EXCLUSIVE

Koirala’s balance sheet

- Ties: Review relationship over 50 years
- SAARC: Special additional tax lied
- 1990 Treaty: Foreign Secretary to work on it
- Security: ISI issued home to Home Secretaries
- Khadka: No involvement in Nepal’s statement
- Water Resources: Dooble hydro talks discussed
- Laxamnepu: India admits there has been submergence of land in the disputed area
- Vote in west Nepal
- 2000 Summit
- Bhutan refugee crisis
- Khadka: Exit to exit from Nepal
- Responsibility for Nepal/Game damage
- Security of Nepali in indian east

Paras does it again

When Paras Shah handed out prizes to children at the Friends of the Zoo function last week, many thought the royal blast had mended his ways. But on Sunday night Paras carried out another hit-and-run, Nepal killing promising musician Pravin Gurung outside the Royal Park police. There was no official comment from Nepal’s security, the residence of Prince Gyendendra, the king’s younger brother, and Paras. Paras was driving a blue Pajero belonging to the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) of which Prince Gyenderendra is chairman. Gurung, 38, was going home on a motorcycle. Although Paras is royally, judicial experts said there is no declared legal immunity in cases like these. The real question, however, is what Prince Gyenderendra is going to do about his wayward son.

Khum makes his move

Long-time Koirala loyalist Khum Bahadur Khadka is leading a group within the Congress party to give the prime minister an ultimatum: be prime premier or prime minister, not both. Khadka, who is also foreign minister in Koirala’s cabinet, is the only senior IV president from the Khadka family. Khadka has given this big message: Water Resources, and Industries and Works—which make up half the development ministry—will go. Khadka, right, says he has no power, not even money. He never pretended he was happy with what he had and warned Koirala several times. The setting of Adbal Alam—al-Kadka protest—was the last straw.

Chinese buses for Saiga

Having cancelled its Japanese-sourced blue buses, the down-and-out public sector Saiga Yatrikai may be getting ready to acquire 200 new buses. The plan is to procure the Tibet-Han buses from an obscure Chinese manufacturer called Tibetan Industry Co. Ltd. The buses will cost Rs 48,250 (Rs 9.45 million) each, including spares and tools. The total deal would be just under $ 10 million (Rs 84.49 million). Tibetan Industry has offered the buses to Saiga on credit and wants the government to guarantee repayment. The Chinese company is said to have verbally assured Saiga that it would be willing to run the buses within fifteen days after the government decides on the purchase. The only thing that seems to be holding up the purchase is the government’s reluctance to guarantee the loan.

What India wants from Nepal

India’s bureaucratic always talks tough, but once again politicians bring relations back on track

RAJENDRA DHALI in NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala went to New Delhi, not hoping for much. His only worry was that bilateral relations should not get worse due to his visit, and that it would not stir a heart not so well home. On that count, he was successful. Girija and Indian Prime Minister Charul Vajpayee are about the same age and as usual they hit it off in Hindi. After the formatting of the bureaucrats not over last week, the bureaucrats took over and got down to brass tacks. What does Nepal’s sovereignty entail, how much can Nepal assert its independence vis-a-vis India? Very fundamental questions.

This time India has done its homework well on trade, security, and the 1950 Indo- Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship. Days before the visit, academics, ex-diplomats who had served in Kathmandu, and Indian-Nepali political figures from Sikkim, Assam, Darjeeling, and Darjeeling: Did it show to New Delhi to analyse the implications of the treaty.

The meeting and visit coincided with a realization here that India had gone too far in exaggerating the US threat across the open border in Nepal. Indian public opinion was manipulated so effectively in the aftermath of the hijacking to portray Nepal’s open border as a backdoor for terrorists, that New Delhi now had to show it was doing something about it.

India was caught in its own trap. For despite security concerns, there are major geopolitical and trade benefits for India from the open border. Hence the pre-visit meeting of Indian-Nepal to discuss the treaty and the open border.

Participants at the meeting, which included Sikkim’s Chief Minister Power Chamling and a representative of Sikkim from Darjeeling, analyzed what would happen if either side gave the mandated one-year notice to change the treaty. Channelling didn’t seem to think much would happen, an open border with Nepal would not affect his state. Channelling’s group, on the other hand, predicted the many stopped because it allows Nepal to live in India which goes against Channelling’s project to designate Indian-Nepal as a “Gorkhaland”.

For India, there are several disadvantages of closing the border:
- It will put Nepal at a geopolitical disadvantage between India and China, since the Himalayas is no longer the physical obstacle it traditionally has been.
- Since Indian business profits vastly from having Nepal as an extension of its own market, closing the border would allow cheaper Chinese products to flood Nepal.
- Nepali of Indian origin dominate the Nepal economy, a closed border would hamper their business.
- Even with a closed border, there is no guarantee that ISI activities in Nepal will cease.

In an interview with The Times of India just before his visit, Prime Minister Koirala left it drop that India could go ahead and close the border if it wanted to. “It is impossible for Nepal to close the border, but if India wants the border closed, we have no objection. It will save Nepal’s interest,” he told the paper. The supposedly campus Oman sumptuous extension of the conclusions the New Delhi meeting on the 1950 treaty.

The first session the Indian prime minister spoke as he greeted Koirala at the map of Rajbiraj Rahan written the “open border is the foundation of India-Nepal friendship.” In Nepal, however, there is much more ambivalence about the open border: it is an economic activity that allows the free flow of Nepalis to work in India (at least 1.5 million people at any given time). There is easy traffic at the open border: cheap manpower from northern Bihar and even Orissa more in the seasonal work in Nepal.

But it is this same border that has directed the Nepal economy by fostering smuggling, in a national race to overtake the years, harming healthy industrial growth. The open border has also fostered an almost complete economic dependence on India, which New Delhi can use to put the pressure, as it did in the 1988-89 blockade. Koirala’s visit was low key in the Indian media, and overshadowed by the Kashmir massacre and the kidnapping of a famous film star in Bangladeshi. But relations have stopped sliding, now channels of communication have been opened so that things don’t reach such similar cabinets again.

One lesson learnt from this year’s deterioration in Nepal-India relations was the role played by an ill-informed section of the Indian media that willingly used planted material calculated to wreck ties. The “Nepal-Game play”’s kick was rejected by most professional journalists, but the Indian media Today carried it verbatim, but that was enough to cause damage.

On issue like hydro power exports, it is clear that India’s priorities are not the same as Nepal’s. On Kalapani, Nepal’s leadership is still not sure whether there was a secret deal or not in 1961 to allow India to place troops in Kalapani.

The Indo-Nepal joint communique was delayed for two hours because of security issues, or the ISL, or even by Kanpur, but by Indian bureaucratic reluctance to admit that there had been subversion in Nepal. In the end, it was Foreign Minister Koirala himself who led the conference. In Foreign Secretary Lajum Singh who feared the Indian negotiators to engage in negotiations had taken place.

At last count, there were more than 59 bilateral committees looking at all aspects of Nepal-India ties. No one knows what these committees do, whether they meet or not, or if they do, what they resolve. No wonder, then, that small gifts get magnified into hyperbole. Now, India and Nepal have set up a super commission” headed by foreign ministers.

The visit made both India and Nepal realize that the ground reality is totally transformed since 1990. India is not longer a needy, and Nepal is no longer an oligarchy. The visit results a crumbling foundation for two mutant neighbouring democracies must treat each other with dignity, equity, and justice.
LABOUR PAINS

I t is well known that the first thing a Nepali politician does when he becomes a minister is he starts running his office like an employment agency. Relations, hangovers, nephews and nieces and other favourites from the former constituency suddenly find job security. But then, the government falls. The minister is dismissed, and a new set of favourites is added to an already overworked and overmanned machinery. This is effectively a system of keeping the unemployed on the dole.

The recent government decision to streamline the civil service is therefore timely. The Nepali political system has been involved in an unending cycle of appointments and dismissals. There are also widespread fears that temporary staff are getting the axe because the minister in charge xứs to the vacant positions with its own people. If that were to happen, the whole exercise would be nothing but a sham.

Compared to government departments, the situation is much worse in public enterprises. A number of PE's top executives are theoretically hired to hire and fire, and determine the salaries of their employees. Though there is no much difference in the basic salary scales of PE and government employees, their home allowances of the former are considerably higher.

Black enterprise is on the rise, even if not officially recognized. In the absence of effective control, the government has also just given the powerful unions an excuse to flex their muscles. It helped the pay of the past employees, and asked PEs to do away with perks if they wanted the new salary scales. In addition, it told them to sack temporary employees.

The increased powers of the unions are already beginning to affect the government's business. The government's attempts to dismiss or downsize employees have been met with strikes and other forms of protest. The government has to negotiate with the unions to reach a resolution.

STATE OF THE STATE

Are we becoming another Bihar?

If the press is not accountable and vigilant, Nepal could go the Bihar way

N etal media has given birth to the fact we border India's poorest and most lawless state. And we see Nepal going Bihar's way. So, if we don't want to end up as another Bihar, we should be careful about how we use the media.

Bihar's economy is largely based on agriculture, with rice and sugarcane being the major crops. However, the state has been plagued by political instability, corruption, and poor governance. These factors have contributed to the state's economic stagnation.

In addition, Bihar's political landscape is highly fractured, with multiple parties vying for power. This has led to a lack of stable governance, which has further hindered the state's development.

One of the main challenges facing Bihar is the state's high unemployment rate. Many young people in the state are forced to migrate to other parts of the country in search of work. This has led to a brain drain, with many educated and skilled people leaving the state.

However, the state has also seen some positive developments in recent years. For example, the state has made significant progress in improving its infrastructure, with the construction of new roads and bridges.

There are also efforts to diversify the state's economy, with the development of industries such as textiles and electronics. However, these efforts have been met with resistance from vested interests, who see such development as a threat to their own economic interests.

Another area of concern is the state's high crime rate. Bihar has one of the highest rates of crime in the country, with a large number of cases of rape, murder, and theft.

The state government has taken steps to address this issue, with the deployment of additional police personnel and the implementation of new laws. However, it remains to be seen whether these measures will be effective in reducing crime in the state.

Overall, Bihar is facing numerous challenges, and it will require the state government to work closely with local communities and other stakeholders to address these issues. This will require a strong, stable government that can work effectively to improve the lives of its citizens.

The state government should also work to address the issues facing the state's youth, who are often forced to migrate in search of work. This will require the development of new opportunities for employment, as well as support for young people to help them build their own careers.

Finally, the state government should work to address the issue of corruption, which is a major problem in Bihar. This will require a strong commitment to transparency and accountability, as well as effective measures to punish those who engage in corrupt practices.

In conclusion, Bihar is facing numerous challenges, and it will require the state government to work closely with local communities and other stakeholders to address these issues. This will require a strong, stable government that can work effectively to improve the lives of its citizens.
How Nepalis and Indians see each other

Artar Singh Prodhan
Kathmandu

India and Nepal have a lot in common. Because India is a big, bigger or sometimes mistaken in power. The Indian media has considerable influence in Nepal. The quality of entertainment that they provide is very good. But when it comes to Nepal it doesn't allow the Nepali market to grow. We should work towards finding the Indian media presence in Nepal and give the Nepali media a chance to grow.

Our prime minister doesn't have a very good relationship with the people. The media is not very good either.

It all boils down to the same thing. Both countries should be very good to each other. Maybe trying to understand each other will lead to better relations.

Nishita Malhi
Kathmandu

One thing I don't like about India is the way it is often portrayed in the media. It is not fair to the people of Nepal.

India has advanced much in terms of science and technology. However, it makes big assertions about itself.

The government in India is not very consistent. The news in India is very confusing. Sometimes the government is seen as the same as the people they are leading. But the reality is different. India is a very large country with a diverse population. The government is different in different parts of the country.

Lalit Chandra
Kathmandu

I am a Nepali, and I am not satisfied with the way the Indian government is doing things. I don't think India is doing things right. The Indian government is not consistent. The relationship with India is not a healthy one. The governments in both countries are not very good.

There are no big problems between the two countries. The two countries can have a healthy relationship. People in both countries are not very good to each other.

We need to be friends. We need to recognize our differences.

Ganesh Khanal
Kathmandu

It is very difficult to see the good things in India. We need to have a different perspective.

We need to recognize the differences between the two countries. We need to work towards a better relationship.

Ram Chandra
Kathmandu

What I like best about Nepal is the people. The people are very kind and friendly. They are always ready to help each other.

Nepalis are similar to Khmer in their kindness and hospitality. They are always ready to help each other.

We should focus on the good things in each other. We need to recognize the differences between the two countries.


tolerant. I informed him.

I enjoy and admire the well-written and well-thought-out articles in the Nepali Times. For me it is important to be able to buy a copy of the paper at any time and in any place.

I am grateful to the Nepali Times for these articles.
Into the valley

It's not just truck drivers, sex workers or drug users who are at risk anymore. All Nepalis are vulnerable.

In Nepal, the spread of HIV is on the rise. In 2000, the prevalence of HIV among drug users was 8.2%. However, in 2009, the prevalence among drug users reached 15.1%. The reasons for this increase are multifaceted and include factors such as injecting drug use, sexual transmission, and mother-to-child transmission.

The government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working to address the issue, but the problem remains a significant challenge. The government has implemented policies to reduce the transmission of HIV, such as needle exchange programs and harm reduction clinics.

Despite these efforts, the prevalence of HIV continues to increase. The government needs to increase its efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and to provide access to treatment and care for those affected.

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Sani and Sasi in their fallow

Maili, Sani and Zina

Maili and Sani have been living together in the streets of Kathmandu since they were young. They work as drug dealers and sex workers, earning a living through these activities.

Maili is a skilled drug dealer and has a large network of clients. She is responsible for purchasing drugs from suppliers and distributing them to her clients.

Sani, on the other hand, is a prostitute who works in the red light district of Kathmandu. She is known for her beauty and her willingness to go to great lengths to please her clients.

Despite their different roles, Maili and Sani share a strong bond. They support each other through thick and thin, and their relationship is a testament to the resilience of people living in the margins of society.
protest themselves, they were often forced by clients who didn't want to use condoms. An average Kathmandu sex worker services three clients a day—making the 30,000 men who live with them every day the vector of this epidemic. Many clients are themselves-rate migrant workers who have returned from India with HIV infection, or have other partners, and the chance of infections spreading to the general population are very high. This is to public health experts is now at risk.

With half the injecting drug users (IDUs) HIV positive, this group is another important target group if the spread of HIV is to be controlled. We wonder if what does not work the police approach. Checking down on 15 drug users, they are all I've called anymore in the world, the more, the more. My disease is already under control. Male and female drug users are addicts and drug users address undergrad. One place in the region is Kathmandu Valley, the eastern suburb of Kathmandu, bordering Ruma. Up to 70 percent of injecting drug users in Kathmandu are HIV positive. At a recent AIDS conference, Manipur's minister of health, Monming Mating, sounded a warning for Nepal: "AIDS". The use of drugs made of injecting drug addicts and punishing them to control AIDS. In countries like Nepal, the epidemic among injecting drug users is just taking off. You have plenty of opportunities to think of new strategies. It was only after Manipur became the only state in India to adopt the thrice-a-month program for controlling drug users. All drug users had to undergo exchange that the epidemic there started showing signs of slowing. And this could only happen because of political will of the highest level, and a coordinated approach among government, non-governmental organizations, and the police and addicts. Health experts say a similar "Harm Reduction" strategy is required for Kathmandu. A model that will go step by step to:

1. Persuade drug users to stop injecting
2. Get injecting drug users to switch to other less harmful drugs
3. Persuade them to stop sharing needles if they can't stop injecting
4. Get them to clean needles if they have to share
5. Stop using needles

Vijay Kumar is an Indian activist from Manipur who is now with Save the Children UK in Kathmandu. The biggest problem in Nepal is that at the government level, there is a closure between those who favour harm reduction, and those who want to use the model," he says. Unfortunately, drug users are often seen as deviants. They are seen not for what they do, but for what they are cut from street transactions, and there is low tolerance for needle exchange because of the public perception that it encourages addiction. Manipur's other experience from Manipur is the serious implication of the epidemic on women and children as the men start dying at a productive age. "We have seen that this crisis can be for women and orphans, many of whom are also infected, and are then colonised by society and by NGOs," he says.

There is no doubt that to come to grips with the epidemic the government and the state must urgently rethink their drug and addiction policies. Without a major policy change, this crisis will get worse and cost the country millions of dollars in the years ahead for the Nepal economy.

New Deadlines

Nepal and India have agreed on a deadline to end the border deforestation project that has been underway since 1981. The joint statement issued by the prime minister of Nepal and India at the end of PM Kohinoor's two-day stopover in New Delhi agrees to instruct the Joint Technical Level Boundary Committee to complete the survey by 2001-02 and prepare maps of the 175 sq km border area.

The prime ministers also directed the Committee to "specifically complete its examination of facts relating to the alignment of the boundary in the western sector, including the Kalapani area, and in other pockets, where there were differences in perceptions of the two sides."
The statement also said that the foreign secretaries of the two countries will review the 1956 Treaty of Peace and Friendship within six months.

Jumla, Lukia airports to reopen

Two STOL airports that were closed for black-listing are being reopened for business.

Starting 9 August, Jumla will allow flights to land and take off between 1000 to 1200 hours. According to the Jumla Civil Aviation Authority office, planes will be allowed to use those sections of the airport where construction has been completed.

Similarly, Lukia airport is also reopened for the autumn tourist season beginning in September. The airstrip will, however, be in operation for only a few months and will close once again in December to complete the work.

Information bias

Lawmakers and journalists have critiqued a bill designed to ensure right to information that some changes can be made to the bill to provide for some provisions by an government to seek defense to information.
The bill was also criticized by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists and handed over to the Ministry of Information and Tourism. The bill was introduced by the ministry's legal department, and is likely to be presented in parliament during the ongoing session.

Most worried was UML lawmaker Rajesh Pant who warned that Clause 7 (1) in the draft could restrict information flow instead of serving the purpose for which the bill was being prepared.

The said provision says that information related to "national security, foreign relations, investigation and those which have adverse effects on Nepal's sovereignty and national integrity should not necessarily be provided."

"The clause has to be changed," said Pant. "Governments can interpret this clause to their purpose."

The bill proposes, among other things, the appointment of public information officers at all government departments for channeling information.

110 women dead in “People’s War”

Since the beginning of the Maoist “People’s War” in 1969, some 1,110 women have been killed, says a report by UNFPA, Nepal, a Kathmandu-based human rights organisation. It claims this is more than all the women killed during the 30-year Panchayat period.

UNFPA says six women were killed as a result of their political beliefs in the Panchayat days and another six were killed during protests for the restoration of democracy in 1990. The group also charges the government of being responsible for the disappearance of 15 women allegedly fighting for the “People’s War.”

Of those that died, 99 were killed by the police and eight by the Maoists, says the report. Of the 99 that lost their lives in the hands of the police, 65 were political activists, 26 farmers and seven students. The report does not name those allegedly killed by the police.

Corporations on warpath

The National Prostitute Programme Co-ordination Committee of the working employees of public corporations has threatened to take tough measures if the government does not respond to its demands soon.

The workers have threatened to stop all work at public corporations, other than those providing essential services on 10 and 17 August as their last stand.

The NPPC is a group representing different trade unions and employee organisations. They are protesting the recent government decision to do away with job security and benefits and bring their salary level down to that of government employees.

The NPPC is also opposing the downsizing and privatization plans of public corporations and is demanding union representation in the board of directors of the corporations.
Koirala in the firing line

Dhulikhel, 6 August. A conspiracy is on to deny Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala re-election as party president during the upcoming UML party convention scheduled for November in Pokhara. The first attack is likely to come from the parliamentry party itself rather than from within the Nepali Congress. Leading the campaign against Koirala in Khasi Budhan Khadga, a senior minister in his cabinet, who is trying to engineer a no-confidence motion against Koirala. Members in Koirala's cabinet believe that the prime minister could make changes in the cabinet to avoid a showdown. Koirala switched camps to join Koirala's opponents two weeks ago when, while receiving the performance of different ministers, the prime minister had remarked that Koirala had not been able to run the water resource minister who would protest the prime minister's decision in the ministry in cabinet reshuffles. Koirala has since camped with his opponents where he has been discussing bringing a possible no-confidence vote against Koirala.

Sources said Koirala has also convinced former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on the need for a no-confidence motion against the PM. Then word was sent to former prime minister Bhairab Mahato telling him that time was ripe for such a move. A Congress MP has been assigned to get Bhairab's approval, but the latter did not agree. It is now said there is divided opinion about challenging Koirala in the parliamentary party. One camp, comprising Chhambah Khadga and Puru Badal Khadga, feel that challenging Koirala with the necessary strength would make Koirala stronger and even help strengthen his position in the upcoming party convention. Others like Koirala and Bid Bahadur KC feel that even with two to four more votes on Deuba's side it would consolidate the latter's position at the convention. This group plans to use the no-confidence motion to corner Koirala and use Bhairab's support to pressure the prime minister not to consent in the party election. They want to pressure Koirala to say "I won't consent" which would be a serious blow to the prime minister that, Deuba could now take over leadership of both party and government.

If this does not work, Deuba and his team could try to frame circumstances of the upcoming convention saying that the district and local bodies have not been able to prepare for the same, because of the poor law and order situation. But the Nepali Congress speaker Nabin Acharya said that would not be enough to postpone the meeting. The party had a history of doing the convention the same way.

The Deuba camp thinks it can get public opinion in its favor if it can get an election.

On 22 July, Deuba had another one-on-one meeting with Khadga, Home Minister Govinda Raj Joshi, Foreign Minister Damodar Dorje, Industry Commerce and Supply Minister Ram Krishn Thaprakar and Communications Minister Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta, at his residence. The meeting lasted a few hours with close discussions over their conduct of business.

Why the haste?

Deputy Leader of Opposition, K.P. Oli in Dhulikhel 1 August Externs that the bill to withdraw Nepal will affect a large percentage of the population. Oli said 30 percent of Nepalese have a difficult time getting citizenship papers. In the past, millions abroad have faced the purchase of the Rs 100,000 Soe (Soth) money. The bill was introduced to solve the problem of citizenship. It has now evolved as a source of friction between the two Houses of Parliament.

The National Assembly sent it back to the Lower House. The National Assembly cannot be asked to sit again. It is a place where bills can be introduced. The National Assembly is taken as the place where solutions to problems faced by the House of Representatives can be found. In such a situation, we must think of a creative role for the Assembly. But how can this be done? This issue is not just about disagreements. Instead of conflict, the issue should be taken as an opportunity where the rejection of the bill proves that there is no such opposition between the two Houses as there is between political parties.

Microbes in the Capital

Khadga, 1 August Microbes are making their appearance in the capital. The bats, alternative to the Vizlan Temples, were inspected under a sterile preparation of paying only a one-time tax.

His Majesty's Government has tried to solve the problem of public transport by allowing the import of Japanese, Chinese and Indian microbes. This will lead to various problems like pollution.

The Valley Traffic Police Office is aware that the microbes would begin to use the microscopes that are being used in the city.

The problem of public transport buses, the route they follow, their stops, parking at night, all these problems will have to be tackled. Within a month, 127, 311. 35 Chinese microbe and 90 Chinese microbe have entered Kathmandu. Another 500 Indonesian pest microbe are being converted to LPG gas stations before coming to Kathmandu.

Arms want Spanish plane

Portuguese, 1 August Brazil's government has begun moves to purchase a CASA C-212-200 aircraft for the Army. The Royal Nepalese Army has offered to buy a Spanish plane made CASA-212-400 aircraft for the public.

In the meetings, around 1.5 million people of Nepal are affected.

The prime minister wants a new plane in the war area. The young and educated, rich and powerful, and those with money who can get citizenships through improper means, and even foreigners with purchasing power can get the papers immediately. The problem is only for poor Nepal.

The objective bill was to solve the problem of citizenship. It has now evolved as a source of friction between the two Houses of Parliament.

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QuoTE OF THE WEEK

"Bohors between two countries should not be open; it should be controlled. There is no border between Nepal and India. Even the line drawn by the British has disappeared."

-Honal Gurung in Pokhara, 7 August

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Nepal's last hunter-gatherer forest nomads face extinction in the name of development

JANA FORTIER

The fact that the Raute, the last hunter-gatherers of Nepal, have survived into this century is truly remarkable in our current age of diminishing cultural diversity.

Today, only a handful of societies around the world still practice full-time hunting-gathering. The Raute are even more special because they live with and use other than guns or bows and arrows. Based on this communal hunting technique, Raute share all of their food and other property equally among each other. Politically, they have created the most democratic subsistence in Nepal. Those of us living in highly stratified societies could learn much from one of them.

For this reason alone, Raute society should be protected and regarded as a precious national treasure of Nepal. Sadly, without any understanding or appreciation for the basic social values of the Raute's nomadic foraging society, international development agencies and the Nepali government continue to assimilate the Raute into the name of social improvement.

In March, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that it would provide aid for the "upliftment of the nomadic Raute tribe." Even though the Raute are reportedly said that they do not "stick to one place," WHO plans to settle the Raute in Bardia District.

Since the Raute are nomadic, their way of life can be unstable. Their principal source of sustenance is hunting, which means that they will have to leave the village to find nutritious food sources. And since the Raute will be unable to collect the forest materials necessary to build and maintain their traditional tools, pine needles for flooring, softened for neck poles, special leaves for windscreens and tent covering, Raute will have to be "poorly" and not "richly" nourished.

There have been news reports that the Raute have refused to let their children take the polio vaccine, saying that it runs counter to their beliefs. One Raute was quoted as saying: "There is no need for us to live like this."

Yet the Raute have no match against the wisdom of international organizations. WHO will have to eradicate polio throughout the world by the year 2005. And in order to accomplish this, WHO will have to domesticate the Raute before vaccinating them.

Another international agency, CARE-Nepal, jumps the Raute into a grab bag of cultural diversity. "Development Groups (DAGS)," CARE-Nepal has determined that DAGS are disadvantaged because of "extreme poverty and illiteracy." This assumption is highly inappropriate for "really literate" societies such as the Raute.

Knowledge of how to live harmoniously in a Raute society is passed on through stories and oral histories. If the Raute were to leave the village, they would have to give up their3 cultural inheritance and learning that is the core of their social life.

A sedentary lifestyle represents an abomination in Raute cultural life, as witnessed by Man Bahadur Rautoli, a Raute elder. "We can't marry in the village. We can't own land. We shouldn't have any property. We can't have a house in the village."

Within less than a year, they will have banished their way of life from the villages. "We are.Nepali retrograde. All the society near us and other nomads also make use of the forest."

Looking grey-t

It feel like screaming, "Let it be ..."

Two unusually long years with tricolour hair—black, white and red. There was not much I could do to hasten the transformation, with the white hair creeping from under the roots. I tried to do away with as much of the dyed portions as possible by cutting my hair short. Now it's all gone.

Accepting grey hair at 40 when my grandmother-in-law has less white hair than me was not easy. But once the decision was made, I felt a sense of liberation. Freedom from the unseen, unattainable "rules of "have to be." I made up my mind that I would accept the dictates of my body and present myself as I was: whether society liked it or not, it was not their problem. In my mind, I'm still not old.

Hennaing hair is an elaborate ritual. Every fortnight I had to plan 24 hours to prepare the henna mixture. The schedule went something like this:

1. Take an iron pot, the lighter, the better.
2. Take six heaped tablespoons of henna, add a whipped egg and some mustard oil in enough cold tea and coffee brew to mix to a thick consistency. Stir from time to time. Continue all of the mix into contact, with the sides of the iron pot and the pouring idea colour.
3. Next day when the hair mixture is ready, with a brush of healthy black on the top and sides, search for a pair of rubber gloves without holes (show them to find out). This is important so that the fingers don't end up with orange spots that linger for a week.
4. Plop the greasy henna on your hair, ensuring that every root is trapped in the greenish-brown paste.
5. Wrap your hair in a towel to "keep the moisture in." Hide the ugly mess under a fancy scarf so as not to scare away unsuspecting guests. Keep worries of lice handy in order to blot away henna seepage.
6. Two to three hours later... when the body heat has gently steamed-cooked the henna and washed off the bottom of the glob begins to feel like a pie crust it's time to wash the thing off.
7. Get under the tap for so as not to let the brown slime splash and splatter your shower curtain, bath and towel.
8. Rinse with water and apply hot mustard oil to "finish" the colour. And so it was, every fortnight, after spending a couple of hours with a headful of cow-dung look-alikes, I was forced to spend another night with a head reeking of vaseline. My husband and children gave me only what were a combination of eyes and disgust.

Two henna-free years later, the sense of being, just the way I am, is slowly satisfying. No pretence of satisfying. No pretending of what's not there. Looking grey is feeling great. Those who know my family and their grieving tendency are surprised at the strength of the henna. Friends who have not seen me for a while are sometimes certain that I have done laundry. Many male acquaintances and young females appreciate the "bold" and 'smart' look. Those who are older, on the other hand, may be "sad" or "behave" people who colour their hair, who seem uncomfortable and vehemently oppose my decision to go grey.

These days when I see men and women smiling around with outlandish henna hair, I feel like screaming, "Let it be, don't hide behind the dye, don't live in a lie, let it be."
**SAD story is over**

In what is being viewed as Prime Minister Koirala’s most astute achievement of his visit to India, a tax which was imposed barely months earlier was moved to be bargained with Nepal to introduce new provisions for the import of Indian vehicles into the country.

India’s April decision to levy the Special Additional Duty (SAD) on Nepal goods entering India had seriously affected exports. But nothing by Nepali officials and businessmen to get it scrapped could budge the Indians.

Nepal’s contention was that SAD was against Protocol V of the 1996 trade treaty that allows zero-cuts entry for Nepal products—except alcohol, tobacco and cosmetics—in Indian markets. “We have always said that there was no legal basis for the duty,”

Three officials, describing the exporters’ fight to challenge the duty in Indian courts, which is why it remained.

It was blocked on items that attracted Indian excise—yarns and manufactures such as toothpaste, soaps, biscuits and noodles. Most affected by SAD were the larger Indian joint ventures such as Dobar, Nepal Lavor and Colgate-Palmolive. And Lover’s General Manager Bandhu Ghimire was sceptical of the lifting of SAD. “All who have worked for it need to be congratulated,” he says.

But the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the Nepal Chamber of Commerce have welcomed India’s decision to do away with SAD. “This is a very big relief for those selling items that attracted the SAD,” says Bacid Ogra, secretary general of FNCCI.

As the quad pro quo for scrapping SAD Nepal will allow Indian vehicle importers on the basis of a “self certification” by manufacturers to comply with Nepal’s Euro-II emission standard, a provision that already stands for Japanese vehicles.

**Defining manufacturing**

During Korea’s India tour, the governors of Nepal and India also tried to reach an understanding on the definition of “manufacturing” for the purpose of the 1996 treaty though no agreement was reached.

In December 1999 India proposed a Four Digit Harmonised Coding system to determine if items using raw materials from countries other than Nepal and India were to be considered for duty-free export to India.

The proposal in now official and may be discussed and finalised by the inter-governmental committee of commerce secretaries. The proposal is said to exclude processes such as splitting, slicing, cutting, repacking, etc, as manufacturing.

The bill defines the terms that can be used to describe the process used by Kodak Nepal. The Eastman Kodak and Kodak India venture set up in Hetauda has not been able to export to India as it has not been able to get the original certification needed to be able to export duty free.

India has also agreed to make food testing easier by setting up laboratories near the border, at Ghorashal and Raxaul. It also helped Nepal upgrade its food-testing laboratory.

Nepal and India also decided to conclude a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) as soon as possible. At present there are 170 operational Indian joint ventures in Nepal.

**Safas cost 30,000 less**

There is good news for the prospective electric three-wheeler (sata tempo) buyers who have been through a rough ride with the arrival of microbuses. The price of electric temps may come down by Rs 30,000 because of the reduction in cost of locally-manufactured chassis.

According to a Martin Chauhan bulletin, industrial chassis currently in use cost Rs 150,000, and locally made ones will cost Rs 120,000. Safe tempo cost Rs 50,000, and this price has remained the same since they went into production in 1995.

The Bhagwan-based Hulas Motor Company is now manufacturing the three-wheeler chassis, making it easier to import them from Scooters India. Kangchenjunga Auto Industry has also begun making chassis locally.

Electric Vehicle Company (EVC) has already produced two electric temps using the Hulas chassis, and Punjab Pukhalo of EVC says the Hulas chassis is as good as Indian chassis.

Safe tempo assembly is becoming more and more indigenous, with chassis, electric vehicle battery charger and forward-reverse switch all manufactured locally. Electric vehicle manufacturers claim that even OCC-converted and the “pot box” can now be manufactured locally.

**More bad news on RNAQ**

The national flag carrier has yet to collect over Rs 400 million due from past ticket sales from its sales agents both within Nepal and abroad.

RNAQ chairman Hari Bhaskara Bhatta told parliament’s Public Affairs Committee that this could be because of litigation or because the defaulters refused to pay. The NAV, suspending that the amount could be as high as Rs 1 billion, has asked RNAQ to provide detailed report on unpaid debts within a week.

**Radisson over-subscribed**

Shares of Oriental Hotels Limited (authorised capital Rs 500 million)—managed by Radisson International—was oversubscribed by at least 17 times within a week of going public with 125 million equity shares. By the end of the week of 27 July, there were over 78,000 applicants for the shares worth about Rs 860 million.

**Microbuses and the macroeconomy**

The big happiness on the streets of Kathmandu recently was not the birth of micro-buses as public transport. Purely from the aesthetic point of view the vans do look better than the smoke-belching Vitranas they replaced now quite safe in the electric three- wheelers.

The micros were delayed due to the government’s characteristic indecision, and in the interim, many tempo drivers (perpetuated by bureaucracy and cooking gas) were also allowed. The traffic arithmetic is not looking good. The 600 Vitranas are being replaced with almost an equal number of micros. But what of the 969 other three- wheelers that have entered the traffic stream since last October! The carrying capacity of public transport has now jumped from 6,500 to nearly 20,000.

Has Kathmandu’s population increased by so much that these new vans can be filled, or are new routes being serviced? The answer to both questions, sadly: No. The rate race is already on you see on micros that are plying past the purring Satins on the Pokhara or Bandipur inclines. Nepal’s public transport is in the hands of powerful ‘associations’ that are actually pumped monopolies that pay for route permits. Licenses cost up to Rs 30,000 on paper, but the real price is thrice that. Permits are issued indiscriminately without even understanding the impact of excessive supply. Since the money is paid upfront, associations aren’t bothered about whether a business survives. New routes are not allowed, the commoner’s back is the least of their worries; and variable pricing is unheard of.

So, if a new company wants to run an air-conditioned bus from Blhupur to Buxhaud, charging slightly higher prices which, the owners claim, they can’t pay, it’s not legal. The associations will not allow it. Economic reforms have not been able to touch these monopolies, and political protection allows survival of the permit-traps.

The initial success of the electric and gas three-wheelers attracted a lot of investment. In the absence of other investment opportunities, money poured into them. The hard mortality of Nepali entrepreneurship was well supported by finance companies and co-operatives. Now, the operators are feeling the pinch. Creditors are calling for installments just as the micros arrive on the scene.

The front pages of newspapers these days are full of notices to those three-wheeler operators to pay up, or else. What is the long-term strategy for public transport in the valley? Do we allow these vehicles to multiply, and grow at the present rate, or do we replace them with more regular buses on truck routes? The Satins are clean, but we are mowing out of space on the streets for them.

What is our response to carrying passengers? Should we look at price differentiation, for local and express services? And how do we defin the powers and laws of the associations so that some of these problems can be addressed?

Anybody listening?

Residents can see their stories and discuss issues at sarbothad@hotmail.com

**INTERNATIONAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR NEPAL TIMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>SAARC countries</th>
<th>Other countries</th>
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<td>1 year</td>
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**Grindlays Gazette**

**INTEREST RATE UPDATE**

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nepali Rupee</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5% Daily tills</td>
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<tr>
<td>6% Daily tills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repo Rate</td>
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**FOREIGN CURRENCY**

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<td><strong>NZD</strong></td>
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**Banks**

**BANKS**

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<td>6.60</td>
<td>3.57</td>
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<td>10.55 - 11.50</td>
<td></td>
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<td>TORN LOAN</td>
<td>6.50 - 7.50</td>
<td>7.50 - 8.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>TORN LOAN</td>
<td>6.50 - 7.50</td>
<td>7.50 - 8.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPORT LOAN</td>
<td>13.00 - 11.00</td>
<td>11.00 - 10.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISC LOAN</td>
<td>16.50 - 14.00</td>
<td>14.00 - 11.50</td>
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</table>
The Valley's middle class is increasingly shopping in supermarkets instead of the neighbourhoods.

Bhaktapur started as an unsung single-storey general store which priced its goods very reasonably. The prices were often lower than what the neighbourhood shop would charge. No wonder that although Bhaktapur has grown into a multi-storied complex now, the consumer profile remains more or less the same: comfortable middle class. More than 700 people visit the store daily to sample its wide range of goods, which include fresh fruit, vegetables, and even electronic appliances.

"I've been coming here for the last two years. One can buy everything here," says Niranjan Koirala. Selling brands like Marks and Spencer, Bhaktapur's clientele is still significantly the well-heeled. The crown prince and other members of the royal family are regulars, as are expatriates and Indian tourists. But customers at this huge store are no longer the super rich only. "Earlier, there were very few middle class Nepalis who shop here for shopping," says Ram Kail Shrestha of Bhaktapur. "These days both our businesses in Thripureshwor and Lalitpur rely heavily on the middle class Nepalis."

There are three other department stores that have branched out - Namaste, Gemini and Park 'n' Shop. Namaste Supermarket from Pulchowk has been in business for the last 10 years. It initially started out with grocery items, and gradually came into its present status of a department store. Its second outlet is at Mugarbajpur. Greatly due to the list of items sold at both the Jwala Shishu and Bandhu outlets of Gemini Grocers, Thamel's Sales Mart started three years ago, and services the international tourist. In Kirtipur, branch Park 'n' Shop is a big hit with women who go there for cosmetics.

All the department stores claim that there is not much difference in their pricing. Consumers, however, tell a different story and insist that Bhaktapur's prices are the lowest. The consumer is king, so far as the choices go. And all because of the department stores that have cropped up all over town.

The first in the scene was Bhaktapur Departmental Stores, which opened in 1985. Bhaktapur, a subsidiary of Head Blue Star, has not looked back since and now even has a branch at Lalitpur.

But it was only after the arrival of Bhaktapur Supermarket in the early 1990s that the middle class discovered the convenience of shopping at department stores. Bhaktapur was different because shoppers who generally felt overwhelmed to walk into the imposing Bhaktapur did not have the same difficulty when it came to shopping there. This was primarily because

---

**Department Store**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department Store</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Opening Hours</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
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<td>419193, 413216</td>
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<td>229833, 224570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhaktapur Departmental Store</td>
<td>Lazimpur</td>
<td>10am-6pm</td>
<td>415193, 415324</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Heaven Departmental Store</td>
<td>Bhaktapur</td>
<td>9:30am-8pm</td>
<td>420689, 422676</td>
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<td>Central Departmental Store</td>
<td>Khokana</td>
<td>10am-6pm</td>
<td>220895, 220286</td>
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<td>Dilli Bazar Supermarket</td>
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<td>419115</td>
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<td>Gemini Grocers</td>
<td>Jwalalshel</td>
<td>8am-8pm</td>
<td>504177</td>
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<td>Gemini Grocers</td>
<td>Bandha</td>
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<td>471370</td>
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<td>Namaste Supermarket</td>
<td>Pulchowk</td>
<td>8am-8pm</td>
<td>609026, 502792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namaste Supermarket</td>
<td>Maharajpur</td>
<td>9am-8pm</td>
<td>427287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park 'n' Shop</td>
<td>Khokana</td>
<td>9am-10:30pm</td>
<td>220490</td>
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<td>Sales Mart</td>
<td>Thamel</td>
<td>7am-10:30pm</td>
<td>420483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grameen Departmental Store</td>
<td>Kumarganj</td>
<td>8am-8:30pm</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A miracle of birth control, a facilitator of women’s independence, a vast medical experiment carried out by men on women, a saviour, a killer, an economic liberator. The Pill is 40.

Tanja Unsworth

The Pill—a device that some think is the single most defining invention of the 20th century, and others see as nothing more than a four-letter word. No other drug in the history of medicine has been so examined, caused more enthusiasm, fright and fury. The name itself seems loaded with significance. Singular, mysteriously captivated at all the tablets and potions we take, this is the Pill.

Of the 11 million women of reproductive age in the UK, an estimated three million are on the Pill. To users of the drug, the little rubber packet is as familiar as their toothbrush. Familiar as the Pill is, an unanswerable question remains, a lurking fear that it must carry with it some dangerous catch. But the Pill a woman takes today is not the same as the one her mother took. It is safer, it also has the power to protect against certain deadly diseases. In ways that the drug’s inventors could not have anticipated, the Pill has benefits that go far beyond simple birth control. Put simply, it can save your life.

And the reason it can do this is perhaps one of the greatest medical miracles of the 20th century.

From the start, the very idea of the Pill was troublesome. To give a drug every single day for years to a large, perfectly healthy population of young women seemed to go against most people’s notions of how—and why—drugs should be used. The majority of women did not take the Pill to ward off life-threatening disorders, or to alleviate pain, or to control unpleasant symptoms caused by unavoidable disease. Most women took the Pill because they wish to have sex. Sex without worry, without the fuss and uncertainty of condoms and diaphragms.

The concept of sex without worry took a serious blow with the arrival of AIDS, but women in monogamous

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Why the P

It is mostly the Nepali male who makes the choice about contraceptives, and he can’t be bothered to buy pills for his wife every month.

Kumala Rai

When family planning services were first introduced in Nepal more than 30 years ago, the Americans who were then supporting population control strongly pushed contraceptive pills for women.

But the Pill never really took off in Nepal, and it was later superseded by the condom, injectable contraceptives, sterilization and intra-uterine devices. Today, only two percent of Nepali women using contraception take the Pill.

Shyam Thapa, a demographer expert with Family Health International (FHI), attributes this to social factors. “All over Asia it is found that people have greater faith in injectables and liquid medications than in tablets. This also affects their choice of contraceptives.”

In the early 1970s, reports of serious side effects of the Pill had made women in Nepal. Even so, Nepali women found it cumbersome to keep track of the tablets, and preferred sterilizations or injectables—at least it was the men who decided and they preferred their own method.

In a country with serious gender disparities, the ease of the Pill could theoretically have given Nepali women greater freedom and choice over reproduction. However, research showed that it was actually the men in many cases who made the decision about the
Trends in Contraceptive Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All spacing methods</th>
<th>Male sterilization</th>
<th>Female sterilization</th>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The contraceptive career of Nepali couples is short. For the majority of them it begins and ends with sterilization.**

The mobile camps emphasized sterilization rather than temporary spacing methods. The use of pills increased after the private sector and non-governmental organizations were allowed to deliver family planning services. The availability of the Pill in urban areas improved vastly and now users easily identified it as an easy alternative. But because of the cost involved, the Pill could still not make major inroads in rural areas.

Increase in availability alone is unlikely to increase the use of the Pill in Nepal. Nepali couples have displayed a loyalty to their contraceptive of choice. Survey says that 86 percent of current users have stuck to the same method they accepted for the first time. Moreover, the most common switching is from the Pill to other methods.

"Many women find the notion of using the Pill impractical," says Laxmi Raj Parajuli, the deputy director of the government’s Family Health Division. "The theoretical effectiveness of pills in preventing pregnancy is estimated at 99 percent, but in Nepal reliability is only 82 percent, mainly because women do not follow instructions properly. Figures for Egypt and Thailand are 85 percent.

Parajuli says that in some cases men are found to have forced their wives to accept family planning decisions. He says, "Men have great faith in sterilization. They think the pill is less reliable. Also, if the wife is taking pills it is the man who will have to go for the shot and buy. Whereas if his wife has a laparoscopy he doesn't have to worry about it anymore."
Who owns your domain?

How about sukugunda.com or yokeho.com? Sorry, both taken.

KATHMANDU VALLEY IS fast emerging as the domain squatting hub of the Himalaya. Some of the most prolific Internet subtleties in the region live within a 3 km radius of Jhansa Trilok.

Several Nepali companies and numerous individuals have made a living out of squatting on popular brand names, or shilling up possible future domains they hope will become hot-sellers. They pay our thousands of dollars a year to renew annual domain registrations, but all they need is the one big jump on a year to recoup everything and more.

One of the most successful in Himalayan Dot is www.himalyadot.com which has already been offered $100,000 for its domain, anilbhu.com, but it's not selling, hoping for bigger money.

The director of Himalayan Dot, Diwakar Kandel, in his early 20s, is a typical of the new breed of aggressive cyber entrepreneurs. It doesn't seem to bother him that many would call him a modern-day pirate, or even blackmailer.

"A whole new set of laws and regulations has now started. People now see money to be made on the Internet, and that will bring a great change," predicts Kandel.

Kandel has been doing a booming business registering just about any name anyone can think of for a dot com company and then selling it for a fat profit—such as www.logo.com—which has already been offered $13,000—and www.sonmoon.com.

These and other names are available from the bidding site gerdomain.com. Himalayan Dot has so far registered 250 domains and is planning to create a global portal — "The Fetch Network"—with fetchtech.com, hareltech.com, kandeltech.com, and other tech-companies—already registered. Himalayan Dot also registers domain for others. Their most memorable client was an 83-year-old who registered 100 domains at one go.

Kandel claims that he will sell Nepali domains like himalayadot.com to the rightful owner for the hundred dollars or so that it has on hand to maintain the site over the years. "It is better that a Nepali company owns the domain rather than an unknown domain name holder who will use it only for test of money," he says.

Himalayan Bank sources said that when they sought to acquire the domain through mediation channels, they were told it would cost Rs 50,000. But then Himalayan Dot offered Bank new site www.himalyadot.com, or www.himalyadot.com.

Kandel says he got the idea of registering Nepali domains when an Indian company, Dot, designed a new site for dot.com with images of dot.com when he let his registration lapse. He claims he's not in it for the money, at least so far as Nepali domains are concerned. "Our objective is investments. We will keep those names for Nepali companies and then sell them at a reasonable price," he said.

The price of domain name registration has come down nowadays. What used to cost Rs 700 for two years, it is now available for Rs 10 a year.

Some sites even register any domain name for free.

Where Himalayan Dot makes its money is by registering a slew of generic domain names, which can fetch a good price in international bidders who seek offers through granddomain.com.

Another Kathmandu company, OBCI, is aiming on names such as nepalnews.com, suyvohols.com, icimod.org.

The Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is now considering taking ICIMOD to court over icimod.org. ICIMOD has been in use with another domain name, ICIMOD.com, for four years, which the Nepali domain name registry ICIMOD has been offered.

A computer engineer, Machine also does not register names like saltbank, pakyanadat, as Reserve registrations to anyone else but those companies.

"This arrangement is quite unique to Nepal. This is one reason why we do not have as many names registered under dot.com," says Sanjib Raj Bhandari of Machine.

There are even dot.com, and dot.org domains (representing educational or non-governmental) that are already 50 or more domains.

There is even a domain called yourname.nep.

However, under new regulations adopted by the ICANN (International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), Nepali companies and individuals cannot claim intellectual property and squatters could be prevented from registering names that are trademarks of other companies.

But in Nepal there are many companies operating with the same dot name, and even one with a similar name, such as sipcon.icimod.org, sipcon.com, sipcon.nepal, sipcon.com.nepal, sipcon.com, and even nepal.com.

There seems to be nothing beginning with "Nepal" that has not already been registered.

Even legitimate private names have not been spared. Domain names like gerdomain.com, exac.com, dhibhakar.com, nepalinfo-pagga.com have all been taken. Even suyvohols.com (with one ‘c’) has been renewed.

Talking to the cuffs, the lead names in India, domains with Nepali language words are also fast disappearing. Names such as paulcom.com, yokeho.com, fahha.com, chaitan.com, gundah.com, have already been taken. The latest to go is suyvohols.com.

Since Internet domain names are registered on a first-come-first-served basis, there is little one can do after a name has been registered (see box).

Domain wars

sukugunda.com was registered by a journalist in 1994, and the fast-food giant was able to get it only after agreeing to drop the name in a primary school. When a domain is registered, it is not necessary to give reasons for choosing a particular name. But when a third party or the owner of an existing proprietary right is to it, the registrar requires both sides to provide documents to back up their respective claims. And if the names cannot be settled, it is taken to court.

Rules for generic names are not clear cut. Nepali apple farmers from Mustang have a perfect right to register apple.com.np. Apple Inc. can, however, raise objections although it is by no means certain that a court will rule in favour of the latter.

The classic case of a domain war was over windows95.com, which had been registered by a student in India. By the time Windows 95 became popular, the website was already highly visible. Microsoft sued the student, and an out-of-court settlement was reached for an undisclosed sum. The student's contention was that he was providing Windows 95-related information on the website—and not making any profit out of it.
Bangladesh NGOs under fire

THAILAND: The Maldives, which has been threatened with occupation due to a potential sea level rise, has faced back a United Nations attempt to strip it from the list of least developed countries (LDCs). Challenging a ruling by the UN’s Conference for Development Policy (CDP), which decided on the eligibility of UN members to be included as LDCs by the 48 LDCs the Maldives said that it has been made to look more efficient and less vulnerable than it actually is.

"The decision was totally unfair and unreasonable," said Maldives Ambassador Hussain Shaikh. "We have one of the world’s worst record of economic vulnerability. We have serious infrastructural problems, including lack of water and food supplies. We have a high rate of population growth. Our economic development has been severely hampered by low levels of human resources development," he said.

The decision to remove the Maldives from the list of LDCs, he said, was based on "economic growth potential and social vulnerability," which the Maldives said were low.

Following an appeal made by the Maldives, the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) last week deferred its decision two weeks, until July 16, in order to further review the status of the island nation.

With a population of just 260,000 people scattered across 1,100 small islands, the Maldives depends heavily on tourism and fishing for its export earnings. Both sectors are considered

Non-governmental groups are going into business, and some don't like it

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are coming under fire from circles who charge that they are no longer fighting poverty, but turning into businesses.

Bangladesh has big national NGOs some of which have budgets larger than some government ministries. In recent weeks, the biggest NGOs in Bangladesh has been accused by a sector of business and political leaders and academicians of doing more to help themselves than the needy.

Some big NGOs admit taking a large part of their funds from other NGOs and organizations, but say they are utilized to their goal of raising money locally to finance their programmes and reduce dependency on foreign donors. Some NGOs have set up banks, shopping complexes, telephones and even television channels.

There are more than 23,000 NGOs registered in Bangladesh and another 146 foreign non-governmental groups also operate in the country.

Together, NGOs receive $20 million worth of assistance from foreign donors who believe that they are more effective in delivering basic social services to their government machinery.

Now, the NGOs are feeling a backlash. Bangladesh Finance Minister Shamsul Amin, who said that while NGOs have played a significant role in protecting the environment, they are now misusing their funds and misusing the system.

Some business leaders complain that big NGOs are taking advantage of their special position to give unfair competition to business by setting up banks, housing cooperatives and even mobile telephone networks.

"The chief of the country's biggest business chamber, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Abidhul Islam, says NGOs have become major industrial players. The businessmen run by the NGOs get tax exemptions and capital at low rates," he said. "Organizations like BRAC have set up holding companies which are into real estate, printing presses and other businesses to raise money for their charity works."

BRAC is a large NGO in Bangladesh, which has been established in the country for about 25 years and has a turnover of about $1 billion.

The government's NGO Affairs Bureau, which did not want to be identified, says there might be a few groups whose actions are questionable. "But it is not proper to make sweeping statements and blame all for the mischief committed by some," he said.

According to the NGO Affairs Bureau, the government has a list of about 200 NGOs that are accused of misusing their funds and misusing the system.

Pakistan to export nuclear material

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan has denied it has decided to export nuclear material and equipment to nuclear reactors for the sale or commercial purposes.

The move would be in breach of recently drafted guidelines, and reports have confirmed US officials, who said it appeared to undermine much of the recent progress made in talks on introducing greater controls on nuclear materials.

In a press release, the Pakistan government's ministry has published an application form for the export of 11 radioactive substances, including deuterium, uranium, plutonium and various types of equipment, including nuclear power reactors, nuclear research reactors and reactor control systems.

It is the first time Pakistan has openly authorised the sale of nuclear materials since it became the world's newest acknowledged producer in May 1998, when it conducted six bomb tests in direct response to tests in India.

The government has announced that it will allow the export of $2.1 billion in application fees, but the US government has declined to purchase any equipment.

The US government has said it will only purchase $1 billion worth of equipment, but Pakistan has declined to export any equipment.

Protests greet SL’s new constitution

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka’s 12th president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, unveiled plans for a new constitution offering her office, which is the best hope of ending the civil war which has claimed 80,000 lives in 17 years.

"Today is...arguably one of the most important days in the history of this country," she told parliamentarians.

Much of her speech was drowned by the noisy protests of the opposition United National Party, its leader, Ranil Wickremasinghe, walked out soon after she started to speak, and many of his MPs tore up their order papers in protest. One even fell to the floor.

The government hopes that the new constitution, which gives more power to the provinces, may eventually persuade the Tamil Tigers to sign a deal.

The government has promised that they would work hard to end the civil war, but this has not yet been achieved.

The president has already rejected the protests and decided to take legal action against the opposition party.
A year later, little progress in Kosovo

More than a year after the end of the armed conflict, there is no progress in the political process in Kosovo.

UNIFIL moves into Israeli pullout area

BEIRUT - The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which includes a contingent from the Royal Nepal Army, will deploy in border areas recently vacated by Israel after the latter gave up the use of the area this week.

The peacekeepers were deployed starting the weekend along the Lebanon-Israeli border. The operation is expected to last two days. Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said the verification process of Israel’s withdrawal border violations had been completed.

The goal of deployment of the peacekeepers had been deployed several times because of new Israeli encouragement measures, including border violations. Israeli sources had been notified that the encroachment that was ongoing in Yanun hill has been terminated,” Ross said.

Besides Israeli forces, the 1,600-strong UNIFIL battalion consists of Irish, Finnish, Ukrainian, Greek and Finnish contingents. The move would complete UNIFIL’s deployment along the entire Blue Line from the Mediterranean coast to Nasrura some 100 km inland to Hiyala and Kfar Shuba near the foothills of Mount Hermon.

US smokers may cough up $55/pack

New York - Smokers are starting to notice the effects of the compensation claims that have been made against the US tobacco industry over the last few years, particularly in the case of Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds. Both companies are being forced to pay the exact cost to the consumers by taking their price.

The case heard recently in Minsk ended in the jury ordering Philip Morris, the country’s largest tobacco retailer, to pay out a total of $3.46 billion. However, stock market analysis now says tobacco firms simply increased the prices by up to 15 cents per pack. This would mean that a smoker in New York, for example, would have to pay almost $55 for the dollars of a pack of Marlboro cigarettes.

The increases are a reflection once again of the higher production costs that are now being passed on to the consumers. According to Carroll Criswell of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. the second largest tobacco company, it now has to pay the price of its products by almost 10 cents.

Japan takes on US domination of Internet

Tokyo - Sony and Nitto-Docomo, the two top runners in Japan’s race to conquer the internet, joined forces this week to develop a service that combines their two products: the PlayStation console and the wireless cellular phone.

The combination of these leading products is expected to strengthen the companies’ position in the fast-growing mobile Internet and converging sectors of video game entertainment and mobile telecommunications. Both fields are seen as doorways into the internet, which has until now largely been dominated by American computer and software companies.

Sony and DoCoMo applied to create a new entertainment network from this winter that will allow consumers to play PlayStation games on i-mode mobile phones. This will entail the development of a new cable that links the two products of hardware and encourage software designers to develop new products that can be used on the PlayStation—which is primarily intended for connection with a television—and the smaller screen of an i-mode phone.

The range of the new service is likely to be limited at first by the cord connection speed and weak graphical output of the mobile phone, but the partners predict that technological developments will create new opportunities. Sony and DoCoMo already dominate their respective markets in Japan and are looking to expand globally.

New alluring face wipe

LONDON - A UK homoeopathic firm has launched a trend of moist furs soaked in the scent of 50 human pheromones—the sweat molecules responsible for sex appeal. The makers claim the Kreatz facial wipes make people appear more attractive to the opposite sex within a three-foot radius for up to 12 hours.

George Dodd, a biochemist and "smell scientist", developed the wipes from 30 years of pheromone research. He said: "Our studies in sighted show that the fragrance combination dabbed across the wrist and underarm makes people appear more confident. It has been described as friendly, warmer and more inviting with a more attractive allure. The wipes could make a person more influential in business meetings, he said. For people who are 50,60 and 70, they could also save relationships. The Vagra pilus gets the machinery working but does nothing to get you interested. Pheromones actually increase sexual attraction," he said.
Private airlines eye international routes

After many false starts, private airlines are again getting serious about flying regional destinations.

The government's latest policy looks really tough, especially since it had granted "equity" licences to Air India and Air Nepal several extensions. But there’s a catch, the final decision on granting licences is decided by the cabinet. And given their political connections—Air India has Pradip Malhotra, son of the late Ganganath Malhotra as promoter, and Air Nepal has Pratap Ranjan, son of former finance minister Shri Behare Deuba—the survival of their licences cannot be ruled out.

Several thousand scarce seats on Nepal’s international routes remain wasted or underutilized, mainly because the flag carrier Royal Nepal Airlines is unable to fly many routes (or to fly at all). The airline is foolishly over-extended, flying long-distance routes to Japan and Europe, with medium-range, narrow-body Boeing 737, instead of concentrating on ferrying passengers to Kathmandu from regional hubs like Singapore, Tokyo and Dubai.

For those who think Nepal’s private operators will make international routes more efficient, the performance of Air Nepal and Air Nepal over the past five years is a sobering reminder that change will not be that easy. Nevertheless, Air Nepal is now trying to get back on its feet after a serious decline. The company is trying to revitalize its operations and is currently negotiating with the government for new licences.

Air Nepal promoters claim they understand the needs of the Nepali market, and are also trying to cut costs. According to the company, the new licence they are negotiating for includes the entire country. The airline plans to launch services to major cities in India, Thailand, Bangkok and Burma.

Air Nepal is still said to be around even though it has a poor track record. To fix the problem, the government has given it some time to improve its services. However, the airline has not been able to turn around its fortunes and is still facing financial difficulties.

Nepal Airlines, on the other hand, has been struggling to cater to the increasing demands of the domestic and international market. The airline has been facing criticism for its inefficient operations and outdated infrastructure.

The Nepali government has been taking various measures to encourage the growth of the private aviation sector. This includes granting licences to private airlines, providing financial assistance, and setting up necessary infrastructure. The government has also been working on improving the country’s air connectivity to enable better connectivity with neighboring countries.

In conclusion, while the Nepali aviation sector faces several challenges, there is a growing trend towards private airlines taking over the operations. The government’s efforts to encourage private airlines will play a crucial role in the development of the country’s aviation sector.
A month of action

SYDNEY - Organisers of the Sydney Olympics have insisted once again that foreign media without exclusive broadcast rights, who are unhappy with the arrangements for coverage of the Games should shut up or pack their bags.

Organisers are refusing to consider altering a regimen intended to protect the $7.7-million investment US broadcaster NBC has made to gain exclusive broadcasting rights for next month's sporting extravaganza.

The arrangements mean that around 150 foreign television organisations will have to compete in what has been called "an eight-lane dash" to pass Olympic to cover events at the main stadium and other principal venues. Organisers insist that only NBC and right-holding Australian broadcasters have guaranteed access to Olympic Park, CNN, Network Ten, Nine, Fox and some other non-NBC holdovers have threatened to downgrade their coverage unless the rules are relaxed.

The European Union has weighed into the dispute, warning Canberra that it risks an action in the World Trade Organisation if the dispute is not settled soon. EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy has written to Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile that missing some broadcast rights represents a breach of WTO obligations.

While Vaile has yet to reply to that letter, organisar say that the International Olympic Committee, and the Australian government, is the appropriate focus of any complaint.

Earlier this year, US Olympic Committee spokesman Mike Moran said organisers should not be interferring in media rights issues. "This is absolutely daunting for them if it isn't enforced. ESPN, CNN, Nine, Fox and others simply may not come to the Games," he warned.

But a spokeswoman for the organisers said NBC must have their sponsorship investment protected and that the present arrangements were fair to all concerned (6pm).

Olympic TV rights row rumbles on

Sydney's Olympic network clicks on

ZURICH - The world football body FIFA rejected an appeal by South Africa against the 6 July vote by the 2005 World Cup host which they lost to Germany. But the FIFA executive body agreed to create a special competition among six confederations in 2006.

Many football officials have called for such a rotation system which would be in line with FIFA's administrative structure. In the wake of South Africa's rejection, the executive board selected Spain to host the 2006 World Cup.

The 2006 World Cup will be held in South Africa and Japan as a test for the 2002 World Cup which was held in the two Asian countries. The winner of the 2006 World Cup will be in the history books.

FIFA rejects South African appeal

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South Africa lodged an appeal a week before claiming irregularities during the voting process, but that was rejected on 3 August. Bafana Bafana's hopes had been dashed due to the ruling on the call for the South African protest "inappropriate".

On the same day, the executive board selected Spain to host the second world club championship 2001 with 12 teams, four more than the inaugural event in January in Brazil. The 2000 Confederations Cup is set to take place in South Korea and Japan as a test for the 2002 World Cup which was held in the two Asian countries.

The winner of the 2006 World Cup will be in the history books.
Festival of death and satire

Yama Raj, the God of Death, sits in judgement on all souls, deciding which are to be admitted to the gates of patal

Blusa Dhakal. Picture for the festival of Gai Jatra, the procession of sacred cows that honors the recently deceased, which may appear a strange reason for celebration, but then again, what a charming way to be remembered. There is lamentation and consoling prayers, mostly among the elderly and old, and the sentimentality of the ritual, but the mood of Gai Jatra is predominantly serene, as if in its finality, the finitude of death itself is being mocked, while life is continuing. The festival is said to recall that Yama Raj, the God of Death, sits in judgement on all souls, deciding which are to be admitted to the gates of patal, the underworld, and which are to be reincarnated. The horns of the sacred cows, Harmonies of the cows and the music of the harmoniums, and the processions, all are subdued and requite the guidance of a cow to show them the way. For they are not only a symbol of the fertility of the land, they are also symbols of the strength and vitality of the community. The cows, by their very nature, are symbols of prosperity and fertility, and the processions are a way of honoring these symbols.

Kathmandu TImes (2000)

Festival of death and satire

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Kathmandu TImes (2000)

Bestseller in Braille

Bhaktapur’s Ghauri Jatra procession last year and above: death of a Kathmandu procession with cow by Dinesh Dorji

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Bhaktapur’s Ghauri Jatra procession last year and above: death of a Kathmandu procession with cow by Dinesh Dorji
The Tinkune mess

Kathmandu’s most visible eyesore is hopelessly dug down in litigation. It will remain that way unless someone rescues it immediately in the name of national interest.

HEMPALA RAI

Anyone travelling from the airport to the Kathmandu city centre will have noticed the eyesore that sits on the middle of those busy roads that mean to form a triangle just before the Bitalgati Bridge. Tinkune (from the Nepal word for "triangle") could easily have been used for anything but the wild jumble of the shacks and dilapidated sheds that stand all over the place.

Why has the government not done anything to get rid of this blight? Oh, for those who remember the wildly lush green at that very spot a few years ago, why was the development allowed at all? But, as the history of this place shows, it was predictable government action that is responsible for the mess.

Back in 1974, when the Airport Highway to Tinkune was ready and the then proposed Ring Road was going to connect this area across the airport, the government decided to construct a Pashupati monorail park at Tinkune. Given its prime location, it is easy to understand why the government chose the place.

Accordingly, the land was appropriated. Those were the heydays of the autocratic Panchayat regime and the rights of the dozen individuals who had been farming there were given short shrift. And neither did they dare protest.

It took two decades and the collapse of the Panchayat system before a government notice in June 1994 acknowledged the compensation had not been paid and that matters would now be taken care of according to legal procedures.

However, as nothing of that sort happened. In May 1996, the 11 owners filed petitions at the Supreme Court, demanding scrapping of the government’s appropriation of their land for public utility. They claimed that the government action was illegal since it had not followed the due process as required under the Acquisition Act. “Since the government failed to comply with the legal procedures to acquire the land and pay due compensation, the government decision should be annulled and ownership of the land be reverted to the previous owners,” says the petition filed by Indra Kumar Gurum, one of the landowners.

The final decision of the Court has not been made public yet. However, according to the spokesperson of the Court, Kashi Raj Dahal, “The full bench on 2 May 2000 found that the Tinkune land has not been registered under the purchase instrument and the petitioners were not aware of having been compensated. Therefore, the decision of the Land Reform and Management Ministry of 1995, which registered the land under government ownership will be annulled.” According to Dahal, the Court will issue a mandamus to the government to complete the legal procedures required for the acquisition of the land. That is, if the government fails to comply in the next two months, the Court will issue a mandamus to the government to complete the legal procedures required for the acquisition of the land. That is, if the government fails to comply in the next two months, the Court will issue a mandamus to the government to complete the legal procedures required for the acquisition of the land. 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Funny Side Up
by Kunda Dixit

In only a little bit more training our Honourable Peoples' Representatives could join the Nepal martial arts contingent heading out to Sydney. An intensive karate clinic to teach them deep breathing skills, exhaustion and sudden shocks would ready them to battle with the best daras in the world.

I know talent when I see it. And looking down at the floor of the August House last week, I could tell that the honourable representatives of the Unified Marxist-Leninists are born karate and for the first time in the history of this sports-loving nation, Parliament for half a day was turned into a dojo. The representatives showed mastery of the three elements that every great karate expert needs: an instinct for speed, strength and technique.

The August House

During the first round, the UNL's Resident Black Belt made a lunge from his seat, carried out two impressive triple kicks down the aisle, and emitting aiba-curling "HEEYAHAAH!" prevailed in the air to land a perfectly placed knuckle punch on the solar plexus of a rather astonished Honourable Member from the Nepali Congress.

That day, the Unified Marxist-Leninists showed their disdain for the Great proletarian October Revolution rock the world in ten days. Following Lenin's famous advice to "take one step forward and two steps back" the Honourable

While the Nepal Peasants' and Workers' Party cheered, the Unified Marxist-Leninists MP had got the Nepali Congress MP in a firm half-nelson. The desperate Nepali Congress MP then struck his fingers up the nose of his opponent, briefly freeze the vice-like grip. The karate expert was trying to unravel two MPs who, it seems, had mistaken the ongoing National Karate Championship Cup for the World Wrestling Federation-Nepal (WWF/N) Tournament.

By noon, the tussle was in full swing with the quarter-finals and semi-finals being waged in various parts of the August House. A particularly interesting bout was going on near the exit where an exaggerated karate was being played in various parts of the house. A particularly interesting bout was going on near the exit where an exaggerated karate was being played in various parts of the house.

After that it became a three-way fight, leading to an electrifying finish in which the judges pronounced the martial winners.

Another interesting match was taking place under the Royal Scope. Two MPs had abandoned karate rules and had got involved in a Thai-style kneeing match which was now in its final round. Two Honourable Members were using each other's heads as punching sandbags.

By the time the final bell rang, everyone present agreed that a good time was had by all and that such tournaments should be held regularly in future. If the August House was no so much fun, I can't wait for the September House.

Kumari

Nine-year-old Manodi Shila Bajracharya is just like any other Pasupati girl. She plays goli by herself in the Palace compound. One morning she actually gave off for the Machhendranath Chariot hutt and Chandra Shila was home alone.

You would never guess that Chandra Shila is actually Pani's Kumari, the living goddess. She does not go to school, a ruse comes home every day to teach her English, Nepali, Mathematics and Science.

But last week, Chandra Shila had to make the annual obligatory trip to the Bhimsen Jatra festival where King Birendra came to pay homage according to a tradition dating back to the Malla Dynasty. Her face painted with the third eye on her forehead and goli on both eyes, Chandra Shila dressed up in her traditional fiery gold brocaded sals, a profusion of silver hangis and necklaces including an intricately carved snake, and a garland of skulls. She sat confidently in her special throne, protected by the multi-headed Karan Naga.

It is the Kathmandu Kumari who gets most media coverage at the annual Indra Jatra festival. Thousands of tourists visit her official residence at Hanuman Dhoka. In contrast, Chandra Shila is out of the forelight, and she seems to prefer it that way. She was declared the Kumari when she was only one and half years old, and she will remain goddess until she reaches puberty.

The selection of the Kumari is an elaborate tarratic ritual, during which the candidate has to spend a dark night in a temple on fast and round her neck with broken heads of water buffalos. Scary, masked men scream and shout. If she shows no fear then she is declared a Kumari. Even touching a Kumari's feet, it is believed, will cleanse the soils of the devotees.

Grindylaws

Dine with us Soltee Crown Plaza presents the Olympic Lucky Draw. At Freeze, Hanubhok Chhipla Coll, Connaught Terrace, Rock Bell and The Bakhuna. Dine at any one of our five restaurants and you could win a round-trip air ticket to Sydney, the seat of the Olympics this year! All you have to do is just place an order of Rs. 100 or more to enter the Olympic Lucky Draw to be held on September 30. And if you are the lucky winner, all you fly to the city of Olympic 2000! So get deep in between Aug 10 to Sept. 14, 1999. And take the most delicious route to the first Olympic of the millennium!!