Faces of Time and the Colors of Sensibility" at the Siddhartha Art Gallery till October 31. Over the years, Baral's paintings have been valued for their sublime exploration of the socio-economic and political situation of Nepal even though his cartoons in Kantipur and The Kathmandu Post under the nom de plume "Batsayana" have overshadowed his

reputation as a painter. He is making his first solo appearance after a gap of 21 long years, this time, with a powerful statement about conflict-ridden Nepal.

The exhibition also marks the 19th anniversary of Siddhartha Art Gallery.



Graphic Prints

September Collection from Nepal, Finland, India and the USA at Gallery Moksh, Cross Kitchen in Lazimpat till October 18.

Walk Along Bagmati

Mix media painting exhibition by Dagmar Mathes at Park Gallery, Lazimpat till October 10. For information: 4419353.

The food of the Northwest frontier, developed in its different regions, has its own set of dishes with differences in flavor, color and preparation. Chef Narender and his team have conjured up relishing fare in the form of *Dahi Ke Kebab*, *Jimikand Ke Shami*, *Murgh Kalmi Kebab*, *Subzi Ke Shikampur* and other delicacies.

Unwind over an unending list of mouth-watering delicacies and savor the flavors of authentic spices, herbs, seeds and seasonings of an exotic cuisine. For information: 4491234 Extn. 5223.

Changa Chait 2061

The final showdown of the "Kite Flying Competition" is



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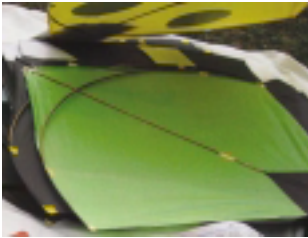
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taking place at the Windy Hills of Club Himalaya, Nagarkot from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on October 16. The best among Nepal's top corporate houses, financial institutions, tourism industry, trading companies, and multinational companies will be battling it out with a fight high up in the skies. Entry fee is Rs. 100/- with one welcome drink. For information: 6680080, 6680083.

1974 AD Jam

1974 AD will perform at the Rox Bar in the Hyatt Regency on October 8 from 7:30 p.m. onwards. Ticket prices are Rs. 300/- for girls, Rs. 500/- for guys and Rs. 700/- for couples. Includes a free shot of whiskey or a soft drink. Door prizes and giveaways are included. Organized by Collage Pvt. Ltd. For information: 9851051986.

Cine Club

Movie: Team Riders (2002). Director: Gerard Pires. Starring: Stephen Droff. At the Alliance Francaise, Tripureshwore. Date: October 10. Time: 2 p.m. For information: 4241163.

ONGOING

Chiso Chiso Hawama

Enjoy a getaway package of 1 night and 2 days at Club Himalaya for Rs. 1700 per person on twin sharing basis for Nepalis and expats. A barbeque lunch of chicken, fish and mutton is also served at Restaurant Kantipur for Rs. 500/- per person every Sunday. For information: 6680080, 6680083.

Dwarika's Thali

Enjoy Nepali cuisine and hospitality for lunch at Dwarika's The Heritage Courtyard. Also at Krishnarpan, the Nepali specialty restaurant at Dwarika's Hotel, 4 to 16 course ceremonial meals are served for lunch and dinner (table reservation recommended). On Fridays, blues, jazz & beyond by Abhaya & The Steam Injuns at Fusion,

the Bar at Dwarika's, from 7 pm onwards. Have a good time during "Sekuwa Saanjh" with barbeque dinner and a can of beer or a soft drink on Fridays at Dwarika's for Rs. 555/- per person. Happy hours from 1600-1900 hrs with a "Lucky Draw" from visiting cards or BBQ coupons. For information: 4479488.

Jack's BBQ

Complimentary shot of Jack Daniel's with every barbeque order at the Splash Bar & Grill in the Radisson Hotel, every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 6 p.m. onwards. Live band on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Longest Happy Hour

Buy any drink and get another one free at The Piano Lounge Bar at the Hotel Yak and Yeti. An array of exotic snacks also available. Time: 12-7:30 p.m. For information: 4248999.

Rock@Belle Momo

Rock 'n roll band, Steel Wheels, will be performing every Friday 6:30 p.m. onwards at Belle Momo, Durbar Marg. Also enjoy the Belle combo meal. For information: 4230890.

Friday Nights at Jatra

Live music by The Strings every Friday night at Jatra, Thamel. For information: 4256622.

Spin and jive with DJ Raju and The Cloud Walkers

DJ Raju spins out the beats catering to the needs of the dance floor - hip hop, reggae, rock, pop, latino, arabic, underground and electric music for party owls. Also jive with The Cloud Walkers. Enjoy the happy hour from 6-10 p.m. At the Rox bar, Hyatt Regency. For information: 4491234

SHOWING AT JAINEPAL CINEMA

FOR INFORMATION: 4442220



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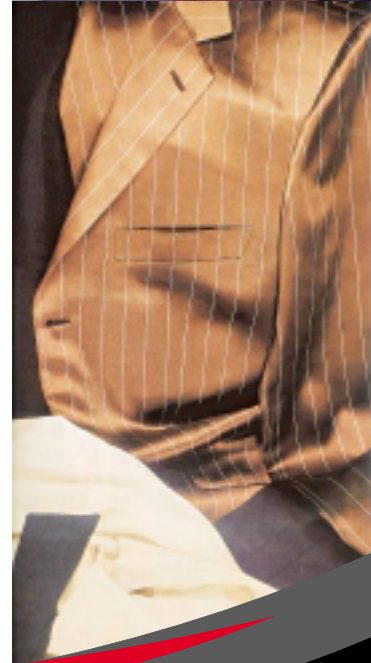
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Fashion FAD

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

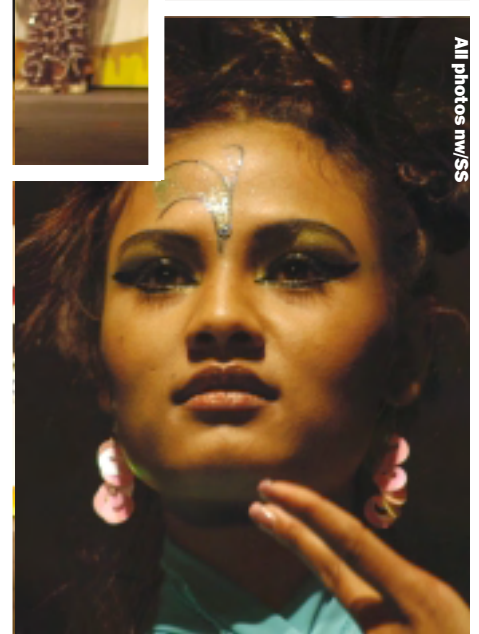
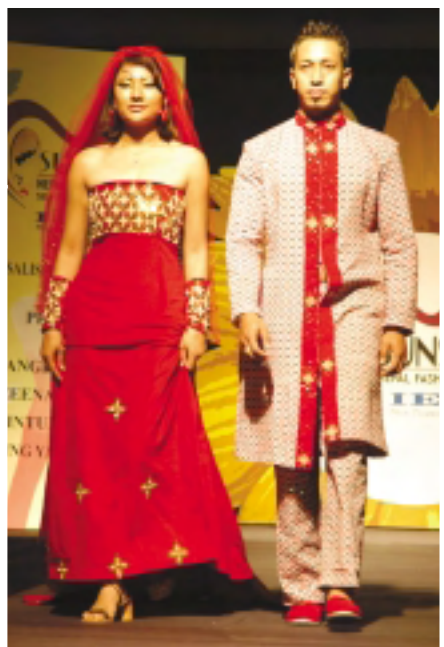
The well-to-do have always known that “clothes make the man,” and trendy types have always counted on the clothes they wear to make heads turn. People in the fashion business tell us that many ordinary Nepalis are now starting to pay more attention to the fashion scene.

More people are opting for designer wear from boutiques, which seem to be mushrooming in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan. Pass through Kupondole, and you’ll notice half a dozen boutiques there. Designers tell us that their clients are chiefly working women who are setting a new and highly fashion-conscious trend in urban areas. Once they see Kusum sashaying a certain kurta on Sony TV, they want the same design tailored for them.

“The increasing numbers of fashion design institutes opened to meet the increasing demand shows the trend,” says Shailaja Adhikari, managing director of IEC, one of a dozen fashion schools currently in operation around the country. Adhikari, whose institute has also opened a branch in Pokhara, says three of her students there have already opened their own boutiques after completing a year and a half of studies.

IEC last week organized the Sunsilks Nepal Fashion Week, bringing together works from 29 design groups on a single platform over five days, starting September 24. Their works covered a wide range: from summer wear, casual wear and wedding wear to party outfits in attractive colors. Some designs included artistic embroidery and cost up to Rs.





All photos: nm/SS



40,000. Models displayed casual skirts and trendy tops, party gowns, kurtas and saris to the accompaniment of the evening's music and lights. Though there was designer wear for men, it played a minor role in the shows; as designers put it, most Nepali men still opt to stay out of boutiques, though the numbers of those who are attentive to fashion trends is steadily rising.

"It was a wonderful opportunity," says designer Suzeesha Sen, who also had a stall at the event held at the Yak

and Yeti Hotel. "More than just business, designers like us got to interact with each other as well as build personal contacts with potential clients who came to the event."

According to Adhikari, the event was extremely successful in attracting VIPs, a class most other fashion shows fail to capture. "Among our guests were the British Ambassador, business people and art gallery owners, who seemed very anxious to promote the fashion scene," she says. The work of young designers is starting to make a mark; their work needs to be showcased in events like these.

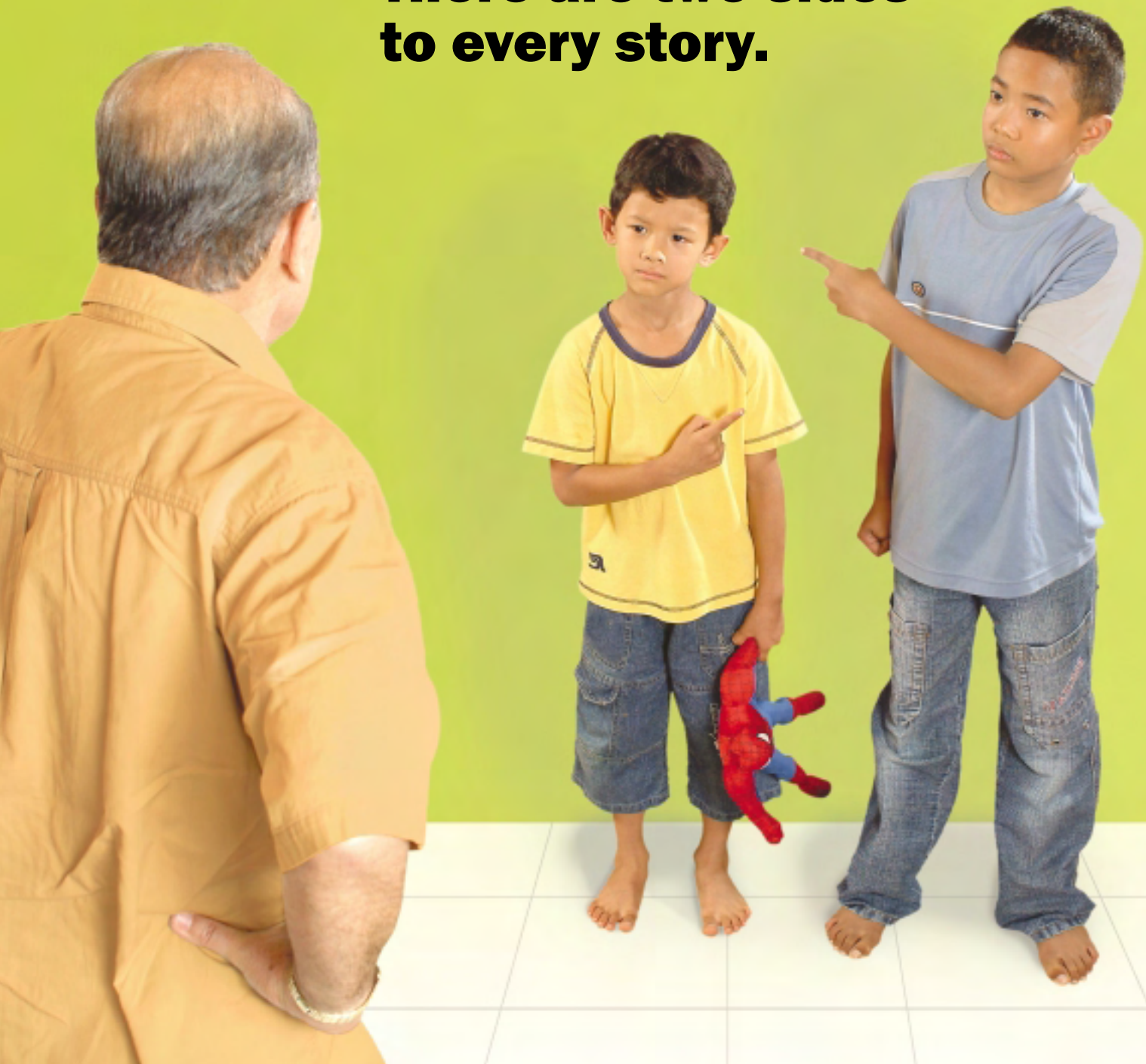
The sponsors of the event, were delighted by the turnout. "On average we had over 250 people who bought tick-

ets for Rs. 600 on each of the first four days. Even on a work day like Monday, the turnout was tremendous," a Sunsilk executive told Nation Weekly. "This certainly describes the emerging fashion scene in the country."

One male viewer, less than impressed with "fashion" pointed out that some of the clothes displayed on the ramp were unwearable. In particular, some of the short and transparent summer dresses showcased during the fashion show caused gasps. "I felt quite embarrassed at some moments," he said, "It'll be ages before girls in Kathmandu are bold enough to wear them!"

But with fashion, you never can tell. **N**

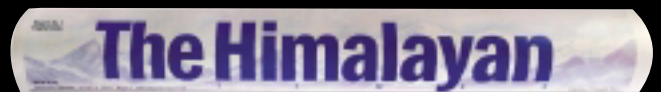
There are two sides to every story.



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

Let Them Be

It's not fair to expect our players to follow the footsteps of legendary footballers like Zidane and Figo and take early retirement

BY SUDESH SHRESTHA

It was as stunning as the Greek triumph at Euro 2004: Football followers all over the world were taken by surprise when a host of Europe's top players retired after the championship in Portugal. Zinedine Zidane and Luis Figo, arguably two of the finest footballers of our time, decided to call it quits.

It's sad that their fans won't get to see these gifted players in their national jerseys anymore. Much of France thought Zidane still had a few more years left in him.

Retirement is never an easy decision. But players have to decide whether to keep playing until their bodies can take it no more or to continue just for the pleasure of the game. Or perhaps they step out while at the top, wanting to be remembered as a winner rather than an also-ran.

To Figo and his teammate Zidane, who both play for the Spanish giant Real Madrid, the second option seemed wiser. "I don't want to abuse my fame, and I'm not afraid of retiring," the 30-year-old Figo told ESPN in a recent interview.

Of course he's not, when he has for years drawn a weekly salary of over \$100,000 and firmly secured his economic future for himself and his family for the rest of their lives.

Many top-flight players in Nepal share the retire-at-your-prime sentiments: It's best to bow out while the fans still want you around.

But their careers have dissimilar endings.

"Drawing comparisons with stars like Zidane and Figo is the stuff of wild fantasy for us," says former national team goalkeeper Upendra Man Singh, who

recently announced his retirement from international football.

Singh takes comfort from modest successes: recent improvements in club football in Nepal and bigger clubs trying to develop themselves along professional lines. Singh, along with Dev Narayan Chaudhary and Bal Gopal Maharjan, were given awards and Rs.100,000 each for their outstanding performances. Chaudhary was declared Player of the Year for 2001; Singh for 2002 and Maharjan for 2003.

"It's difficult to imagine living a decent life being a full-time footballer



RICH AND COZY: Figo gets a weekly paycheck of US\$100,000

DOESN'T HURT: The French superstar Zidane called for early retirement

here,” says 30-year-old Singh. Still, he counts himself among the fortunate ones. “Thanks to God, I always had a family business to fall back on.”

His long-time teammate on the national side, Bal Gopal Maharjan, believes it’s unfair to compare Nepali footballers, whose annual income is below Rs.100,000, with their compatriots in India and Bangladesh, let alone superstars.

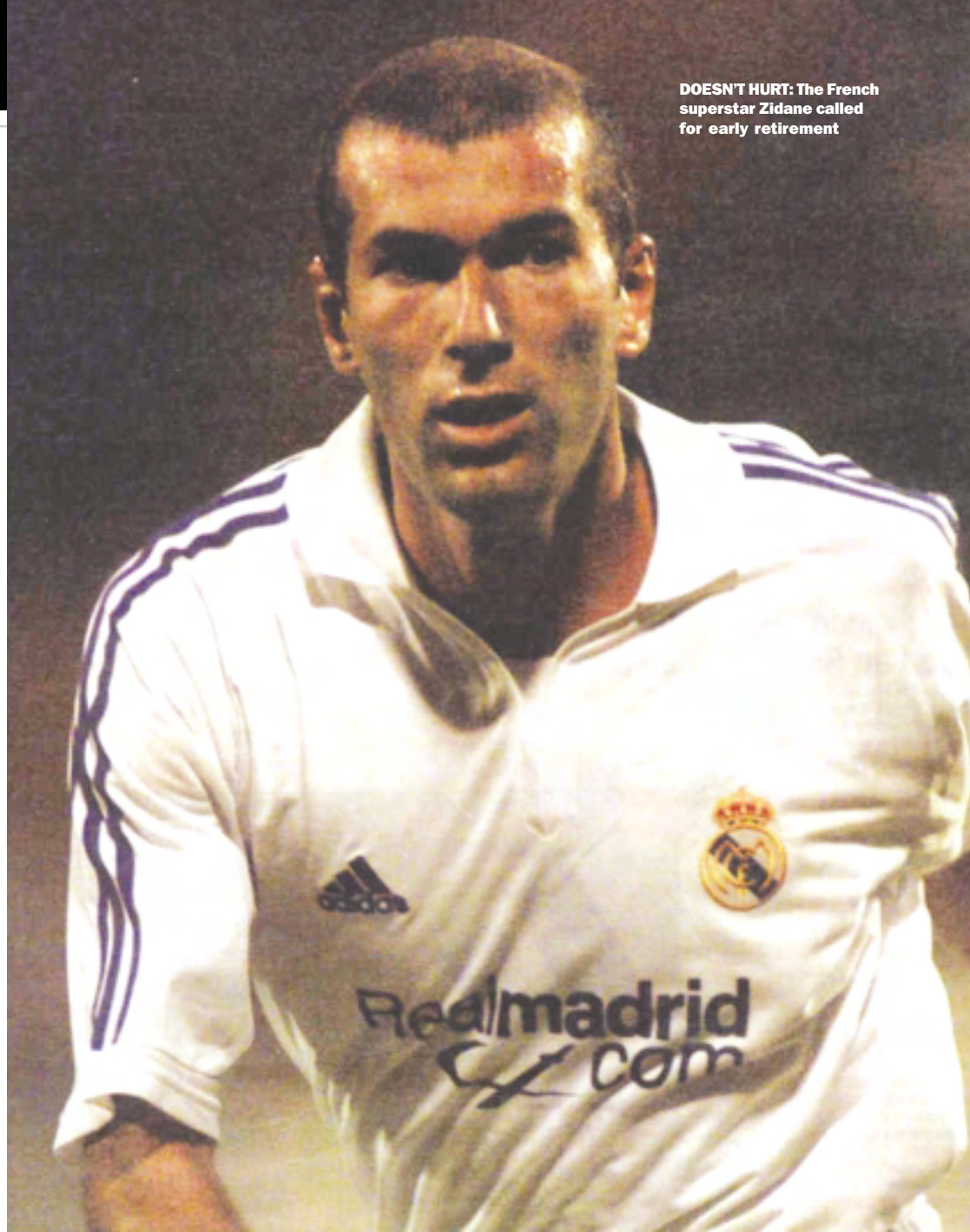
Top professionals in Bangladesh earn around Tk 2 million (Rs 2.57 million) in one season. In India, they make up to IRs. 1 million.

Maharjan at 29 has been a bulwark for Nepal’s midfield for over a decade. He says Mahindra & Mahindra of India paid him a monthly wage of IRs. 25,000 during his brief stint during the 1997-98 season. He also played with Bangladeshi club Brothers Union between 2001 and 2003. “I was paid \$1,500 per month there,” he says.

“Four or five good professional seasons in India or Bangladesh means a secure future,” says Maharjan. “Little wonder there are hardly any qualms over retirement there.” Not so in Nepal, and the reason is none other than financial. Maharjan is considering a career in refereeing after his retirement, while taking up another profession—he is a certified pharmacist. Meanwhile, he wants to continue playing for a couple of more seasons.

For many Nepali football players, there is virtually no career after retirement, especially for those who come from outside the capital. Many of them spent their best years fighting for a national berth rather than preparing for college exams.

Even the limited opportunity that a number of Nepalis enjoy playing club football in India and Bangladesh is now



under threat. Indian and Bangladeshi clubs are more interested in scouting talents in West Africa, most notably Nigeria, for subsistence wages, as little as \$500 per month. “Burly Africans at bargain prices mean Nepali players are losing out,” says a player who has played club football in India and Bangladesh.

For the guardians of Nepali football who have a dream to take Nepal to the second-tier in Asian football, after such top-tier luminaries as Japan and Korea, by promotion of young talent, this is a scary prospect. An individual’s motivation will depend a lot on a clear roadmap of his current career prospects and prospects after retirement.

“That’s one big challenge,” admits Ganesh Thapa, the president of All Nepal Football Association (ANFA). He hopes that the new crop of players will at least have a breathing space. “We’ve raised the prize money in a majority of tournaments.” Thapa says. Some players now earn as much as Rs.10,000 per month, a far cry from salaries during Thapa’s club days.

He likes to talk proudly of a Rs. 4 million special welfare fund, which helps players and coaches meet their medical expenses. “We may be behind our neighbors in terms of players’ earnings,” he says, “but we’re at least trying to follow their footsteps.” For now, there will be few Zinedines and Figos in Nepal, where every player dreads retirement. **N**

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Snapshots

BY DHRITI BHATTA

Earthly Beauty

ANITA GURUNG, Miss Nepal 2004 Second Runner-Up, will be the first participant from Nepal to feature in the Miss Earth contest. The beauty pageant will be held in Manila on October 24. The 18-year-old well realizes that she has her task cut out. "I will try to introduce Nepal to the world," the 5'5" tall beauty told the media before leaving for the Philippines on September 29. Gurung is among more than 70 other contestants, who will be competing in the fourth occurrence of this pageant that advocates protection of the environment. "We can solve our environmental problems," writes Gurung on the Miss Earth official website, "by having strong partnership with different companies and with communities in order to share information." Jyoti Brahmin, another beauty of Nepali origin, is representing India at the Manila pageant. Gurung told us she would be performing a Nepali folk dance, carrying a traditional *doko*. A lot of Nepalis will be dancing to her tune.



cybernepal.com.np

Distance Runner

Athens was a huge disappointment for Nepal. Last week, **RAJENDRA BHANDARI** salvaged some of our pride. He won a gold in the Asian All Star Athletics Championship in Singapore, completing the 5,000-meter race in 14 minutes and 16.33 seconds. He then delivered Kennedyesque advice to his fellow athletes. "Think of what you can do for your country before you expect something in return." He bagged two silvers at the ninth South Asian Games in Islamabad early this year. In Athens, he broke, not just the national record, but also a SAARC record, running the 5000 meters in 14 minutes and 14.04 seconds. But that just wasn't good enough for an Olympic medal. For now, that will have to wait.



THE VIGIL MAN

Like most other sectors, the media too has been hit hard by the conflict. It took President of International Federation of Journalists **CHRISTOPHER WARREN** to come to town himself to express his solidarity for a free press. Warren also promised assistance to Nepali journalists, which he said, could include either economic aid, security-related training or a global campaign for the safety of the beleaguered press. He identified Nepal as one of the most dangerous places for journalists and the present working conditions as tough as that in Iraq or the Philippines, which last year recorded the highest number of deaths among journalists in Asia.



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KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Assist in designing various print publications published by the organization.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: Competent in graphic designing programs such as, Adobe Photoshop, PageMaker, Corel Draw etc. Pre-Press knowledge in publishing will be an advantage.

FINANCE OFFICER (1)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Manage financial activities, keep records and produce reports.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: A bachelor's degree in Accounting/Business with previous experience in similar field.

MARKETING OFFICER (4)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Market the various publication and services offered by the organization.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: A bachelor's degree in Business with experience in media marketing is preferable.

MARKETING/SALES EXECUTIVE (5)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Market and solicit sales of the various publication and services offered by the organization.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: Intermediate.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (1)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Manage office facilities, assets and supervise support staffs.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: A bachelor's degree in Business with experience in similar field is preferable.

RECEPTIONIST (2)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Manage office telecommunication, fix appointments, file correspondence and administer front office duties.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: Intermediate with secretarial training

DRIVER (1)

KEY RESPONSIBILITY: Drive and maintain company vehicles.
MINIMUM REQUIREMENT: A valid driving licence with minimum 2 years of driving experience

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Research Training & Consultancy Division
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Our mission is to empower disadvantaged adults and youth to become productive members of the society through basic educational assistance, vocational and technology training, mentoring, teaching, and arts & sports programs.

HOPE Foundation provides educational opportunities for disadvantaged children, adolescents and adult through developmental programs that enhance personal growth and improve economic stability.

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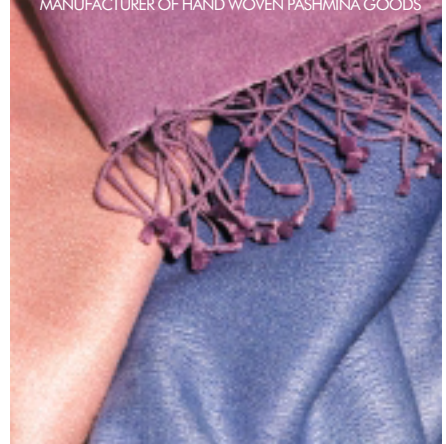


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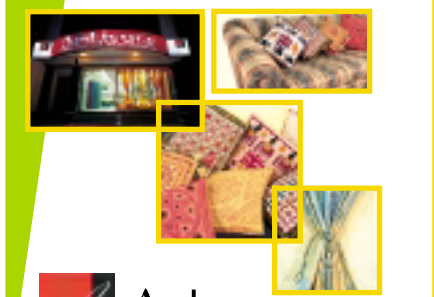
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Making A Difference

Her friends both in the United States and in Nepal know her as a shouting optimist, who always wanted to come back home and make a difference—in whatever little ways she could. So the career choice wasn't too much of a dilemma for **Manju Karki** when she completed her studies (Masters in Public Health from University of Michigan in 2002). After working

for an NGO in the United States and at WHO headquarters in Geneva, the destination was Nepal and her field, the NGO world. A year after her return, she has lost none of her infectious optimism, but the earlier zeal is now tempered with caution. "I think there is also a lot of favoritism," says Karki about Nepal. "Many times employees only work to please their boss instead of thinking of their job as their own project." Working in regions affected by conflict was another huge challenge that has sapped some of her motivation. Last month, Karki found out, rather painfully, how it was to be on the receiving end of the conflict: The Maoists bombed her Dhumbarahi residence, which was partially rented to the government run Agricultural Development Office. "We had a close call," she says. Currently working for Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), she is soon moving on to Action Aid. She talked to Aditya Adhikari about her decision to return to Nepal and her experiences, both in Nepal and in the west.

What made you decide to return to Nepal?

There were many incentives to keep working in the west. There was a great deal of competition and there were rewards. There was the opportunity to do original research and publish findings in journals. But somehow there was something lacking. Perhaps that had something to do with being away from family in Nepal, and also the desire to make changes here. Hearing about interesting projects that my friends in Nepal were involved in was also very tempting. I felt that I could really make some kind of difference here.

How would you describe the work culture of the western NGO world?

I was impressed by the separation between the personal and professional lives when it came to work. That everyone was highly motivated was also exciting.

What is the NGO world like in Nepal?

I can't speak for everyone, but from what I've seen, it is a little unhealthy. There is no clear distinction between the personal and professional lives. I think there is also a lot of favoritism. Many times Nepali employees only work to please the boss instead of thinking of their job

Many have been made unnecessary victims and I feel that the cost we have to pay because of the conflict is too high.

as their own project. This hampers motivation. Of course this doesn't apply to the organization I work for, but is rather my general observation of the NGO world in Kathmandu. But the opportunities are immense: to create projects, for travel and networking. There are also many talented people working. The experience I got working in the field broadened my horizons and gave me a multidimensional perspective. All this has made for an exciting work climate.

How did your work experience in the west help your work in Nepal?



B Rai

My writing and research skills improved tremendously in the States. I learned to back up my ideas with concrete facts and information. I also developed leadership qualities that I wouldn't have had if I hadn't lived abroad. If there are ideas I don't like, I'm not hesitant to voice my opinion even if the person I am talking with is much more senior to me.

How has working in Nepal for the past year been?

When I came it was really exciting and the work has been largely fulfilling. But sometimes I feel that the cost we have to pay because of the conflict is too high. Our staff have been unnecessary victims, for example, and has had to face harassment in places like Dang and Baglung. My own house [in Kathmandu], which was rented to the government run Agricultural Development Office, was bombed. All these things are really frustrating and brings down your motivation.

What advice do you have for Nepalis abroad who wish to come back?

Don't be over-ambitious. There are problems of convenience and accessibility that may be frustrating. Even simple things like the Internet and photocopy machines may be inaccessible. Perhaps the people you meet will not always reciprocate the enthusiasm you have. But, again, the opportunities are immense. If you want to work in the NGO world and have concrete plans of your own it isn't that difficult to get funding, provided your proposal is sound. The work here is fulfilling as it gives an opportunity to work in a wide number of fields instead of narrow specialization as in the west. **N**

Justice Without War

War is nasty, brutish and never short enough

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

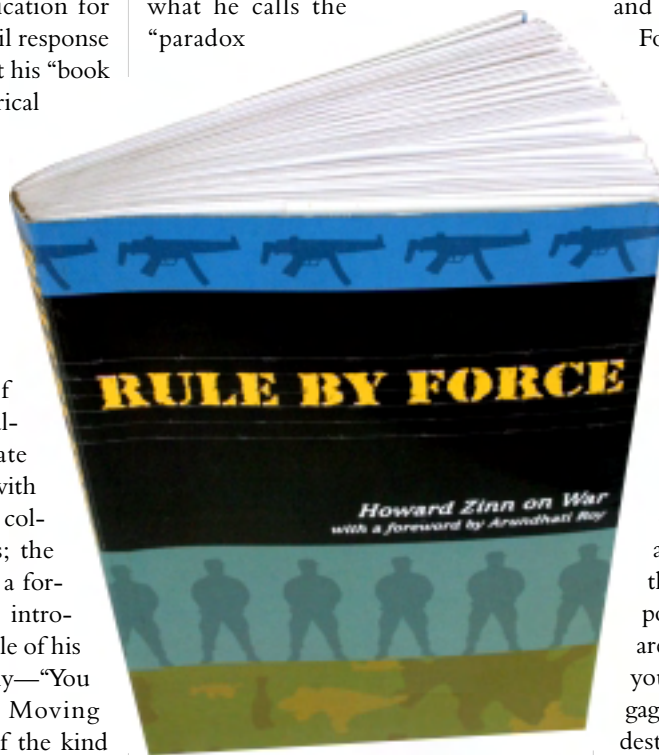
Those who fight in wars have no illusions about “good” wars. Who better to write of the ruthlessness and brutality of war than someone who has fought in one? Professor Howard Zinn’s historical perspective, which is often seen as radical, is informed by his experience as a bombardier during World War II. What makes his position “radical” is that he sees no justification for ever going to war. In an e-mail response to this reviewer, Zinn says that his “book is intended to show by historical example, personal experience and logical argument that war is not morally acceptable or practically effective as a solution for whatever problems we face in the world.”

He explains why: “War is a monstrously wasteful way of achieving a social objective, always involving indiscriminate mass slaughter unconnected with that objective.” The book is a collection of 22 anti-war essays; the subcontinent edition features a foreword by Arundhati Roy, who introduces Zinn by saying, “The title of his lucid, engaging autobiography—“You Can’t Stay Neutral on a Moving Train”—is a clear giveaway of the kind of man he is.” Zinn’s views are always powerfully expressed and often sharply at odds with conventional wisdom. He explains what led to this book: “After my own experience in that war, I moved away from my own rather orthodox view that there are just and unjust wars, to a universal rejection of war as a solution to any human problem.”

Equally unorthodox is his rejection of the common conception of the historian as an impartial observer. He once remarked, “Objectivity is impossible, and it is also undesirable.” His essays are powerful partly because they are partisan. The essay “The Massacre of

History” is an account of how an air of nobility was accorded to “ugly realities” of American history by sympathetic chroniclers. He gives many examples of how even profound believers in democratic ideals have trampled on others’ rights in the name of “nationalism and expansionism” since the period immediately after American independence.

His arguments explain what he calls the “paradox



Rule By Force (Howard Zinn on war)
by Howard Zinn
Natraj Publishers (Paperback)
PAGES: 214
PRICE: Rs. 400

in American foreign policy” by means of examples from the founding of America to the present time. Zinn says that America talks about democratic ideals and yet continues to pamper and plant dictatorships abroad. He cites instances from South America, South-east Asia and the Caribbean. “In the United States today, the Declaration of Independence hangs on schoolroom walls, but foreign policy follows Machiavelli,” he states, and he

further claims that a nation’s relative liberalism at home often serves to distract domestic attention away from ruthlessness abroad.

His criticism of American government may strike many as hyperbolic. In “On Libya” he argues that if Libyan leader Khadafi was one face of terrorism, the other face was President Ronald Reagan during his presidency. “Does a Western democracy have a better right to kill innocent people than a Middle Eastern dictatorship?” In “Of Fish and Fishermen,” Zinn offers a powerful metaphor about the need to reverse the perspective to see the horror of war: He refers to an eerie movie clip in which the fisherman gets hooked instead of the fish and makes a desperate bid for escape.

For the first time the fisherman gets to see himself from the standpoint of the fish. The image of the fisherman is used to explain why there was a Japanese pacifist movement following the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“A Speech for LBJ [president Lyndon Johnson]” suggests that the then president tell the nation: “Some have criticized us for not trying even more force. Of course we could do this. No one in the world needs to be told how powerful we are. We can stay in Vietnam as long as we like. We can reduce the whole country to ashes. We are powerful enough to do this. But we are not cruel enough to do this. I as your president am not willing to engage in a war without end that would destroy the youth of this nation and the people of Vietnam.”

Zinn would find the equivalence between Vietnam and Iraq obvious. “All wars,” he says, “present agonizing moral questions,” and every war has two faces. If one face of the war in Iraq is promoting democracy and emancipating Iraqis from the ruthless chains of Saddam’s tyranny, the other face is unending violence and mounting human casualties.

Zinn’s insistence that there is no such thing as a “just or righteous war” is a challenge to the world to confront issues of justice, not without a struggle, but without war. **N**



Young Believers

There were times when all SLC toppers would flock to Amrit Science College and then compete for MBBS or BE degrees. Any digression from the script was frowned upon; it was considered ignoble. All intelligent students did science. Business studies were for lesser ones. Lesser still were those who went to law and liberal arts colleges; their poor SLC grades, bench mark for admissions, were not good enough for other disciplines.

That annual ritual was best evident after the SLC results. Just about every single SLC topper would have a front-page interview in Gorkhapatra (later also on NTV), where he (mostly a “he”) would announce that he wanted to be a doctor. He wanted to serve the country’s poor and needy.

Times have changed. And thank goodness. It was stifling. The urban middle class kids now have as many careers to choose from as the schools and colleges they go to. Private schools and colleges have long overtaken Amrit Science in terms of admission applications they get from young students. While medicine and engineering are still major draws among our best and brightest, these disciplines no more sound like the exclusive club they once did.

Today’s young students seem to have a sense of enterprise and adventure. And a better sense of what they want to do with their lives without their parents telling them the course of action. Increasing numbers of Nepalis are heading west for better education, for example. “The reason I want to go to the States is for better education,” says Yashas Vaidya, 18, a triple A student at the A Levels. “And for the overall development of my personality.” Unsurprisingly, more than 70 percent of Nepali students currently enrolled in the United States are undergrads.

So what does all this mean? It means several things. For one, the United States offers one of the most competitive educations in the world. In a globalized world, our own youngsters want to make sure that they want a degree that they can market beyond the confines of national

boundaries. This also means that we are going to lose a chunk of our best and brightest to foreign lands each year. The lure of the Land of Milk and Honey is not the only reason for the exodus. Protracted instability at home has significantly contributed to the dynamic. But it need not be our loss. The Nepali community in the United States has been steadily growing in size over the years—thanks also to the U.S. Diversity Visa. It’s now time to add some stature to the size.

With proper leadership and vision, Nepalis in the United States can be an influential lobby. Many of them have the habit of comparing themselves to the huge Indian community and feeling bad about their failure to influence the turn of events in Washington. That’s being very harsh to themselves in a country of immigrants. Immigration pundits say it takes at least a generation or two for an incoming ethnic community to establish itself in the United States. It is only in recent years that a critical mass of Nepalis seems to be building up there.

While many of these young students will no doubt be leaders of the new Nepali community in the US, many of them will come back to start a new life at home. Tika Rai, a native of Dharan, has been running a wireless Internet startup since his return from the United States last year. The electrical engineer only has eight employees at the Baneshwore-based Magnus but a grand vision. The company imported its management manual from the U.S. and he is now trying to impress on his young staff such important values as ethics, punctuality, and communication skills. “We know they are not going to be with us forever,” says Rai, 35. “But when they shake hands with us to say goodbye, we want them to feel that they are saleable anywhere in the world.” If Nepal ever needed such believers, the time is now. Anyone can tell you times are hard.

Akhilesh Upadhyay, Editor

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