Two of Nepal’s biggest banks are insolvent. Rs 45 billion worth of depositor’s savings is in danger. The largest borrowers are the defaulters. Banking reforms are the only hope.

Nepal is a public radio pioneer in South Asia. It was the first country to allow community radio stations in 1997 when Radio Sagarmatha went on air in Kathmandu. Nepal has also been more liberal than others in the region in allowing private FM broadcasters. The deregulation increased credibility and professionalism of radio, made the medium attractive and cities more aware of new ideas and trends. But it seems the government doesn’t think so. A sudden decision by the Ministry of Information and Communication on 2 January to cancel the licences and call officials over to explain reasons behind the decision is a clear indication of the government’s reform plan, no matter officially stated otherwise. The licence revocation came at a time when the street violence’s credibility and professionalism of radio, made the medium attractive and cities more aware of new ideas and trends.

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Girija’s last hurrah

Leaning out on The dreadful precipice
One contemptuous tree.

FEW mornings, you can see vapour rising from the surface of these lakes. The sun promotes the mirage, and the Valley of Helambu finally comes to life. Mistral-borne mists, incredibly high in the sky, are in ascension and seem to want to reach out and touch it. By afternoon, there is a crisp winter breeze setting over the lake from the forest on the far bank. The wind brings back the innocence you thought you had lost, lapang in the deep journey of life. Becoming rains, the shadow of the surrounding hills lengthens across the valley floor absorbing the darkness. Then the man-class, and the image of the ancient city of Katmandu, slow down with a smirky luminance. Helambu is magical at dawn, and of year.

As usual, it is not the Nepal Congress, but the Nepali Congress which status politics: when power, and leadership erupt openly once more. Girija Prasad Koirala will be trying to ruthlessly pluck all chairs, and sit on two chairs, and try to pull both chairs from under him.

So nothing has really changed, except this feeling of free fall. The government is getting ready to arm a paramilitary force, and international arms dealers are circling like vultures. The ruling party had better sort out its own power struggle for this country’s sake, if not their own. Just look at the continual elections topped by the latest slogans and decisions. The ultra-left is inviting a crisis that could one day even cost us our independence. Those on the far right are set on a course of democratic reversal. And what does the government do? It plays party games by blocking needed current affairs on PM, forgetting that rumours like the ones that fanned the flames last month can only be countered by open, transparent and responsible media.

Scapegoating selected media, and blaming the messenger is not going to mask the incompetence of a government that demanded an apology from a foreign actor for something he never said. Banning news on PM is the kind of election we have come to expect from officials so insecure that they are afraid of their own shadow.

On the morning of the second day of the last week of the last month, before the convention takes place, Girija Prasad Koirala will stand off the central committee members from national constituency of general convention members, but Sudha’s regional hold over the party apparatus in the mid-west and far-west regions of the country post-Pokhara. The party constitution is expected to be amended to elect half the central committee members from national constituency of general convention members, but Sudha’s regional hold over the party apparatus in the mid-west and far-west regions of the country post-Pokhara. The party constitution is expected to be amended to elect half the central committee members from national constituency of general convention members, but Sudha’s regional hold over the party apparatus in the mid-west and far-west regions of the country post-Pokhara.

It was just two weeks ago, but it feels like ages have passed. It is like that with bad things: you don’t want to remember. And in Kingdom of Amnesia, we are especially good at pushing aside memories, and not learning lessons. So it seems now like a bad dream—those two days of sudden violence. As swiftly as it flared, the flames died: a lost chance to prove their relevance in a party that has functioned like a platform that day, but is likely to re-emerge as a semblance of an actual political party in Nepal.

Nepal Congress leaders like to think that those two days of recent violence. As swiftly as it flared, the flames died: a lost chance to prove their relevance in a party that has functioned like a platform that day, but is likely to re-emerge as a semblance of an actual political party in Nepal.

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Rationalism and nationalism

What if the Indian media applied to its own society even a tenth of the standards it has judged Nepal by? A noted Indian writer explores the moral lifestliness of his country’s press.

“Randomly sampled” with anything. If sampling meant heart-Indian journalism positively that didn’t have, in the policeman’s in a district town a role model democracy.

The situation on the border changed when the Indian government, in effect, announced its “deeply concerned” and said it would persist no matter what.

The NEPAL AS UNDERWORLD HAVEN
Nepal put the jailbirds on trial as if they had done anything. It isn’t so many years ago that India blocked the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane last year. The NEPAL AS A DEN OF THE ISI
NEPAL AS UNDERWORLD HAVEN

The Rastriya Swayamsevak Samaj, an umbrella party, seems committed to turning Nepal into hell (well, its half hell already). They committed to turn Nepal into hell and umbrella parties seem committed to turn Nepal into hell. Sad, isn’t it, to think about these people.

The Critical Outlook, a weekly English-language newspaper, published an article on the subject of “Nepal as a Den of the ISI”. The article, which was written by Mark Pickett, a British journalist, claimed that there was evidence to support the claim that the Nepalese government was colluding with the ISI.

Aftershocks

“Waiting for the big one” (25) left me in a state of panic. It has projected an apocalyptic picture of the valley after a magnitude 7 or 8 quake. It seems the aftershocks will be more serious than the actual earthquake.

No one can prevent an earthquake, but the time has come to think about how we can prevent an earthquake and its aftermath.

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SALIL SUBEDI WITH HEMLATA RAI

If major flashfloods out in your neighborhood the thing to do is lock in, but don’t be too tough as the firefighting will still take over. Provided you run up at all, for it can likely the flames will be too raging to regular their tandem, some of which are owners of 60 years old, and if it assures within those few big fires simultaneously in Kathmandu, the rest anyone can do sit back and watch the flames, as fires engines on hose and water are hot close with anything new. At the moment, we can do nothing but hope nothing like that happens,” says one firefighter in Kathmandu.

If you want to know what is stirring about, take a small tour the Bagmati Valley. Even the Bagmati Valley today is burning. People are setting their homes on fire, burning dry grass, etc. But most of these fires are not deliberate, but are set to clear the land for planting. The smoke is, however, greatly concerning for the people who live nearby. The smoke is making it difficult for them to breathe, and it is also causing damage to crops and forests.

In some areas, the fires are so intense that people are literally being driven out of their homes by the smoke and heat. The flames are spreading rapidly, and it is difficult to control them. The firefighters are working hard to contain the fires, but they are being hindered by lack of resources and support from the government.

The government has commitment to control forests, but they are not doing enough. They are only providing support to the firefighters in terms of water and food, but they are not providing enough equipment and training. The firefighters are working without proper gear and equipment, and this is putting their lives in danger.

The situation is even worse in the rural areas, where the infrastructure is even more limited. The firefighters are not able to reach these areas in time, and the fires are spreading rapidly. The government needs to take urgent action to control the fires and protect the people and environment from further damage.
Why don't they use protected. The police exploit us. They are the unlucky ones, left to face the mobs. We are neither armed nor their cannon instead? asked one fire fighter.

Motra, German
Model: 1976, Capacity: 4,000 litre
(Kathmandu-2)
Magirus Deutz, German
Model: 1976, Capacity: 2,400 litre
(Kathmandu-1, Patan-1, Bhaktapur-1)
Bedford, UK
Model:1973, Capacity: 1,500 litre
(Bhaktapur -1)
Dennis, UK
Model: 1945, Capacity: 1,200 litre
(Bhaktapur-1)

**Everest Hotel**
Planning permission has been granted for building the world’s highest hotel—17,000 ft above sea level—in the Rongbuk valley on the Tibetan side of Mt Everest. The project has however angered environmentalists and climbers who feel that the hotel will attract more visitors and make the area a virtual theme park.

The man behind the scheme is Russell Brice, a New Zealand-born mountaineer who has been climbing and running expeditions on Mt Everest for more than 20 years. Brice and his Nepali partner, Ang Tsering Sherpa of Asian Airlines, first met representatives from the China-Tibet Mountaineering Authority in Lhasa, where they agreed upon a joint venture to build a lodge at base camp. Brice then had to seek the approval of more than 10 government authorities before finalising the proposal for the eight-bedroom hotel and six chalets with 36 beds.

The proposed hotel will cover 22,000 square feet of the base camp area and will include a bar and restaurant serving local cuisine. The hotel, yet to be named, is expected to cost £23.9 million to build and designers say they have ensured that the complex will be solar powered and waste will be recycled into energy using highly pressurised tanks. Buddhist monks have advised that the design remain traditionally Tibetan.

The idea originated from a temporary camp set up by Swedish climbers 10 years ago. “It made sense to have this sort of set-up permanently, to serve not only climbers but also the majority of tourists who visit the base camp for a short time,” says Brice. But honorary secretary of the Mount Everest Foundation, Bill Ruthven, dismisses the idea. “This is commercialising Everest. It should be left aloof from the masses.”

**DFID gives £19.5m**
Britain’s Department for International Development (UK) has agreed to give Nep-70,000 5.1 million euro— about 10-mile-long runway in the Rongbuk valley on the Tibetan side of Mt Everest. The project has however angered environmentalists and climbers who feel that the hotel will attract more visitors and make the area a virtual theme park.

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Lesser citizens

Nepal ratified CEDAW (the UN convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women), which recognises marriage and family rights as important and inalienable rights of women. However, men and women are not treated equally. While women are not allowed to initiate divorce, men can divorce their wives for reasons such as infidelity, desertion, or refusal to bear children.

Grounds for divorce

In case of forced marriage between minors, a divorce can be obtained through mutual understanding between the two parties when they come of age. The procedure to obtain a divorce is different for men and women, and the grounds for divorce can vary. However, the provision of maintenance expenditure will be paid to the divorced wife only if the cause of the divorce is established to be the husband's fault. The husband will then provide maintenance to his wife for at least five years or until the wife remarries, whichever comes first.

For men:
- If wife lives separately from husband for more than three years;
- If wife attempts to live the life of or causes disability or any serious physical damage to husband;
- If wife has sexual relationship outside marriage or admits having sex outside marriage in a court;
- If wife elopes;
- If wife is infected with a contagious, transmissible sexual disease or if she becomes insane, crippled or blind, husband can remarry without divorcing the first wife;
- If a married woman or a widow enters a forced marriage by stating her marital status otherwise, she is penalised and the marriage is automatically terminated.

For women:
- If husband remarries;
- If wife is thrown out of the household;
- If husband lives separately from wife for more than three years;
- If husband attempts to take life, causes disability or serious physical damage; and
- If husband is impotent.

(adapted from Himal Khabarpatrika)
The Hepatitis B virus is spreading fast, and most people don't even know.

HEMLETA RAI

A silent killer is upon us. If the doctors are to be believed, there is a “sudden, persistent and progressive” growth in Hepatitis B cases since 1997, and with which they claim can be seen the “emergence of an epidemic” in Nepal.

Researchers put the number of Hepatitis B patients in Nepal at 200,000, and approximately 200 new cases are recorded annually. The incidence of acute Hepatitis B was 5.9 per 1000 in the years 1985-86, rose to 15 percent between 1997-98, and is projected to have grown by 30 percent between 1997-2000. Doctors warn that there could be more underreported cases.

Amor for help to controlling the spread of the disease in that, an infected person can carry the Hepatitis B virus without showing any symptoms of the disease and transmit the disease to other healthy people. It is often diagnosed too late, after having exacted its toll on the sick people. It is often diagnosed too late, after having exacted its toll on the people. It is often diagnosed too late, after having exacted its toll on the sick people.

The infection is detected through blood tests and in case of indications of active liver damage, the patient is recommended for a liver ultrasound and biopsy. The government’s Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases Control Division identifies drug addicts, commercial sex workers, military personnel, migrant workers and people who develop chronic kidney problems as particularly vulnerable to the disease.

The problem is there are people who are so under skeptical of the evidence of the virus, and claim that it is a pharmaceutical industry-engineered scare. However, the people working to raise awareness against the virus claim the simple and straightforward approach. They claim that people develop this misconception as in some adults the virus sometimes just disappear, without ever developing into a serious ailment. The rate at which the virus develops into a chronic infection among adult recipients is also low. Studies show that there is an 80 to 90 percent chance that the Hepatitis B infection develops into a chronic infection if the infection occurs in childhood and less than 5 percent if it occurs in 10 years after birth.

From Data of the Resource Centre for Primary Health Care said that the rate of Hepatitis B infection in Nepal is alarming and that biologically, the Hepatitis B virus is more infectious.

According to him, present vaccination is the most effective way to control the spread of Hepatitis B in Nepal. But he was critical about the way the vaccination is administered in the Kathmandu Valley. “What is dangerous is the commercialisation of the Hepatitis B vaccination in Nepal. There is neither a price-control mechanism nor follow-up to check if the pharmaceutical companies are selling unauthorised vaccines to the public.”

A study reported by the Liver Foundation Nepal (LNF) throws up some interesting findings. It does that certain ethnic groups like Thibars, Magar-Bas and Sherpas have higher Hepatitis B prevalence compared to other ethnic groups in Nepal. “It is because among them, mothers are transmitting the virus to their children. However, we still need to further studies and research efforts to establish the real reasons as to why some groups have higher Hepatitis B prevalence,” said Dr Santosh Man Shrestha of LNF.

The open border with India, and the large number of people who travel across to find jobs are also to blame for the spread of the disease. The 2002 study assessed the Hepatitis B prevalence in India in the thousands of Nepali migrant workers who are seen in Nepal. Hepatitis B infection in people who work together, as well as 20 other countries are also vulnerable. But, as much as countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam and India are said to have high incidences of Hepatitis B, other Asian countries like China, who are also high incidences of Hepatitis B, other countries that have a high prevalence of Hepatitis B is also facilitating the spread of the virus. According to the documents made available to the Hepatitis B virus Foundation, China has a Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) prevalence of 10 percent, Vietnamese, and Pakistan and India, 3 percent.

The Asian-Pacific consensus meeting on Hepatitis B and C held in Tokyo, Japan recently, last year, admitted internationalism for the community in the west to prevent the spread of Hepatitis B virus to the virus. The whole world is in a condition to spread the Hepatitis B virus to the local community, which is considered a great health risk for the local community. Normally, the Hepatitis B infection is transmitted by blood and blood products, tattoos, acupuncture and dental care, taking improper medical and surgical care and avoiding multiple sex partners.

VILLAGE VOICE

by HEMLETA RAI

W hen the residents of Kumrose decided to set-up a community forest, adjoining their lands, it was a tough choice. Bound by the Rapti river on the south and the Royal Chitwan National Park on the west, it meant facing one of two perennial water bodies. The village is home to the endangered one-horned rhinoceros, problems: suffering the annual monsoon flood of the river or facing machan (view tower) that can accommodate eight visitors at a time.

There are many agencies who talk big about village tourism, but nobody come up to help us. We are willing to work and manage the machan as a community, and we are confident that if we are trained in restaurant and lodge management we can attract more tourists to our forest, and make a fortune. Our income is very low. That will be vital for self-sufficiency and also enhance the sense of ownership towards natural resources,” says a disheartened Bin Bahadur Gurung, vice-chairman of Kumrose VDC. “The lack of proper publicity, we do not get any guests as expected,” said Bahadur of Kumrose VDC.

The Kumroze Machan is a forest which is rich in flora—dusky horned owls, large grass warbler, lesser adjutant stork, lesser spotted eagle, yellow-billed detector, black stork and riparian grass waders have been seen in the forest. It is also rich in fauna—there are numerous species of trees including Shimla Rhododendron, Skeleton Rhododendron, Strobilanthes k furnished and Malabar Rhododendron. It is also rich in flora—dusky horned owls, large grass warbler, lesser adjutant stork, lesser spotted eagle, yellow-billed detector, black stork and riparian grass waders have been seen in the forest. It is also rich in fauna—there are numerous species of trees including Shimla Rhododendron, Skeleton Rhododendron, Strobilanthes k furnished and Malabar Rhododendron.

Annually, the Kumroze Machan earns between Re 100,000 to 150,000 from both Nepali and foreign visitors. The main drawback at the Machan is the lack of facilities at the site, which keeps away visitors who might otherwise have preferred to spend a night at a community-managed machan rather than in already congested Kumaun, a 20-minute bicycle ride away inside the RFN area. There are many agencies who talk big about village tourism, but nobody come up to help us. We are willing to work and manage the machan as a community, and we are confident that if we are trained in restaurant and lodge management we can attract more tourists to our forest, and make a fortune. Our income is very low. That will be vital for self-sufficiency and also enhance the sense of ownership towards natural resources,” says a disheartened Bin Bahadur Gurung, vice-chairman of Kumroze VDC. “The lack of proper publicity, we do not get any guests as expected,” said Bahadur of Kumroze VDC.

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November decision allowed "self certification". Nepal’s Emission Rules basis of "Conformity of Production" (COP) issued by Environment (MOPE) decision allowing imports on the procedures are in contravention of Nepal’s emission

Some arguments and counter-arguments of the unions and industry:

- Unions say that workers elsewhere have better facilities than what Nepali workers get. Industry maintains that if Nepali workers should get similar perks as those in Germany then Germany also has to do it the Nepali way.

- Unions have presented "low" salary structures in different hotels to prove their point. Industry maintains that the account does not factor in free or subsidised food, medical benefits, etc.

- Unions say hotels maintain different account books and hide profits. Industry charges there are several government departments looking into that and especially with VAT there are no chances of doing what the unions allege.

Court bars Indian vehicle imports

The Supreme Court last week has ordered suspension of the import of Indian vehicles till its convences again to hear a petition by a consumers’ right group which charges that import procedures in conflict with the Convention of Nepal’s emission standards. The Court has also asked the Customs Department to furnish details on vehicles imported on the basis of "self-certification" so far.

The petitioners are challenging a Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) decision allowing imports on the basis of "self-certification" like it does Japanese and Korean auto-makers. This has angered some of our self-proclaimed environmental activists who feel the unregulated use of cooking gas to run vehicles has created the LPG crisis. Perhaps they are driven by the emission-manufacturers in other parts of the world. Perhaps the emission-manufacturers are really beyond the ambit of the law. Perhaps the problem is of equal treatment for all vehicles or vehicle businesses.

The import of Indian vehicles was held from December 99 to July 2000. For all intents and purposes, it was a clampdown on Indian vehicles. There are no quick solutions. Urban Nepalis have got too used to fast money, fast food, fast cars, instant gratification, and that is something that we have to foster tourism, not wreck it. If you have to go to the States and Australia, but this is the eject seat—don’t we have a responsibility to return to society what Nepal has given us?

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No business like show business

The Nepali film industry is finally coming into its own. The success of Darpan Chhaya and the censor row over Aago have given Kollywood a new boost.

Incidentally, another film by Tulsi Ghimiray had started the trend. His family action drama, Chhaya, was a big hit. In 1999, Ghimiray understood that a Nepali public wanted a 40-year-old diet. Hindi films had the edge, in terms of themes and quality. Based on the familiar father-son theme, the film managed to do just that. But the gap of quality that followed film assembly, there was overkill and Bollywood took a misstep. This was a bleak period for Nepali cinema—with productions producers couldn’t even recoup. Rs 50,000 on a film, the industry also failed to understand the value of small investments.

In the early 90s, when viewers preferred to stay back home and watch the latest Hindi hits in the comfort of their living rooms, Nepali over Hindi.

Films are big business in Nepal. Theatres, whether concessions building catering hundreds, “vision” video halls that are converted genuine fanatics, or working-class shops playing as cinemas are spread all over the valley. Aago presents a turnover of Rs 9 million.

Darpan Chhaya, produced on a modest Rs 4 million budget. Rs 9 million is average for a Nepali film but already made Rs 6.5 million. By conservation estimates, the producers expect a turnover of Rs 12 million.

Says filmmaker and president of the four-month-old Film Development Board today (Kharel), “It’s a healthy sign that Nepali films are being bought and sold. The film is on the floor of the editing room. Businessmen, including exhibitors and distributors, are investing. The prices are paying-up to 40 percent of the capital required in exchange for exclusive distribution rights. Theatrical and ancillary rights, Nepali films still have a long way to go, the industry. Nepali films in terms of quality and economic achievement,” says Kharel. The Nepali National Film Association, the body that represents the interests of producers, distributors and exhibitors, is working with the Film Development Corporation to get government recognition for the movie business in a production-oriented industry, rather than a service-oriented sector. This would allow it to tax concessions when importing raw material and equipment. Already after the taxbreak announced last year, production has doubled.

In 1995 Nepali theatres screened 520 Nepali films. In 1997, 90 films were screened in 116 theatres around the country, including 64 video halls. Once-underpaid actors are working double shifts, and their prices have shot up. Popular lead male Nishchal Basnet charges Rs 300,000 per film, while actors like Rhikesh Singh and Jhala Shrestha are demanding as much as Rs 200,000, more than double what they made just a couple of years ago. It’s not just the stars who’re fetching a flash day—film technicians are in demand too, confirming dates for the next project before they’ve even done with this one. Dance drivers and fight men are also fully booked.

Finally, their projects are making most of technology to cut production time and costs. Director Purusbdh and digital films on digital computer, “It’s terms of time and money it’s cost effective. What might take 200 hours on analog can be completed in 120 hours.”

While Kollywood can’t compete with Hollywood in terms of scale, it is reproducing the same number of films as, say, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or Australia. “This is the beginning of the best period of the industry,” says Ghimiray. As nepali cinema has accelerated, the middle class has returned to the cinemas. New theatres and multiplexes in Kathmandu have also lured the upper crust back. An Entertainment line-up to watch. Chhaya goes out outside Bhaktapur, in Kathmandu. Kollywood actors are working dinner and coffee, director Purushottam Pradhan safe confidence, “It’ll probably continue 100 days. That means other Nepali films waiting for a slot will have to wait a long, long time.”

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SUKANTA TULADHAR

Kathmandu’s urban landscape today is a mélange of many architectural styles and eras, with buildings of varying qualities. These concrete structures are a reflection of the changing lifestyles of the people. But the urban strain is a concrete monster towering over narrow lanes, or wedding cakes Villas that seem to have been transplanted from Beverly Hills and plunked down on Kathmandu.

The basic contemporary urban look is that of a sandwiched concrete skeleton frame, flat roof, cement-plastered surface and large windows. This “neo-vernacular” style defies everything it is supposed to. Twenty years ago when the tile-roofed, masonry brick two-storey houses were starting to come down, we were making fun of these buildings. Now it is the ugliest buildings that try neither to be assimilated, nor abandon totally Kathmandu’s traditional sense of the buildings (see: Mahals with brick façades, Nagarkot, or in the original Thamel, or in the original Thamel). Perhaps it wouldn’t have mattered if these buildings had come up in the middle of the Ganges plains, but they co-exist with and often stand in place of the exquisite living architectural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Many owners and designers get carried away while trying to be traditional, and end up with hotels that look like Taj Mahals with brick façades, completely dissonant with the traditional Nepali urban squalour and appallingly hazardous construction, there is the slight glimmer of hope that a new generation of Nepali architects is marrying form with function and designing new buildings that try neither to be too assimilated, nor abandon totally Kathmandu’s traditions.

The present trend towards marrying Malla with Rana-Victorian styles began in the 1980s when the focus was on how to give a new layer to the history of construction techniques from older structures. The extensive use of brick is something that still makes sense for Kathmandu, which lies in the zone built, but the mortar can be changed to sustain interested in exposed-brick traditional look. And it does not matter that this is happening only on the façade because it returns to the streetside. Kathmandu’s historical harmony of space and grace, do at least have some variety in the real estate market. In the past five years, however, population pressure has made it pick up again. The economics of such constructions makes immediate sense: it enables people to build higher than before, whether to stretch a small piece of land to get a significantly larger floor space, or to just look for more space. We have very sensible building codes and zoning laws, but since these are usually implemented, the sky is the limit. “People take it as an achievement. If they can close higher than their neighbours on the same foundation,” says architect Nargis Naik Shrestha, one of Kathmandu’s most sought-after architects and fan, Creative Builders Collaborative. House owners ignore the advice of architects and engineers when building becomes a race to keep up with the Janardans. My advice of architects and engineers of one of Kathmandu’s most sought-after architecture firms, Creative Builders Collaborative.

A Millenium Newar house generally didn’t get taller than three stories, the ideal height for a house in a semi-tropical climate. Now, however, the ground floor was for storage or a shop, in a bazaar area, the second for living and sleeping, and the top floor had a kitchen and pooja area. The use of locally available materials was construction economical, and the house was easy to maintain. The presence of different layers of brick work and timber made the walls sturdier and also insulated the house. The sloped roofs made it easier to drain rainwater from the walls.

2. The Everest View Hotel in Syangboche.
3. Heritage Plaza in Patan.
4. The Soaltee’s original old wing.
5. The Shangrila Hotel in Lopspur.
6. The Bali Hotel in Patan.
7. The Oasis 49 Dhara building soars above the Patan middle class and is going for a sloped roof, curves wooden windows and exposed brick walls.

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Modern Nepali architecture is finally showing signs of moving out of its kitsch phase to explore new styles and tastes that are in harmony with the urban and natural environment. But with so much ugliness around, it will take time to make an impact.

Ridgeline. And of course, what can we say about Tiger Tops in Chilime that has built rooms on the jungle canopy, an idea that has been copied all over the world. But Kathmandu’s new architects seem to have learnt their lesson well. Today, although Kathmandu’s skyline is a jagged outline of concrete terraces, from certain aspects you do see the emergence of a new line of red roofs, most modern.
As research-oriented, software development jobs are difficult to get, Nepali companies are gunning for labour-intensive IT-enabled services.

Telecom is already active, and has started selling, and other two, Envisys and Skylink.com, are in the process. The call-centres are the top-of-the-line IT-enabled service providers. To understand how it works, say, for example, you live in the USA and want to know the balance on your credit card, promise payment, or just apply for one, chances are you’ll ring the toll-free number and hear what sounds like an American accent, but is actually a Nepali voice giving you all the information you need. Or, you could be making airline reservations, ordering products in the USA or Canada, information like the latest in blanket vacuum-sealing technology. It’s much cheaper for firms overseas to outsource such work to countries like Nepal.

What makes these companies important is that they currently provide around 1,800 Nepalis with hi-tech jobs. Employees don’t necessarily need high-tech backgrounds—companies have trained high school graduates for the jobs. “We want people who understand English, and can maintain a certain quality of work. Their level of education is not very important,” says Juddha Gurung of Himalayan Info Tech. His company has more than 500 applicants, but only 458 were selected. The workers in the smaller outfits like ours, because we will give priority to the smallest of clients,” he adds.

Employees are training the Nepali workforce, and the idea is that they eventually will do the same thing. But, chances are that Nepali companies will soon be outsourcing work to other countries, and the idea of Nepal as an IT hub is not far away.

Entrepreneurs don’t want just attention, they want to be developed. “We want to be seen as a hub of IT-enabled services. Nepal is just entering the global e-commerce-oriented services. Nepal is just entering the global e-commerce-oriented services. It’s much cheaper for firms overseas to outsource such work to countries like Nepal.

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Searching for a new utopia

ALEC KLEIN

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) last month approved America’s first true merger, clearing the way for the two companies to finally complete the world’s largest media merger ever. The $95 billion merger of AT&T and Time Warner, announced late Thursday in New York, will be a milestone event in drawing towards this, and the social and civil society groups with the aim of stimulating the debate of the Left in the country’s global network. The 25-30 January gathering in the southern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, will download geographies of trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and political and social movements from throughout the world to identify new moral and political economic social and political linkages.

The initial projection of 2,700 participants, doubled for the World Social Forum 2001 gathering to take place in the Brazilian port city of Porto Alegre, the mother of all mergers

The media and TV conglomerate AT&T Inc. said it will offer $105 billion in cash and stock, or about $120 a share, for Time Warner Inc., in a deal that will make AT&T the world’s largest media company.

AOL and Time Warner can finally go ahead with their $121 billion merger.

The combination of the two New York-based media and communications giants will create a company with operations in more than 150 countries, with investments in more than 1,000 media properties and 12,000 websites. The new company will have more than 70,000 employees and a market capitalization of more than $140 billion.

The deal, which was announced last month, is expected to close by the end of the year.

AOL shareholders will receive one share of AOL Time Warner for each share they own, while Time Warner shareholders will get 0.51 shares of AOL Time Warner stock for each share they own.

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**Biodiversity burn-out**

**At the current rate of destruction, the Philippines archipelago, described as the “hottest of biodiversity hotspots”, may soon burn itself out.**

In recent years, the Philippines has been described as one of the world’s “hotspots” for biodiversity. However, the country is losing its biodiversity at an alarming rate due to deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction. The latest models predict that if current trends continue, the Philippines may lose up to 70% of its biodiversity by 2050.

**Indonesian “Yummies”**

Indonesia where currency fluctuations have put even daily necessaries almost out of reach of many people. Yet, in cities across the country, exclusive entertainment spots are still not short of clients. The latest models of luxury cars are regularly parked outside these hotspots. “I pass through every weekend,” Yaya Suryana, a lecturer at the State Islamic University in Bandung, says of a particularly popular entertainment strip. “And it seems there is no such thing as economic crisis whatever he says.”

Meet the “yummies”—Indonesia’s young, upwardly mobile, independent elite singles, who live it up even as tens of millions of their countrymen struggle to make ends meet. Highly ambitious, yummies rarely appear to be for their lifestyle that they deserve to party as hard as they work—and they have more than enough money to live it up. Often occupying high positions in companies or owners of successful businesses, these 20-somethings earn between $12,000-15,000 annually—a small fortune in a country where the per capita annual income is $617.

Some commentators dismiss them as a selfish bunch. They note that many yummies jump jobs—proof of “disloyality” and “ungratefulness”—and delay having a family for fear of jeopardising their careers. Others see them differently. Explains psychologist Joyce Djaelani: “This generation sees life as a sea of opportunities they must grab.”

A sense of adventure is one characteristic that yummies share. It is this that distinguishes them from their parents’ generation: yummies seem to have a fondness for challenging sports. Bambang, one of them, has taken up paragliding. “I feel closer to God when paragliding. You realise how insignificant you are,” he says.

That many yummies do not think twice about leaving high-paying jobs to start up businesses is evidence of their willingness to take risks, says sociologist Rina Octaviani. 25 years old and already owns a boutique in an exclusive area in Bandung. She earns about $1,200 a month of which she spends on weekend escapades in an exclusive resort, where she indulges in her favourite sports. “Money isn’t a problem,” says Octaviani. “It gives me more than enough money to work harder.”

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extinct, plant and animal species documented by the organization in 1990. The 120 were selected because they are among the world’s worst-hit. They are found in the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Pacific Islands.

The IUCN lists the Philippines as the “most threatened” of the 25 so-called “biodiversity hotspots” in the world. These are areas with the least number of species and an alarmingly high degree of threat against those that do exist.

**The way of the dodo...**

- **There are 25 “biodiversity hotspots” in the world: areas with the least number of surviving species and a high degree of threat against those that exist.**

- **The Philippines ranks second in the world. After Africa in terms of number of extinct and threatened plants and animals.**

- **Threatened animals in the Philippines include the Philippine Eagle, the rarest eagle in the world. Only about 350-300 of them now exist.**

**Flashed government policies have also been critically timed by development agencies. Dr Francesca Nobile, former head of the Ford Foundation in the Philippines, says that a $300 million loan from the Asian Development Bank in 1995 for a national reforestation programme was wasted through faulty policies. “The programme was ill-advised and managed and relied on insufficient data. The programme was linked to HIV/AIDS prevention, and top-rank officials in the country’s government were lagging behind the epidemic.**

**Further demonised them and the disease itself.**

**Insufficient data. The programme was linked to HIV/AIDS prevention, and top-rank officials in the country’s government were lagging behind the epidemic.**

**India has been transformed by vast growth, the number of adults infected by 2005, a number that will rise to 50 million by 2010.**

**More than 4 million people with HIV/AIDS live in India, which is second in the world—after the African continent—in terms of extinct and threatened plants and animals.**

**The IUCN Red List indicates that of the 11,046 endangered and threatened species, 4,853 are found in the Philippines.**

**In BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES**

**World Bank report warns that the number of adults infected by 2005, a number that will rise to 50 million by 2010.**

**A Supreme Court decision in New Delhi last year called for condom distribution in factories where sex workers were present.**

**This is one of the few times when there have been no laws regulating the sex industry.**

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**One in every 10 adults suffers from HIV/AIDS, grossly ignorant of sexual matters.”

**Moreover, human rights abuses linked to HIV/AIDS are still legion.**

**People with HIV/AIDS are often discredited from their jobs, forced out of their neighbourhoods or discriminated against.**

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In the present case, for his selfish needs Koirala has forced one set of rules on another and he did not even vety party.

When he became prime minister, he had said that he would solve the Maoist crisis, control corruption and providing security. Will Deuba be successful on these counts?

Fifty-six MPs, including myself, had filed a vote of no-confidence against our parliamentary leader, Girija Prasad Koirala. It appears that the Nepali Congress is divided into the Koirala and Deuba camps. And if these camps slug it out in an election, there are still many government vehicles anymore. But continue to use government vehicles that were made available to them. The absence of peace and understanding within the party has led to these problems. Every party has many centres of power and this is true for the Congress as well. One has to gain support, handle all of them carefully and move ahead. This is the test of a successful leader.

The Central Library was established in 1948 with 235,000 books. A strategy has been designed to make the country's library and archives paperless. The library and archives include almost 80,000 books.

The study by the national accounts committee has set aside Rs 1.2 billion for two years in the budget for the project. The Central Library has made plans to make its premises paperless. The library and archives can help resolve many problems. The library can store almost 1 million books of any language on any subject.

The government and the Maoists have not been able to solve the Maoist crisis. The government has not been able to provide security. The government has not even been able to control corruption.

Division among Maoists

The two main contenders for the post of party president are Girija Prasad Koirala and Sher Bahadur Deuba. For membership in the Central Working Committee, the contenders are Ram Chandra Poudel, Shushil Acharya, Surendra Bahadur Devkota, Chandra Bahadur Deuba, Shankar Paudel, Keshab Rai, Ananda Prasad Pant, Raju Nepal, Shambhu Pant, Chitrakar, UB Pradhanang, Ram Mohan Shrestha, and Balaram Gharti Magar.

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MOVIES
- Movie ticket bookings online at <www.nepalshop.com>
- Pequeños Milagros (Small Miracles) A film by Eliseo Subiela, Argentina, 1997. An introverted but willing Rosalia believes in being a fairy and succeeds in changing the air-to-structured reality around her. Organised by the Inter-Cultural Film Society. Saturday, 20 January, 4.30pm. Russian Culture Centre.
- <vcl@wlink.com.np>
- Russian Film Festival. Jointly organised by the Kathmandu Film Archives (a Martin Chautari & Godavari Alumni Association undertaking) and the Russian Cultural Centre.

Schedule
Moscow Doesn’t Believe in Tears (1987) Best Foreign Film Oscar winner; 24 January, Wednesday, 5.30pm.
Genephi Blues (Courtesy Nepal Association); 25 January, Thursday, 3pm and 5.30pm
Brothers Karamazov (Based on Dostoevsky’s novel); 26 January, Friday, 5.30pm.
Tickets at Mandala Book Point in Jamai, GAA Hall in Thamel, Martin Chautari in Thapathali, and all Momo King branches. Rs 100 and Rs 50 per show. For more information ring Martin Chautari at 246065 or email <mchautari@mos.com.np>

EXHIBITION
- Angkor A black and white photography exhibition by Jaro Poncar from Prague. The focus of the exhibition is the temple complex Angkor Wat, one of the architectural wonders of the world. Last day 20 January. 8am to 6 pm. Indigo Gallery, Naal.

SLIDE LECTURE
- Across the Himalaya and Beyond Lecture and slide show by Arlene Blum who’s led over 20 successful mountaineering expeditions, including to Mt Everest and Mt McKinley and the first American summit of Annapurna (1.621 m), a 2,000 mile, nine-month trek across the Himalayan regions of Bhutan, Nepal and India. Friday, 19 January, 6 pm. Indigo Gallery, Naal. Rs 200. Reservations required. Call 413580 or email indigo@wlink.com.np

MUSIC
Shangri La Music Package
- Jazz Fever at the Jazz Bar. Piano (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday), piano and violin (Tuesday), live jazz (Thursday and Saturday) and live Irish music (Friday). International cuisine with drinks from a bottomless cellar, gourmet food and expresso, cognac and cigars... and more! 437741-43 or www.hotelshangri.com
- Jazz by Cadence at Upstairs Restaurant, Lazimpat. Every Saturday 7:30pm—10pm.
- Rock and Blues Robin & Lozoo play rock, blues, soul, and Nepalese tunes at The Bamboo Club, Thamel. Every Friday evening.

DANCE
- Odissi Dance by the renowned Odissi dancer Madhavi Mudgal and her group to mark the Republic Day of India. Sponsored by the Indian Council of Relations (ICCR). Venue the Royal Nepal Academy on 25-26 January. More details at the Indian Embassy. 413174, 410990
- Traditional Dances every evening in the courtyard of Dwarika's Hotel. Enjoy drinks from a choice of two bars. No entrance charge, however reservations are recommended for dinners. 479488.

EATING OUT
- Authentic Nepalese sekuwa (barbecue). Regular Friday night sekuwa in the lamp-lit courtyard setting starting 2 February at Dwarika’s Hotel. Select your own appetisers, momos, salads and choice of meats as well as delicious desserts. Packages include one free drink and lucky draw. Reservations recommended. Dwarika’s Hotel, 479-488.

EVENTS
- CAN Info-tech 2001 - Nepal Information Technology Show and Conference Nepal’s sole IT exhibition bringing together hundreds of experts, professionals, buyers, sellers, manufacturers and suppliers to provide a forum for networking and exchange of ideas. Some of the world’s leading IT companies will also be represented in the show. A two day conference on IT Revolution: A Millennium of Opportunities will also take place. Representatives from more than 17 different nations, 25-26 January. Birodha International Convention Centre, Baneshwor. Tickets Rs 50. Rs 25 for coupon holders. 432700.
- How Nepalese Organisations Could Benefit from the Asia Invest Programme Information seminar organised by Technology and Trade Information Promotion System (TIPS) National Bureau in Nepal. Ms. Genevieve-Anne Dehoux, Senior Project Manager, Asia-Invest Secretariat in Brussels will be the main resource person. 22 January, Monday from 9.15 am—12.30 pm at the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Meeting Hall (Room 10), Tiku.

NEWSPAPER CLIP
There isn’t much you can forecast with a weather satellite picture like this. The subcontinent largely devoid of clouds, thick haze and fog over the Indo-Gangetic Plains, a hint of high-altitude cirrus riding the jet stream above Iran. The western Himalaya could get some cloud this way (4)

For inclusions in the listing send information to editors@nepaltimes.com
A decapitated God and an insatiable princess

Instead of being pleased by all this royal extravagance, the god grew angry at being disturbed.

Before beginning the story, I must mention that, although I had forgotten his name when I started writing, I now recall that he was called Bhairab.
RCT, and football triumph

At the start of the year in history, two major football clubs returned to Nepal with the hosting of the Birthday Cup. Nepal Police Club (NPPC) won the first division title, while Dasharath Stadium was the venue for the second division. The tournament was played in two consecutive years in the 90s to the finals of the Birthday Cup for really mattered. The club made it 'A' division 38 years ago. But regarded as one of the best in 1999, RCT was of late struggling to couldn’t have asked for a better football season in Nepal, RCT tournament was organised for the earlier win was in 1973 when the Cup for the second time in the

year. It was done in the form of a provincial entry by the organisations and went on to the semifinal stage by defeating the Three Club. The club's win in the first round was in the final, RCT played a.

The Birthday Cup was welcome relief from ANFA squabbling, and a great start to the football season.

For football lovers, this tournament has also helped Geeta Rana. The successful completion of the tournament has also helped Geeta management. The Ganesh Thapa-Ganesh Thapa controversy dominated the football season, and it was with this tournament that a football-loving public finally saw some good football. In the Valley, the successful completion of the tournament has also helped Geeta Rana demonstrate that she is capable of running Nepal football. It was clear major reason that the Geeta Rana-led ANFA, has organised after she was promoted to president of the association in October. All 'A' division clubs of Kathmandu participated in the tournament. Teams from South Korea, Bangladesh and Maldives were expected to take part, but apart from two Indian teams, no other foreign team participated.

The man with the golden foot

He has a knack for scoring hat tricks. And The Birthday Cup was no exception. Though he failed to score in the last two matches, Nirajan Rayamajhi made history in the Birthday Cup with three consecutive hat tricks in three matches. The 22-year-old Rayamajhi scored three consecutive hat tricks in consecutive matches. Last year's winner, had to play a much-improved RCT.

For RCT, this triumph means a lot. It not only has its reputation as Nepal’s leading club been enhanced, but it also gives the confidence as the team’s management. “For us it's a perfect start,” says club chairman Bijou Narayan Manandhar.

For football lovers, this tournament has also been a great start to a new football season which has been delayed because of the Geeta Rana controversy dominated the football season, and it was with this tournament that a football-loving public finally saw some good football. In the Valley, the successful completion of the tournament has also helped Geeta Rana demonstrate that she is capable of running Nepal football. It was clear major reason that the Geeta Rana-led ANFA, has organised after she was promoted to president of the association in October. All 'A' division clubs of Kathmandu participated in the tournament. Teams from South Korea, Bangladesh and Maldives were expected to take part, but apart from two Indian teams, no other foreign team participated.

For further information see the Panos website www.panos.org.uk or send an email to Regional Director, Panos South Asia, at psa@panos.org.np. Applications are invited with CV and covering letter to the above through email or by post/fax to:

The Director, Panos South Asia OPD Box 1891, Patan, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-520985, Fax: +977-1-529246

Please quote reference: PSARO/2001/NT

Applications must be received by noon, 14 February 2001.

Interviews are scheduled for 27 February 2001 in Kathmandu.
Walking on clouds

Arlene Blum is a scientist who climbs mountains. Read all about her adventures in her next book.

Blum's photographs and articles have appeared in national geography, the Smithsonian and science magazines. To accommodate a life with "maximum freedom but minimum security", Blum conducts leadership skills and teamwork and problem-solving workshops where participants are encouraged to overcome "their own self-imposed cultural boundaries when the stakes are high in order to create and maintain a complex organization without losing sight of the ultimate goal," she adds.

In 1982, she held such workshops for tourism professionals, senior policy makers, and business leaders from Nepal's leading Ministries and private sector. In 1989, she held similar workshops for tourism professionals. "We will look at how leading professionals and notable industry figures can engage their peers and colleagues to share their vision, to make a tangible result," she adds.

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The wild boar menace

It violates the conventions of the International Treaty on the Disposal of Hazardous Wastes which this country has ratified, and they go about as if they own the place.

As anyone who has ever husbanded a female rhino in Nepal will tell you, a great deal of care and training needs to go into nurturing a relationship. In every marriage there has to be compromise, accommodation, and, yes, a consent to live together (full explanation do you part) even if you want to punch the spouse in the proboscis every time he snores. It is the same in political marriages: there has to be give and take. If someone is giving then some other one must be taking, if not then there is no Big Deal. This is why the Minister of Animal Husbandry is a crucial post during the Palace Cattle Fair (slipper: “You catch my back, and I’ll grab you in yours”) where livestock will be auctioned to the highest bidder in the run-up to the next general election. Any prize specimens will change hands as the non-stop partying gets underway. OK, boys, enough fun and games. Time to get this show on the road.

Nepal Times