Round Ten
Nepal and Bhutan will sit down for the 10th round of ministerial talks starting Sunday to try once more to hammer out a deal on the return of the 100,000 Bhutanese refugees living in camps in eastern Nepal. An agreement is possible only if the 16-member Bhutanese delegation led by Foreign Minister Jigme Thinley agrees with Nepal’s criteria for verification of refugees. Bhutan insists each individual be taken up on a case-by-case basis, while Nepal says humanitarian norms dictate that the family as a whole must be taken as a unit. The UNHCR has suggested a middle-of-the-road option: take up every refugee over age 15 for individual verification, and the rest as a family unit. Julia Tall, the US official in charge of refugee affairs, who visited Kathmandu and Thimpu earlier this month backed the UN approach. The talks are fraught with pitfalls, among them is the issue of the 17,000 children who have not known life outside the camps.

Kadigham in jam
Kadigham’s monotonous traffic jams are not just trapping commuters. This week, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadiragamar was stuck at the Babar Mahal intersection stuck at the Babar Mahal intersection for an hour on his way to the airport to catch his flight out. Sri Lankan officials said to be said to have been peered that Kadiragamar, who is on the Tamil Tiger hit list, was provided no security while visiting Kadiragamar’s lone police escort finally made a passage for the car through the jam. A senior Shihaa Niaze aide told the security discrepancy was because Papandreu’s visit was “official” while Kadiragamar’s was a “working” visit.

IC 814
On Christmas Eve last year flight IC 814 from Kathmandu to Delhi was hijacked and held in the Afghan city of Kandahar for a week. A flashback at the ordeal and its continuing fallout on Nepal’s tourism industry……….pg 4-5

EXCLUSIVE

CLOSE TO THE EDGE

The government is ready to set up a special paramilitary force to take on the Maoists whose presence is suddenly felt nationwide.

BINOD BHATTARAI

What is astonishing is how quickly in the past month the country’s mood has turned from bad to worse. Underneath the seeming crush of rioting students blocking streets of the capital there is a deep sense of foreboding that we are all being pushed to the edge by forces beyond our control...

Five million children couldn’t attend classes last week because a student group sent out photocopies of a mildly worded letter ordering schools to close. Just to show they meant business, the pro-Maoist students roughed up a few principals. What it showed was not how much the Maoists are in control, but what little government control there is.

The Maoists are simply exploiting a certain constituency by absolute disarray in governance, in the political power vacuum, and in a leftist opposition that seems to have gone into winter hibernation.

To be sure, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala hasn’t had much time for governance lately. No sooner had he patched up a threatened mutiny within his own party than he was immersed in a high-stake haggle with the Royal Palace to get approval for an ordinance to set up a special pro-government lieu.

But the Maoists have exploited a situation that was ripe for exploitation: the Maoists are under tremendous pressure from within their own movement to resolve the contradictions their declarations have created that is, show results.

So far, Nepal’s Maoists have outdone Mao by carrying out a revolution in fast-forward, and they need to maintain the momentum. The school strike could have been a diversion to strengthen their base areas and hold elections to what they call an interim people’s parliament. For now, a demoralised Maoist movement is not a revolutionary threat.

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EDTORIAL p2
Wakeup call
Interview p3
Rahuram Bhattarai
Raha of the CMPH. Then say, it is clear that the Maoists would not have been able to get to where they are so quickly without opting for an armed struggle.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

The question of whether violence is a legitimate strategy for a proletarian revolution in Nepal has split our communists many times both before and after 1990. Pradip Mathema, deputy leader of the main opposition UML, was one of the leaders of the Nasal Student rebellion in Jhapa in the 1970s. “Once you take up arms it is difficult to give it up,” says Dhungel. Within two years, some of us had realised that armed struggle was the wrong way, but it took 10 years to change the party’s party approach. His decision to accept violence was cost Dhungel his party membership, and he understands why the Maoists face a dilemma now. “Today’s impossible for the Maoists to win power through brotha, but neither is it easy for them to stop their struggles.” One window that may get the Maoists back in the mainstream would be to win over the masses by implementing broad based economic and social reform programmes, and thus negate the need for a revolution. That would be possible only with strong, firm governance and by a government that knows what it is trying to achieve.

The question of whether violence is a legitimate strategy for a proletarian revolution in Nepal has split our communists many times both before and after 1990. Pradip Mathema, deputy leader of the main opposition UML, was one of the leaders of the Nasal Student rebellion in Jhapa in the 1970s. “Once you take up arms it is difficult to give it up,” says Dhungel. Within two years, some of us had realised that armed struggle was the wrong way, but it took 10 years to change the party’s party approach. His decision to accept violence was cost Dhungel his party membership, and he understands why the Maoists face a dilemma now. “Today’s impossible for the Maoists to win power through brotha, but neither is it easy for them to stop their struggles.” One window that may get the Maoists back in the mainstream would be to win over the masses by implementing broad based economic and social reform programmes, and thus negate the need for a revolution. That would be possible only with strong, firm governance and by a government that knows what it is trying to achieve.

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Wakeup call

Most Nepalis would not accuse us of being alarmists if we took a deep breath today and said that the country is staggering towards a dangerous abyss. Ten years after democracy, ten prime ministers and three elections of elected rulers whom the people trusted seem to have run out of gas. Increasingly, it feels like we are flogging a dead horse. Legally the country has always been adrift, but nutritionally the country has been starved of a long-term plan for development.

What do you say when you look around inside the cabin of a plane flying to Kathmandu these days and see that half the seats are empty? Why, turn to the bright side, and say the seats are half full. We have to walk from the airport, are we going to be kicked out at the other end, most tourist passengers were worried: will we find a hotel, do we have to worry about the gauntlet of touts, taxi drivers and beggars clutching at your bags as you emerge from the plane? They must be into extreme adventure. First there is the adventure of the flight, then the adventure of finding your way out of the airport, and finally the adventure at the hotel.

What do you do when you turn to an old friend for an opinion, and find that he is not even there? It is becoming apparent that Nepal is not for the faint-hearted. The irony is that at any time in the last ten years, there is no feeling of no one being in control. Five million school children could not go to school last week because a student union threatened their teachers, a tourism industry crippled by strike, a country that needs a military intervention is bringing the economy to its knees, farmers in the tarai don’t want to grow rice anymore because they lose money on every sack they sell, donors are诗句 contemplating winding down development projects. It has now reached the point where the government should evaluate its own non-performance and tell us if it has failed. Even at the best of times, Nepal’s development challenges are so serious and solutions are required so urgently that any government that takes it upon itself to try rule has an enviable task. Without major resolved long-term vision and planning, a super-efficient and honest bureaucracy, we cannot begin to make a dent on this country’s crisis of poverty, inequality and social justice. But what does the best of times. Freedom is being squeezed from the left and the right by people who want to see it fall.

This is a wakeup call.

STATE OF THE STATE

Spirituality in the age of science

Our history is glorious. But, sadly, we can’t live there. We have to live in the present, and plan for the future.

STILL IN BANGALORE: My hugely entertaining jaunt round India is finally winding down. I have just returned to attend this seminar organised by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). It was great to re-live those days of Indian HIstoric Seminars on Science and Society Interface. This week, when the IISc was playing host to their holinesses, like the Dalai Lama and the spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) was hosting the second annual conference, which was a huge success. It has been an exciting week. I have learnt a lot about science and society, and I have enjoyed the city of Bangalore for the second time.

The seminar was attended by luminaries like His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The theme of the seminar was to re-live the glory of an idealised past to awaken a sense of identity and pride in the present. Also, it was a great opportunity for the participants to interact with other participants and share their ideas on how to improve the quality of life in India. The seminar was organised by the National Institute of Advance Studies (NIAS), which is based in Bangalore.

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Mao said “a revolution is not a time for holding parties”. You cannot expect politeness in revolutions!

Something funny country and the got involved in agitation. I got expelled for my actions and was not allowed to take my exams. My politics had been involved in revolution. I was not ready to go back in this. I left the Madanpur Mahendra College (MCC) and attended Indian leftist, the late professor Shyam Ram, and PhD supervisor, Dr Arijit Mitra. They understood my problems and adjusted. Many people had doubts about my PhD thesis. It was not purely a historical work. I was labelled as political enemy and was declared “National and Regional. There is no rebellion”. Finally, everyone connected to a rebellion does not have to carry a gun. According to certain situations, and the necessities of a revolution, some carry a physical weapon and others a mental weapon.

Is it true that you got interested in politics while you were studying at ASCOL? I studied for two years at ASCOL in 1972-73. At that time there was hardly any political activity taking place in the country. Even political parties had just begun to arise and gain momentum. I came from a very backward village where people normally only knew of the government. They were not educated in any way and their villages and the government were one and the same. I was asked to go underground. The pros and cons were calculated at the time of revolution. But this does not mean that I did not have a couple of political parties. I used to write lots of papers, and listen to speeches given by students allied to different political parties. Elections at ASCOL meant the same to both parties, but one could use the candidates of different parties. I remember I had voted for Prakash Man Singh from the Nepali Congress and the late Mr. Ram Raja Prasad Singh, who had been elected from the graduate constituency, and my PhD advisor, the late Madan Khatiwada from the leftists as my class representatives. At that time ASCOL was considered to be the best college in Nepal and it was associated with it. It was an honor. I was made to give a speech in front of 250 students. It was the first public speech. I had never thought of speaking, but it was a good experience and I will never forget it.

The theme of the English-speaking students was concerned was sovereignty, but after I finished my English, I started thinking about it. I came to a small town in the northern part of our country. I had to leave school at 110, but the Ministry of Education provided me as teacher for three years. I got married to a girl I had met in school. At that time ASCOL was the best college in the country. I began asking myself what the best way to live was, and what a revolution does not have to just carry a gun. According to one’s proclivities, Indians towards the Nepalis, and thought about the backwardness of my village and country. I began thinking of the right way to live, and what a person was supposed to do on this earth. Searching for answers I slowly came into contact with leftist-feminist and thought-political.

Could you tell me something about your experiences at ASCOL? I cannot forget the time I spent at ASCOL. It left a very deep mark on my personality. At that time ASCOL was considered to be the best college in Nepal and it was associated with it. It was an honor. I was made to attend an educational shop called a boarding school but who now goes to a university. I remember that there was something for my country and then got involved in politics. I got enrolled for my Bachelors in 1971-72. At that time there was hardly any political activity taking place in the country. Many people had doubts about my PhD thesis. It was not purely a historical work. I was labelled as political enemy and was declared “National and Regional. There is no rebellion”. Finally, everyone connected to a rebellion does not have to carry a gun. According to certain situations, and the necessities of a revolution, some carry a physical weapon and others a mental weapon.

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Ten reasons why we must not despair

Some of us were forced, nearly at gunpoint, to play with our children.

by Daniel L. K.
Soon after Sanjay Dhital and Rosina were married, he had to be back at his job with a Japanese charity in Peshawar. So their journey was going to be like a honeymoon trip. Well, almost, for as they boarded IC 814 in Kathmandu on 24 December last year, they could hardly imagine they’d go through such a traumatic ordeal. Nepali Times presents excerpts from Sanjay’s diary:

Friday, 24 December

I couldn’t get the PIA flight to Peshawar [via Karachi], so we had to fly Indian Airlines. The flight was two hours late. We took off and half an hour later were served lunch. I’d begun eating when I heard shouting “heads down, don’t move.” Looking back, I saw three masked men running up the aisle. Two had pistols, the third, a grenade. They shouted in Hindi: “Don’t move or we’ll shoot.” I stopped eating, put my head on my knees, shut my eyes and waited. An announcement came over the PA system: “The plane has been hijacked. Don’t try to be smart, keep your heads down. Or we’ll shoot you.” The captain came on. “We’ve been hijacked, try to be patient, obey instructions.” We had to blindfold ourselves. The plane descended and landed somewhere. I thought if there’s a commando raid, it will be now. But we took off 25 minutes later. I was really scared. My wife began to cry, and I held her hand. The plane landed one more time, and took off again.

Saturday, 25 December

We landed for the fourth time. There was no way to tell where we were. We were made to sit at the back of the plane. We were given four biscuits each and water for lunch and asked if we wanted anything else. Around noon they said UN diplomats were coming from Islamabad. An Indian team was expected by CNN and BBC.” The hijackers said: “Your government doesn’t care about us. We will begin killing you one by one. I may appear friendly, but I can be tough. Think about Allah, recite his name.” This was it. After an hour Burger asked: “Does anyone want to talk?” No one spoke. Then Gajendra, a Nepali, asked for food. He ate well. At noon Burger went to see the chef. He returned after 15 minutes, smiling. “Salaam alaum friends. At the Taliban’s humble request, the Indian government in talking again. Pray to Allah.” An hour and a half later, he appeared saying: “Congratulations, 80 percent of our demands have been met.” We were relieved, and waited. Burger asked if we wanted to give the Taliban a token of our appreciation. We decided to present them with a model of the aircraft we were on with details of the hijacking. Burger said: “Brothers and sisters, please forgive us. We did not want to cause you all this trouble. Your families have suffered a lot. We want to hear that you’ve forgiven us.” Everyone said in Hindi, we forgive you. Burger said “Have a good trip back,” and stepped off the aircraft.

Sunday, 26 December

I was very thirsty and asked one of the hijackers, a reasonable fellow called “Doctor”, for water. He poured me a soda. They put our blindfolds back on, and in the afternoon gave us naan served with water. I’d begun eating when I had major demands. That evening, a passenger was asked to recite dialogues by Gabbar Singh [a character from an old Hindi film]. The atmosphere was lively at times.

Monday, 27 December

The captain said: “No one has come to rescue us, the Indian government didn’t agree to our demands. There is only one thing we can do now—kill you and yourselves. Your government doesn’t not care about you. We will begin killing you one by one. I may appear friendly, but I can be tough. Think about Allah, recite his name.” This was it. After an hour Burger asked: “Does anyone want to talk?” No one said. Then Gajendra, a Nepali, asked for food. He ate well. At noon Burger went to see the chef. He returned after 15 minutes, smiling. “Salaam alaum friends. At the Taliban’s humble request, the Indian government in talking again. Pray to Allah.” An hour and a half later, he appeared saying: “Congratulations, 80 percent of our demands have been met.” We were relieved, and waited. Burger asked if we wanted to give the Taliban a token of our appreciation. We decided to present them with a model of the aircraft we were on with details of the hijacking. Burger said: “Brothers and sisters, please forgive us. We did not want to cause you all this trouble. Your families have suffered a lot. We want to hear that you’ve forgiven us.” Everyone said in Hindi, we forgive you. Burger said “Have a good trip back,” and stepped off the aircraft.

Tuesday, 28 December

One hijacker was called Burger. Negotiations were on and he even played a tithe.

Wednesday, 29 December

Biscuits for breakfast. Women got milk. The smell from the toilets was unbearable and I was worried about diarrhoea. Someone came to clean them, which was a relief. Burger interacted with passengers—women called him “brother.” Talks were still on, and they served us chicken. For the first time, I could sleep today.

Thursday, 30 December

Suddenly, the atmosphere on the plane was different. Burger appeared with a megaphone and woke us up. “I have bad news, the talks aren’t going anywhere. The Indian government didn’t agree to our demands. There is only one thing we can do now—kill you and yourselves. Your government doesn’t not care about you. We will begin killing you one by one. I may appear friendly, but I can be tough. Think about Allah, recite his name.” This was it. After an hour Burger asked: “Does anyone want to talk?” No one spoke. Then Gajendra, a Nepali, asked for food. He ate well. At noon Burger went to see the chef. He returned after 15 minutes, smiling. “Salaam alaum friends. At the Taliban’s humble request, the Indian government in talking again. Pray to Allah.” An hour and a half later, he appeared saying: “Congratulations, 80 percent of our demands have been met.” We were relieved, and waited. Burger asked if we wanted to give the Taliban a token of our appreciation. We decided to present them with a model of the aircraft we were on with details of the hijacking. Burger said: “Brothers and sisters, please forgive us. We did not want to cause you all this trouble. Your families have suffered a lot. We want to hear that you’ve forgiven us.” Everyone said in Hindi, we forgive you. Burger said “Have a good trip back,” and stepped off the aircraft.

Still in one piece

The Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist), generally known as Ma-Le, managed to keep itself together by agreeing on a last-minute compromise to keep its central leadership virtually unchanged. The first formal national convention of the MLP, held 7-13 December, endorsed Sahana Pradhan as President and Bimal Gurung as the all-powerful General Secretary. The MLP split from the parent UML party about 33 months ago and was completely routed in the parliamentary elections of May 1999. Powerful dissident CP Mainali has been given charge of the western development region and two other party organisations, while Deep Prasad Oli is to head the party’s publicity wing.

CORRECTION

All photos accompanying the article Ganja Nation (Nepali Times #21) were by Surbhitendra Khadka. Instead of what appeared, we regret the photograph of the Indian-Nepal border on p6 which was by Charita Karki-Jha.
Close to the edge

Maori leaders could be foreseeing that serious instability caused by the insurgency could be used by the former autocratic forces to regain their lost powers, or even cost Nepal its independence.

With daggers drawn on both sides, political assassinations, mass killings, and other acts of violence have characterized the conflict between the two sides. The insurgency is not only a threat to the security and stability of Nepal but also to the global community. The United Nations has been criticized for its slow response to the crisis, and some experts believe that the international community's inaction is contributing to the crisis.

While the government is working to address the situation, the United Nations is being blamed for its lack of action. The United States has also been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United Nations has been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United States has also been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United Nations has been criticized for its lack of action in the region.

Peacekeeping for a price

The poor in poor countries are twice betrayed: by the rich nations and by their own governments.

The problem with the poor countries is that their governments are not economic backbones alone. The people of these countries are also poor in learning the lessons they should from such conflicts and the discrimination inherent in them.

Their governments collaborate with their own objectives in the name of globalization, democracy, peace and human rights. These governments earn a tidy sum from peacekeeping by sending contingents of their armed forces as peacekeepers. Everyone is happy with this easy-dollar deal.

The world has seen a soft landing. Maoist leaders could be foreseen that serious instability caused by the insurgency could be used by the former autocratic forces to regain their lost powers, or even cost Nepal its independence. The United Nations has been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United States has also been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United Nations has been criticized for its lack of action in the region. The United States has also been criticized for its lack of action in the region.

The least we can do is learn about the cost of our mistakes. And learn to speak for the interest of our people. Maybe the Indians would have a politician for their Western Himalayan PCPs who never had the victims been taken from the Western world.

Shashi Ramachandra is a New Delhi-based Indian journalist.
Three men on a horse

Dev Kumari Thapa is one of the most established Nepali writers writing in English. She is the author of several short story collections and children's books, and has worked as an assistant, a brilliant copyist or a sculptor arrived at so detailed and extravagant chandeliers, huge bronze. They almost all were, and are among the finest anywhere.

The course of life

But Maila did not last long at his new job. The boss was very difficult to work for. He would give you one task, and then give you another task which was impossible. I tried to work hard, but it was impossible. I had to leave my job.

After leaving four jobs, Maila could finally play with a few friends. He told him, ‘Look, Maila, you don’t possess the traits one needs to hold a job; you can’t be for any number of reasons, since Jung Bahadur, was forever on guard against assassination attempts.

Dev Kumari Thapa

manjushree thapa

THE EARNEST, IMPERFECT EVERYMAN

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He used to come to toy lookings and do some shopping for my brother. He would be one of the most important people in the house. On one occasion, he was given a task to deliver something to a customer. He left at 8 am and returned at 5 pm. He did not come home because he was working for the customer. He did not come home for two days.

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The course of life

He used to come to toy lookings and do some shopping for my brother. He would be one of the most important people in the house. On one occasion, he was given a task to deliver something to a customer. He left at 8 am and returned at 5 pm. He did not come home because he was working for the customer. He did not come home for two days.

After leaving four jobs, Maila could finally play with a few friends. He told him, ‘Look, Maila, you don’t possess the traits one needs to hold a job; you can’t be for any number of reasons, since Jung Bahadur, was forever on guard against assassination attempts.

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Nepali fertiliser

Nepal's first chemical fertiliser plant was formally inaugurated last week. The Luna Nepali Chemical Fertilisers—Rs 280 million Nepal-India joint venture—promises to introduce 60-80,000 metric tons of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash-based compounds while providing direct employment to 600 people. Nepal has 20 percent of the country's stock, and the remaining 80 percent is held by Indian investors.

Safest workplace

Surya Tobacco Company bagged Nepal's first National Safety Award for having the safest workplace among 65 competing industries. The award was given as part of the National Safety Week, 3-9 December, and Surya won it for adhering to European environment, health and safety standards. Safety evaluation was conducted by a three-member jury comprising of B.B. Chhetri, chief of the Occupational Safety and Health Project, S.N. Vaidya, director, Department of Labour and C. Pinnagoda, International Labour Organisation.

Baker's Pride

Maruti Trading has begun marketing six brands of chocolates made by Baker's Pride, an Oman-based company. All the six new brands—Oasis, Bang, Zoom, Mega, Island and Bravo—come in 20-30 gm consumer packs and are priced at Rs 11.

Yearend getaway

Chitwan is gearing up to welcome 150,000 Christmas and New Year's visitors to the Chitwan Festival 2000 (26 December to 2 January) to be organised at Champa Park in Narayanghat. There'll be 275 stalls selling everything from food and tourism trinkets to elephant rides and boating on the Narayani River, say the organisers.

Sugarcane prices

The government sugar factories have fixed the price of cane at Rs 131 per quintal. The price of cane delivered at the factory gates is now Rs 136 per quintal, up from the previous Rs 125. The government sugar factories have fixed the price of cane at Rs 131 per quintal.

Polluters protest

Public transport operators have begun to protest the government's decision to get rid of all vehicles that are more than 20 years old by mid-November 2001. The vehicles have begun flying black flags, and this form of protest will continue until 5 January. They also plan to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister asking reconsideration of the decision. Should that fail to change things, transporters say, they'll enter phase two of the protest, which will include shutdowns in Kathmandu Valley and across the country. No dates have yet been given. If the government follows up with implementation, the streets will have 10,15,000 fewer vehicles by this time next year. Next on the list of the Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) are two-stroke motorcycles, which are said to number anywhere between 30-35,000.
MIKI UPRETI

An elephant polo tournament in Nepal was born at a bar in St. Moritz, in 1981. Jim Edwards of Tiger Tops was chatting with a polo enthusiast, and whiskey magnates. As the night got merrier, the game began to take shape. It may have extrapolated from the next morning’s hangover had Jim Edwards put the trunk and ball together in a new way. He may have been saying, “Have stick and balls. Get on elephant backs.”

And so began the first-ever international elephant polo tournament at the Royal Chitwan National Park, playing time each, with elongated hexagonal polo sticks and regular polo balls. (Footballs were once used, but they exploded under the feet of elephants so they decided.) The field used to be a regular polo field size, but the elephants took too long to get to the other side so they have since been reduced to 100 m x 60 m. Each team now fields three elephants, each with a mahout and player wearing a colonial-style pith helmet. For those who have watched horse polo, it is like watching the game in slow motion. Everyone described it as “one of the world’s fastest games on one of nature’s slowest beasts.”

The elephant polo tournament traces its origin to a telegram that read: “Have sticks and balls, get elephants ready.”

The Nepali teams, which includes the National Parks team, generally do well, since they have the most practice riding elephants in the park and in the Meghauli fields. They have won the trophy a couple of times, last in 1999. This year they had a handicap of five and came fourth.

Ranbir Yadav, captain of the National Parks team and former winner of the Chitwan Park says: “It’s been 12 years since we played the game. At first we just didn’t get it and lost for two or three years. But then we got the hang of it, and we’ve been winning. We’ve won because our elephants are swifter and we play well.”

Premium

At the international elephant polo tournament in Chitwan last week, enthusiasts played “one of the world’s fastest games on one of nature’s slowest beasts.”

The game is not easy and slow as it looks. A team’s performance depends on coordination between the elephants and their life-long drivers called mahouts, between various elephants in the same team, the accuracy of the passes and the ability of the forward elephant to outman the opponents. For sake of fairness, the mounts and elephants are swapped at half-time between teams. Other important rules:

- Elephants are allowed to squat or lie down in front of the ball.
- Elephants aren’t allowed to pick up the ball with the trunk.
- If a player falls off an elephant, the game is stopped until they get back on.
- Personal fouls include: hitting or tripping the opponent, elephant or another player, elephant or another player wearing a colonial style pith helmet. For those who have watched horse polo, it’s like watching the game in slow motion. Everyone described it as “one of the world’s fastest games on one of nature’s slowest beasts.”

The WEPA championships are institutional and institutions are sent out from the Association’s head quarters at Tiger Tops in the Royal Chitwan National Park. Entries fees are $200 per team, and entrants include Steven Swig, a rich lawyer from San Fransisco, Alf Erickson of Port Lauderdale, Florida, another lawyer who also indulges in hot-air ballooning and collecting condominiums.

The WEPA championships were held with two teams taking part in two leagues. Tiger Tops Tuskers took away the WEPA 2000 trophy, winning the championship in brilliant display of coordination in the final match against the Swissair Juniors. The Elkende team from the USA won the Amateur Quirch Cup in a hotly contested battle with the Screwy Tuskers.

Elkende polo rules have changed over the years, but basically each game consists of two chukkas of 9 minutes each. The game is not easy and slow as it looks. A team’s performance depends on coordination between the elephants and their life-long drivers called mahouts, between various elephants in the same team, the accuracy of the passes and the ability of the forward elephant to outman the opponents. For sake of fairness, the mounts and elephants are swapped at half-time between teams. Other important rules:

- Elephants are allowed to squat or lie down in front of the ball.
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19th WEPA Championship Rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tiger Tops Tuskers</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Swissair</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Chivas Regal</td>
<td>India</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>National Parks</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>British Gymkhana Giants</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>The Tigresses</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Elborado</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Screwy Tuskers</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Harry Winston Rough Cuts</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Creams Powhriens</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you celebrated the beginning of the new millennium last year, you were wrong, wrong, wrong. At least you weren't too late. There are many domestic and international options open to Nepalis to usher in the next thousand years... whatever comes up.

KATHMANDU AND VALLEY REM

Where: Hotel de l’Annapurna, Durbar Marg

When: Christmas, New Year's Eve

Party line: Again, not a party as such, but like Hattiban, a Mumbai band, buffet, door prizes; dinner at Gurkha Grill with Spice on Ice again.

Budget: One-night package at Rs 2500 or $55 for a single

When: Anytime, 25 December.

Where: Hotel Everest Plaza, Kathmandu

When: 23 December, 24 December, New Year's Eve

Party line: Festive hotel ambiance; colorful lights and decorations; live music and regional bands;

Budget: Rs 3200 or $75 per single room. $ prices are for tourists only.

Party line: Gurkha Grill with Spice on Ice again.

Budget: Rs 4000 per person. All prices include tax.

Where: The Radisson Hotel, Nagarkot

When: 24, 25, 26 December, New Year's Eve

Party line: The Radisson Hotel Shop with All Christmas Surprises and associated talk.

17–25 Dec – Christmas carols from The Range on the Radisson Lobby.

24 Dec – Five-course dinner at the Fun Café with a complimentary glass of champagne

25 Dec – Rug-a-chut dinner with unlimited sparkling wine at the Fun Café.

26 Dec – Bedding Day brunch at the Fun Café.

31 Dec – Theme dinner at Alpina Dhau – Kiss the Millennium with DJs, including Stevie from London’s Ministry of Sound and a buffet dinner.

Budget: 24 Dec – Rs 1000 (excluding tax) per person.

25 Dec – Rs 2199 per person.

26 Dec – Rs 999 per person.

31 Dec – Rs 1299 per person.

All prices – 25 – 31 Dec special party at Galaxy Disco.

Where: Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort, Nagarkot

When: Christmas, New Year's Eve

Nagarkot is a easy 30 km from Kathmandu. Rs 2175, etc., it provides a grandiose view of the central Nepal Himalaya, including Shisha Pangma.

Budget: Double rooms at Rs 4500 or Rs 3500 for tourists and Rs 700 per single room. Options are for tourists only.

Contact Information: Tel: 1-95359, 415432

Website: www.funcafe.com

Where: Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort, Nagarkot

When: Christmas, New Year's Eve

Get there before 31 December—celebrations are for in-house guests only.

Budget: Double rooms at Rs 4000 or Rs 3500, Rs 1000 for tourists and Rs 700 per single room. Options are for tourists only.

Contact Information: Tel: 977-1-680068, 413641

Website: www.clubhimalaya.com

Where: Hotel Yak and Yeti, Durbar Marg

When: December 25 onwards, 24 December, 25 December, New Year's Eve

Party line: Christmas cakes and cookies on sale starting from New Road via Tripureshwor, Pulchowk, Lagankhel, some serious relaxing. There are weekend packages for one night or two. The packages include breakfast, dinner and some serious relaxing. There are weekend packages for one night or two. The packages include breakfast, dinner and

Budget: Double rooms at Rs 1500 (excluding tax) per person.

Where: Club Atithi Resort, Pokhara

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When: Anytime, 25 December.

Party line: Skiing in the Himalayas, with ailing skiers, full swing of the Himalayan hospitality.

Budget: Two-night package: Rs 4200 or $80 for a single room. Rs 3200 or $70 for a couple.

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Contact Information: Tel: 358757, 357575; fax: 977-1-956777; email: clubatithi@adlink.com; website: www.clubatithi.com

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All prices – 25 – 31 Dec special party at Galaxy Disco.

Where: Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort, Nagarkot

When: Christmas, New Year’s Eve

Budget: Rs 3500 per person and $50 for expatriates.

Contact Information: Tel: 488100, 488099;

www.soaltee.com
Trekking

For a change of scenery from the bustling city life, you may want to consider going trekking, an opportunity to explore the natural beauty of Nepal. The Himalayas are a paradise for trekkers, offering a wide range of trails to suit all levels of experience. Whether you're looking for a short day hike or a multi-day trek, there's something for everyone. The natural landscapes, clear skies, and fresh air will rejuvenate you.

Some popular trekking routes include:

- Langtang: Known as the gateway to the Himalayas, Langtang offers stunning views of the snow-capped peaks. The trail passes through dense forests, rugged terrain, and breathtaking scenery. Budget: $320 per person for a group of four to six including meals, accommodation, transportation (Kathmandu to Charikot and Barabise to Kathmandu) and any camping fees required.

- Annapurna: A challenging trek with breathtaking views of the Annapurnas, Dhaulagiri, and Tukuche Peak. The trail takes you through remote villages, offering a glimpse into the local culture. Budget: $160 per person for a group of four to six including meals, accommodation, transportation (Kathmandu to Bhumdi and Dhampus Phedi to Pokhara) and Tiger Tops Tented Camp accommodation.

- Tsum Valley: A trek through the far west of Nepal, offering a unique experience with the Sherpas. Budget: $350 per person for a group of four to six including meals, accommodation, transportation (Kathmandu to Bhumdi and Dhampus Phedi to Pokhara).

- Everest: A classic trek to Mount Everest Base Camp, providing unforgettable views of the highest peak in the world. Budget: $1500 per person excluding taxes, park fees and transportation.


Wildlife, Safari, and Adventure

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve is a sanctuary for wildlife and nature lovers. Spanning over 175 sq km, the Reserve is a unique combination of wetland, grassland, and deciduous forest, making it a paradise for bird watchers. The Park is home to over 500 species of birds, including endangered species like the Bengal florican and lesser florican. The Reserve is also a haven for many mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, making it a perfect destination for wildlife enthusiasts.

Budget: $150 per person excluding taxes, park fees and accommodation. Contact information: Tel: 411225; email: wildlife@machan.mos.com.np; website: www.tigermountain.com.

Royal Chitwan National Park

The Royal Chitwan National Park is one of the most popular wildlife sanctuaries in Nepal. The Park is home to over 500 species of birds, 55 reptile and amphibian species, and 12 mammal species. The Park package includes adventure elephant back, jungle walks, canoeing, and bird-watching. Budget: $225 per person for Nepalis and INR3799 per Indian national (both including taxes).

Contact information: Tel: 220697, 231198; fax: 231200; website: www.chitwan.nationalpark.gov.np.

Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge and Tiger Tops Tented Camp

Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge and Tiger Tops Tented Camp are options for accommodation in Chitwan. The Lodges offer comfortable rooms, excellent cuisine, and a variety of activities like jungle drives, elephant rides, and bird-watching. Contact information: Tel: 247078, 247079; fax: 242237, 282252; email: ross@tiger yöu ad

Tiger Tops Wilderness Lodge

Tiger Tops Wilderness Lodge is a luxurious retreat for nature lovers. The Lodge offers comfortable rooms, excellent cuisine, and a variety of activities like jungle drives, elephant rides, and bird-watching. Contact information: Tel: 247078, 247079; fax: 242237, 282252; email: ross@tiger.com.np.

Royal Bardiya National Park

The Royal Bardiya National Park is a sanctuary for wildlife and nature lovers. The Park is home to over 500 species of birds, 55 reptile and amphibian species, and 12 mammal species. The Park package includes adventure elephant back, jungle walks, canoeing, and bird-watching. Budget: $225 per person for Nepalis and INR3799 per Indian national (both including taxes).

Contact information: Tel: 220697, 231198; fax: 231200; website: www.chitwan.nationalpark.gov.np.

Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge and Tented Camp

Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge and Tented Camp are options for accommodation in Chitwan. The Lodges offer comfortable rooms, excellent cuisine, and a variety of activities like jungle drives, elephant rides, and bird-watching. Contact information: Tel: 247078, 247079; fax: 242237, 282252; email: ross@tiger.com.np.
MORE MILLENNIUM GETAWAYS

Pokhara
Pokhara isn’t just the starting point of Nepal’s famous trekking and rafting destination. It also boasts of Phewa Lake and panoramic views of the Annapurnas, the most famous geographical landmark of Pokhara, dominating the skyline to the north. These attractions make it an all year round destination for all kinds of tourists. The valley of Pokhara is at an altitude of only 900m and so is warmer than Kathmandu. It’s west of the capital, and is accessible by a 30-minute flight or a 6-hour bus ride. Charter helicopters are also available.

Where: The Fulbari Resort and Spa
Where: Shangri-La Village Pokhara
Where: Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge
Where: Shangri-La Village Pokhara

Party Line: A stay of any length between the above dates entitles you to free buffet breakfasts, gifts, free use of the fitness centre, and limbement discount on full board, laundry and long-distance calls.
Budget: Rs 15,000 for a Nepali couple and $250 for an expatriate couple.
Contact Information (Kathmandu): Tel: 411225; fax: 414075, 419126; email: fulbari@fulbari.com.np; website: www.fulbari.com

Party Line: A stay of any length between the above dates entitles you to free buffet breakfasts, gifts, and free use of the fitness centre.
Budget: Rs 10,000 for a Nepali couple and $55 for an expatriate couple.
Contact Information (Kathmandu): Tel: 49784; fax: 49784; email: info@shangrilaville.com; website: www.shangrilaville.com

Party Line: A stay of any length between the above dates entitles you to free buffet breakfast, free use of the fitness centre, and free transport to and from a beach club.
Budget: Rs 59,000 for a Nepali couple and $350 for an expatriate couple.
Contact Information (Kathmandu): Tel: 49784; fax: 49784; email: info@shangrilaville.com; website: www.shangrilaville.com

Tourist Information:
- Kathmandu
- Pokhara
- Jomsom
- Phewa Lake
- Annapurna
- Mardin
- Bangalore
- Goa
- Colombo
- Maldives
- Phuket
- Pattaya
- Krabi
- Bangkok
- Delhi
- Kolkata
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Comment

High tech or high risk?

By Rubens Ricupero

The EU may preach human rights abroad, but Europe’s Gypsies continue to languish.

In an interdependent global financial and trading system, trust in market forces and monetary policy alone is not sufficient.

Frac-tioning the market through Africa is a sign of a divided continent. The basic policy challenge remains how to overcome economic and currency-exchange constraints and also investment to the level required for growth at least six percent per annum. The current level of prospective capital inflows is too small to fill the emission gap. Still big enough to make any African economy vulnerable to the adverse arbitrage of short-term capital flows. This scenario continues growing dependence on capital flows. In recent years these have been thoroughly replaced by assurance losses due to financial trading conditions. The way to protect the need is to add dependence to launch a macro and a stabilizing programme to support growth. For long enough. In addition, the demand for economic and social protection by a global financial system continues to rely on internalization for credit.

Secrets are likely to continue at their next press, public and political deficits and medium-term consequences of the countries seriously affecting the oil. Stopping financial trading involving a small system is not needed to protect the need to protect. This is likely to occur now, however, by greater unemployment, and the existence of access capacity to carry.

Canberra cool on greenhouse cuts

SYDNEY - Australia, the largest per capita producer of greenhouse gases, says it prefers to enhance “carbon sinks” - trees, farmland and vegetation that soak up carbon dioxide — which may have a lower target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. But environmental groups say its argument is leading to official complacency about Australia’s emission levels and is pushing debolestion and the demise of indigenous forests in this country.

Australia’s 1.5 percent share of global greenhouse gas emissions seems low, but not for its small population of 19 million. Recently, Australia’s emissions have increased 15 percent from the base level, over 100 percent more than it was allowed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). With an economy heavily dependent on energy-generating fossil fuels like coal and gas, Australia says it cannot afford to switch to renewable forms of energy. Like the US and Japan, Australia has been cutting carbon dioxide emissions, among them trading in “credits” earned from environmental projects overseas by rich countries, collapsed at the Hague last month.

In the current climate equation, Australia must curb 400 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

No room for Roma

Brian Kenety in Brussels

The EU has special provisions that allow Roma to enjoy legal status in Europe and provide legal status in case of abuse, including eviction, and to seek asylum. Roma asylum seekers are often the most vulnerable groups, as they may face racism and the Roma minority is considered to be at risk for discrimination.

The European Union (EU) has established a special Roma policy instrument that allows EU states to provide Roma with legal status, protection against discrimination, and access to social services.

However, in many European countries, Roma are still at risk for discrimination and persecution. In some countries, Roma face extreme violence, poverty, and social exclusion, and Roma minorities have been at risk for discrimination and persecution.

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"It was the craziest day of my life," said Dushyant Verma, referring to the moment when he realized that the entire township of Dushyant, including his home, had been obliterated in a single instant. "It felt like the world had ended."

Verma, a resident of the town, was awakened by a loud explosion followed by a massive earthquake. As the dust settled, he discovered that his entire neighborhood was in ruins, with buildings collapsing and debris scattered everywhere. He quickly gathered his family and neighbors, and together they began searching for survivors.

"We found a few people who were still alive, but the majority were buried under the rubble," Verma said. "It was a nightmare." 

Local emergency services were quickly called to the scene, but the sheer scale of the disaster made it difficult to respond effectively. Verma and his neighbors worked tirelessly to clear the debris and pull survivors from the wreckage.

"We were able to save a few children, but unfortunately, many were not so lucky," Verma said. "It was a very sad day for us all." 

As the days turned into weeks, the community worked together to rebuild what they could and to help those in need. Verma and his neighbors continued to volunteer, helping to clear away the debris and repair damaged homes.

"It was a long and difficult process," Verma said. "But we were able to come together and support each other through it all." 

Today, Verma and his neighbors continue to rebuild their community, working hard to restore what they have lost and to create a brighter future for themselves and their children. 

"We are strong, and we will recover," Verma said. "We will make this place even better than it was before."


**Maistri foreign policy**

June Asha, 13 December

1. All illegal armed groups and formal and informal armed elements are isolated.
2. The necessary legal instruments to enable military courts and punishment for all terrorist acts are being prepared.
3. The necessary legal instruments are being prepared to facilitate the establishment of a military court and federal state.
4. A number of international organizations are being contacted to get their support.
5. The government is in the process of compiling a list of those responsible for atrocities.
6. The government is preparing a plan to provide compensation to the victims of atrocities.
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**Indolent Singh Darbar**

Chief Minister Phalano, 15 December

For a week schools throughout the country were shut down. Students, teachers and other individuals linked to the Maoist cause had called for the closure of schools, and this had received the support of the government. The government had referred the matter to the Supreme Court, which had ordered it to mediate to reach an agreement, but Singh Darbar had failed to respond. The government decided to take action and the Supreme Court has ordered a vote of no confidence to be held.

**People’s Government**

Santosh, 13 December

For the first time in its 30-year history, the government has decided to hold an election to decide who should be the next government. The election will be held on 15 December.

The government in Kathmandu was on the verge of providing development funds to the districts of Rukum, but it was thwarted by the Maoists after all police posts were moved to the district headquarters. Maoist sources also said that the government had asked them to withdraw their forces from the area, but they refused.

5. Will not establish relations with countries that discriminate on the basis of religion, colour, caste or are not friendly to the people of Nepal.

4. Will keep all neighbours at the same distance, will follow and practise a policy of equality, friendship and cooperation with all neighbours.

3. Will not participate in any international organizations that discriminate on the basis of religion, colour, caste or are not friendly to the people of Nepal.

2. Will maintain friendly relations with all countries and will not involve itself in any international organization or group that discriminates on the basis of religion, colour, caste or is not friendly to the people of Nepal.

1. Will not participate in any international organization or group that discriminates on the basis of religion, colour, caste or is not friendly to the people of Nepal.

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**Spooks spoiled**

Naya Sakh, 15 December

Deputy Prime Minister Ram Bahadur Rijal is getting ready to meet with high officials of the National Investigation Department (NID) to confirm the existence of a group of spooks that have been operating in the country. The NID has been asked to provide information on the existence of any such group.

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**Bastola on shaky ground**

Deshantar, 11 December

The Limead government is facing a crisis as a result of the deadlock in the Rukum district. The government has been unable to secure the support of the Rukum district, which is crucial for the government's survival.

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**ML Bolsheviks and Mensheviks**

Buddhabar, 13 December

The Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) recently held a convention to discuss the future of the party. The convention was held to discuss the future of the party.

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**Photo**

Phalano, by Rajesh KC, 15 December

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**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

If the Nepali Congress wins the election, the party will face the same kind of dilemma as it faced in the previous local elections, he said. We could blame our defeat on Bam Dev Gautam, who was the home minister and deputy chief minister, he said.

**Now RPP’s turn to agitate**

Nepali Times, 15 December

While the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) is still recovering from the defeat of the recent elections, the main opposition party, the RPP, is gearing up to start a fresh agitation soon. The party is expected to launch its agitation in the coming days.

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**Indolent Singh Darbar**

Chief Minister Phalano, 15 December

The government has decided to take action against the leaders of the Maoist cause, who have been calling for the closure of schools, and this has led to the closure of schools across the country.

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**Bastola on shaky ground**

Deshantar, 11 December

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**Photo**

Phalano, by Rajesh KC, 15 December
Copper on the Net

The coppersmiths of Palpa may not have seen a computer, but e-commerce has changed their lives and fortunes and is helping to bring others back home.

The copper pot industry was forced to abandon their trade and menial jobs. Bal Bahadur Bishwokarma, the nominal leader of the Bishwokarma cooperatives, says Bir Bahadur Bishwokarma, the minimal leader of the cooperatives, “We compared his income with ours and realized he had no savings, whereas a person here makes Rs 25-30,000 a year.”

The best thing would be for them to live in their own community, their own village and be able to do what they want. Bishwokarmas working in the past have seen a computer before but none seemed interested in the new universe of the Internet. But they are grateful it has given them enough work to continue doing what they are familiar with and staying on in their own village.

For centuries, these Bishwokarma coppersmiths of Palpa survived by their craft—water pitchers, basins and trays. Today, the industry employs 35 coppersmiths who earn Rs 1500-2000 a month. Many of the once-landless Bishwokarmas are buying land and all of them are sending their children to school. But that is saying a lot for a community that has traditionally been backward due to their marginalization by other groups that consider them ‘untouchable’.

A year ago, decorative items made by the coppersmiths of Palpa started appearing on the Internet. Socially conscious online companies, like www.virtu.com (formerly worldmarket.com), a business-to-consumer website, started taking the copper items they produced and supplied them to retailers like Pottery Barn or mail-order line companies, like Sundance Catalog. The Bishwokarmas of Palpa don’t know what the Internet is, most of them haven’t even seen a computer, but e-commerce has changed their lives and fortunes, and is helping to bring others back home.

The cooperative, says Bir Bahadur, had no plan of going back. “People pour into Kathmandu but none seemed interested in the copper items. The Association’s director, Bal Bahadur, asks a lot of questions before joining the local cooperative, says Bir Bahadur Bishwokarma, the minimal leader of the cooperatives, “We compared his income with ours and realized he had no savings, whereas a person here makes Rs 25-30,000 a year.”

The cooperatives here are staffed by Bir Bahadur after he returned from a training programme at NALSAP Technical Institute 7 years ago. Today, the industry employs 35 coppersmiths who earn Rs 1500-2000 a month. Many of the once-landless Bishwokarmas are buying land and all of them are sending their children to school. But that is saying a lot for a community that has traditionally been backward due to their marginalization by other groups that consider them ‘untouchable’.

Every two weeks, group leader Bir Bahadur Bishwokarma travels to Kathmandu with as much as 120-150 copper items. They go to the Association for Craft Producers (ACP), a fair trade group in Kathmandu that checks the quality of the products and supplies them on consignment. The ACP also sells in Richmond that checks the quality of the products and supplies them on consignment.

“People pour into Kathmandu but none seemed interested in the copper items.” The ACP helps Nepali artisans market their traditional skills. Although the association has been exporting products mainly by its 300 retailers for nearly 15 years now, the website has opened up new markets,” says Meera Bhattarai, the Association’s director. “People pour into Kathmandu but none seemed interested in the copper items.” The ACP helps Nepali artisans market their traditional skills. Although the association has been exporting products mainly by its 300 retailers for nearly 15 years now, the website has opened up new markets,” says Meera Bhattarai, the Association’s director.

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ABOUT TOWN

CINEMA
Movie ticket bookings online at <www.nepalshop.com>. 50% discounts on all bookings for school students at Tara and Prithvi movie theatres.

ART EXHIBITION

VISION. Solo painting exhibition by Sanjay Bantaure organised by the Chholungla UNESCO Centre. Opening 29 December. 9.30 pm. Bamboo Gallery, Panipokhari. 412507

A Diary of Portraits (1975-1999). A series of studies in mixed media of the colourful people of Kathmandu by Carolyn Both, a long-term resident of Nepal and a teacher of Creative Mandal Art Classes at the Kathmandu Buddhist Meditation Centre. Last day 31 December. Gallery hours 9am-6pm. The New Restaurant at the Summit Hotel, Kupondol. 524684

Angkor. A black-and-white photography exhibition by Jaro Poncar from Prague. The focus of the exhibition is the Hindu/Buddhist temple complex Angkor, regarded as one of the architectural wonders of the world. 20-26 Dec, 2001. 8 am-6 pm. Indigo Gallery, Narayani.

COMPETITION
Weekly Prizes. Take part in the various quiz competition and win numerous prizes ranging from gift vouchers, air tickets, adventure trips, dinner and lunch at some of the best places around. Special attraction for Christmas. Log on to <www.nepalshop.com>.

FESTIVALS
Eid-ul-Fitr. Namaz prayers at Nepal Jame Masjid and Kashmiri Masjid, Bagh Bazaar. 10 am on 26 or 27 December. Call for date confirmation 247044

Christmas
Carol Singing. Services at Assumption Church, Dharibhakti. Carol singing starts 6 pm. Mass at 7 pm on 24 December.

Mass. Aaradhana Church Sanepa, 10 am. Assumption Church, 9 am and 5:30 pm. Hotel Annapurna, Durbar Marg, 7:30 am. Hotel Yak & Yeti, 10 am. 25 December

MUSIC
Jazz Sessions. Live jazz at The Jazz Bar, Hotel Shangrila. A unique jazz bar where Michael Fienstein played Gershwin & Porter. Featuring this month a host of jazz bands including Elaine McInnes & Chris Masand with the Jazz Commission, the Swingtunes, the Latin Lovers and others playing Cole Porter, Gershwin, Brubeck and Coltrane. Enjoy the drinks from a bottomless cellar, gourmet food, coffee, cognac and cigars and more... impress Ella, Sarah, Louis 412999.

Chi'mundo Ho! Hall! Harro.com Nepal’s most popular chat presents a charity concert featuring The Altarum, Wild Grace, Smairka, Monkey Temple, Flower Generation and others. 23 December, 12noon—5pm. Aroma Sports Center, Sanepa. Tickets: Tick ‘n’ Tock, Suwal Video New Road, All Nanglo and Bakery Café outlets. Rs250 (includes burger and a Coke).

Shikar Beat Contest. Twenty selected bands of the original 82 will be contesting for cash awards totalling Rs 172,000. Special guest performance by Cobweb, 1974 AD, Robin & Lozza, Rock Yogis. 23-24 December, 3 pm onwards. Tundikhel Khula Manch. Free Entry.

DANCE
Classical Nepali dances based on Buddhist and Hindu epics and the Tantric pantheon showcase the sacred arts of ancient Kathmandu Valley. Every Tuesday, 7 pm. The Great Pagoda, Hotel Vajra (near Swayambhunath Stupa, 10 minutes west of Thamel). Rs 400. 271545

Children Khel, Exciting children’s Christmas and New Year party: 24 December, 11 am-3 pm. Entry Rs 100. Free drinks and prizes. Hotel Shangrila, Lazimpat. 412999

BENEFITS
ASMAN Night. Benefit dinner and dance for The Education of a Girl Child, organised by ASMAN. 24 December, 7:30 pm. Baber Mahal Revisited. Rs 1500, 270147, 413151, 413394

MARTIN CHAUTARI
Cultural imperialism in Nepal. Discussion forum led by Mahendra Lawoti, researcher at the Nepal South Asia Centre. 26 December, 5:30 pm. Unless otherwise noted, presentations are in Nepali. Write or Call for directions: chautari@mos.com.np / 246065.

NEPALI WEATHER

20. Seed condiment (5)
31. Contribute insect (4)
17. Kung Fu expert
3. Lose flab in the rough (4)
5. Culminate with mace (4)
34. Eye the sports channel (4)
32. Hun in loft (5)
30. Spring month (3)
13. Spelled the Romanisation (4)
31. Contribute insect (4)
32. Hun in loft (5)
30. Spring month (3)
21. Polar, teller of sea
5.  Culminate with mace (4)
1. Honour at the gala (4)
18. Zinc, perhaps (2)
20. Pole, teller of sea
5. Culminate with mace (4)
1. Honour at the gala (4)

QUICKWORD 12

Across
1. Honour at the gala (4)
5. Culminate with mace (4)
9. Yellow red pigment (5)
11. Genesis of the stamp collector (4)
12. Head Whoopie (5)
13. Gaily from the run of (4)
14. Cat and An perhaps (3)
15. Give the Flemish a guide (2)
17. Kung Fu expert downwind (3)
18. Iragnation at sleepy hounds (6)
20. Pole, teller of sea stories (6)
22. Swear at mangy canine (3)
23. Indian state is partly explosive (2)
24. Cobbler poke (5)
27. Sultanae home of Drys (4)
29. Bonsai country dwelling (5)
31. Contribute insect (4)
32. Hun in loft (5)
33. Wean atrish (4)
34. Eye the sports channel (4)

Down
1. Particle or wave destination (4)
2. Nympheans (4)
3. Loss in the rough (4)
4. Before the complications (3)
5. Spring month (3)
6. Father of man, perhaps (5)
7. Distance before hitting the sack (5)
8. McPherson’s tread (4)
9. Act against inertia (6)
10. Angkor’s slave trade point (6)
11. Zino, perhaps (2)
12. North Dakota possibly (2)
13. Seed condiment (5)
14. Deliver promiscuously (5)
15. No rousing this one (4)
16. Great pretender, in deed (4)
17. Scar with the quart (4)
18. Lingerie edged (4)
19. Poise (5)
20. Consume at tea (3)

KATHMANDU

Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue
22-03 21-02 21-02 22-03 23-04

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On Friday & Saturday (between 9 am and 4 pm) the representative of WCIMT will be there to answer your queries at Kathmandu Academy, Baghcaoba.

For inclusion in the listing send information to edition@nepaltimes.com

KATHMANDU WEATHER

This satelite picture taken on Wednesday morning shows clear skies all the way to West Asia with only white patches of ground fog over the Gangetic plains bordering Nepal. A high-pressure area is sitting all the way to West Asia with only white patches of ground fog over the Gangetic plains bordering Nepal. A high-pressure area is sitting all the way to West Asia with only white patches of ground fog over the Gangetic plains bordering Nepal.

KATHMANDU

Fri Sat Sun Mon Tue
22-03 21-02 21-02 22-03 23-04

by CROSS EYES

Temper and conditions
1. The competition is open to everyone, except employees of Infocom Pvt Ltd and Himalmedia Pvt Ltd.
2. In case of a tie, the first entry will be declared the lucky draw winner.
3. Entries have to reach Himalmedia by 5 pm, Tuesday 5th January.
4. The winner will be announced on the coming issue.
5. The prize has to be collected at the Himalmedia office with a proof of the announcement. Please come with an ID.

To send in your entries, please fill in the details below and fax to 9771-520113, or email to crossword@himalmedia.com. Entries can be dropped off at Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Palat Dhoka, Lalitpur.

Name:

Email:

INFOM

To receive the Sunday Infocom edition, please write to infocom@nepalshop.com


SALIL SABED

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Henry Bajracharya, the 70-year-old force behind the snow leopard program at the Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation, said he was headed on a mission to save the world’s most beautiful mammal. “I have always admired the snow leopard for its grace and majesty,” said Bajracharya, who has spent 20 years working with the species.

Snow leopards are found in the Central Asian mountains, with the highest concentrations in the mountainous areas of the Xinjiang region of China. They are also found in parts of Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Unfortunately, the snow leopard is facing numerous threats, including habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. In Nepal, poaching is a major threat, with the animal being hunted for its fur, which is highly valued in traditional Chinese medicine.

In recent years, the Nepalese government has taken steps to protect the species, including creating protected areas and implementing conservation programs. However, more needs to be done to ensure the long-term survival of the snow leopard.

Bajracharya’s mission is to raise awareness about the species and to promote conservation efforts. He hopes to inspire people to protect these magnificent creatures and to ensure that they continue to thrive in their natural habitats.

“Snow leopards are not only beautiful, but they are also important indicators of the health of their ecosystems,” Bajracharya said. “Their survival is essential for the survival of many other species that depend on the same habitats.”

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Serious efforts are underway to save Nepal’s snow leopard population. Because the main threat is from poaching, the message is: it is worth protecting the rare cats.

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Snow Leopard Stewardship Program (NPWC)

The Nepalese government has established the Snow Leopard Stewardship Program (NPWC) to help protect the snow leopard. The program aims to identify and protect critical areas for the species, and to work with local communities to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Jackson, who is the director of the Snow Leopard Stewardship Program, said: “It is important to work with local communities to protect the snow leopard, as they are the most important people in the conservation of this species.”

The program focuses on creating a network of conservation areas, and on working with local communities to reduce human-wildlife conflict. It also aims to improve the livelihoods of people who live near snow leopard habitats.

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A farmer in Mugu sells a complete set of snow leopard bones for 1,000 rupees (about $10), while the animal can have a street value of as much as 10,000 rupees (about $100). This has led to poaching, which is a major threat to the species.

In recent years, the Nepalese government has taken steps to protect the species, including creating protected areas and implementing conservation programs. However, more needs to be done to ensure the long-term survival of the snow leopard.

Bajracharya’s mission is to raise awareness about the species and to promote conservation efforts. He hopes to inspire people to protect these magnificent creatures and to ensure that they continue to thrive in their natural habitats.

“Snow leopards are not only beautiful, but they are also important indicators of the health of their ecosystems,” Bajracharya said. “Their survival is essential for the survival of many other species that depend on the same habitats.”

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Nepal is certainly happening, although they could do with better content and be a little more imaginative. Their popular chat site, Hamro.com is virtually synonymous with online chatting for Nepalis, the infrastructure still struggling to do much out of the ordinary. Some small national newspapers also provide a service, but not on a large scale. Visitors are by and large content with the free, easy-to-use chat rooms that don't work, a few illegal mp3s, a handful of travel-and-trade-related sites. Thus, the basic facts are easy to sift through, but no single site has created enough to go beyond the obvious in terms of information, search or chat. Yes, mountains are beautiful, but you'll have loads of fun on a web site like Hamro, where all else is lacking.

The Nepali sites fall into one of two endless possibilities of the Internet. They can be service providers for the rather predictable, like Hamro.com, Nepal's first online medical consultation, or1800211. (See Biz Briefs for details.)

One of Nepal’s first e-commerce sites. NEPAL’S FIRST ONLINE MEDICAL CONSULTATION: Information on traditional mother and baby-care practices. NEPAL’S FIRST ONLINE MEDICAL CONSULTATION: Information on traditional mother and baby-care practices.
Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Now that a certain large neighbour to our south, with a population of two billion, has once more massively declared her intent to make her beautiful country in the known universe, this leaves many of us smaller neighbours insecure and on the horns of a dilemma. As far as beauty is concerned, we are now

The Bimbo Deterrent

India has great beauty, the question is what the rest of the world is going to do about it. There are three answers: “Practice, practice, and practice.” Our girls need to go through rigorous training, re-fitting and streamlining to be able compete with the best desis. India has on offer. The schematic diagram below was secretly obtained by our intelligence agents and depicts a state-of-the-art bimbette who was crowned last week at an Artillery Air Show in the Millenium Dome. The arrows point to soft spots where we need to get to work without much ado:

WARHEAD: This is the brain of the weapon. It should be quick and agile. No matter what the question, your answers have to be: “I am an incarnation of Mother Teresa.” “I want to be a marine biologist/clinical psychologist.” “I want to be the first woman to climb Mt Everest in a strapless peach aerodynamic nose job.”

NOZZLE: For in-flight stability, grey need an aerodynamic nose job. Flaps: Need to be fully deployed during launching. DORSALFINS: Remember beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Propulsion System: Never underestimate the power of a nice pair of these to get a leg up on the opposition. Undercarriage: It is the high heels that will give you the strategic advantage in this struggle for ultimate world hegemony.

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Mothers Nature

mother nature

Panners tell for their children—a sneeze or a cough is enough to set in a panic. It was just such a collective panic that led to the formation of the Save the Environment Foundation (SEF), after Chandra Rana and her friends concluded that Kathmandu’s pollution was responsible for their children’s chronic respiratory illnesses and decided to do something about it.

From clearing out the mounds of rotting garbage near the Ratnasmekhara vegetable market to campaigning against Vikram temps, SEF has achieved a lot. The beautiful garden in front of the Birendra International Convention Centre in Nayaparanewari is an SEF undertaking. Earlier, the space gave no hint of the world-class convention facilities that lay beyond what had essentially become a public toilet.

Now the landscaped garden looks like the work of real pros, but isn’t. “All the designing was done by us!” says Panka, laughing with pleasure. The park boasts out-of-season flowers, sculptures dedicated to Mother Nature by leading Nepali artist Thakur Prasad Manal, artistic-looking tree stumps, green poems carved in marble, and walkways.

SEF also plants trees—the barrelled trees on the stretch of road in front of Singh Durbur is their doing. In addition, SEF awards environment-friendly industries (with the Ministry of Population and Environment), propagates energy-saving techniques in factories, and is leading an awareness campaign against polluting the Bishajari Tal area of Chitwan.

SEF is a group of 15 women, most of them housewives concerned about the environment. There’s no big budget and the Foundation isn’t donor driven. “There are donors who will be more than happy to support us, but SEF is not interested,” says a defiant Rana.