It’s not over yet for Girja

Prime Minister Girja Prasad Koirala may have thought the going would not be so rough anymore since he won the recent election for a second term. But he is up against a tough challenge in the form of the new coalition government led by Dahal-Nepal. The local elections are ongoing and the UML, which is still trying to come to terms with the recent defeat, is likely to face a uphill battle. Thecast of the new government is still being formed and the UML is likely to play a major role in determining the outcome. The situation is likely to remain tense until the new government is formed.
EDITORIAL

SUICIDE

The decline in Nepal's carpet exports began with a decline in quality; in particular, inconsistent knots, dated designs, irregular sizes and dumping. Then there were concerns about cheap chemical dyes and the use of child labour. The Nepali carpet industry tried to dodge those charges, but finally bowed to green and child-free labels. But it was too little, too late. The damage had been done, others overtook us, and the industry never really recovered.

Something similar happened to our garment exports. Unscrupulous exporters used Nepali quotas to stick 'Made in Nepal' on products from countries which had saturated theirs. They took little interest in building indigenous, training and increasing long-term competitiveness. As quotas are replaced by new free-for-all World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, there is no way we can compete with countries in the region, particularly on design and labour cost. It is always easier to blame others. Our exporters searched for convenient scapegoats among Indian and Chinese exporters bent upon undercutting anyone who dared. They blamed green and child labour. When that didn't work, they blamed the media. Unless the industry puts its own house in order, no one least of all the government, can do anything to help in a cruel and globalised world.

And where went carpets and garments, it seems, tourism is sure to go. The short-sightedness of those who benefit most when tourism flourishes are the ones who seem to bent on wrecking it. Tourism is one area where Nepal has some competitive advantages—Mt Everest, Buddha's birthplace, temples and the gentility of the people. These are formidable tools. Others couldn't destroy it even if they tried. But we can, and we have proceeded to effectively demolish tourism, the last nest of the troubled economy. As a frequent flier, reports of Maoist violence and chronic political instability weren't enough, hoteliers and their labour unions took it upon themselves to complicate matters by banning registration of new hotels. If you didn't believe it, some hotel owners actually invited guests from their own establishments on 11 December. This must belong somewhere in the Guinness Book. Nepal, like this spreads like bafflefire across the world via the Internet, and that is exactly what happened.

Then there were the riots. Hoodlums went around hotels targeting Indian tourists. With patriots like that, who needs enemies? So, no surprise that arrivals have plummeted and everyone seems to be bent on preventing a recovery. Hotel owners are not listening to the unions, the state of the town last any American citizen decides to sue it for not productivity. The last was the pashmina wave which peaked in the US last winter but is rapidly waning as (don't know if I know it) inferior quality and small scale delivery affected sales.

It is always easier to blame others. Our exporters searched for convenient scapegoats among Indian and Chinese exporters bent upon undercutting anyone who dared. They blamed green and child labour. When that didn't work, they blamed the media. Unless the industry puts its own house in order, no one least of all the government, can do anything to help in a cruel and globalised world.

Bee to the blossom, Moth to the flame:
Each to his passion: What's in a name?

—Helen Hunt Jackson

STATE OF THE STATE

Political pornography

by CK Lal

In a bit like hard-core porn. There is a sense of illicit anticipation, but once you see that nothing is left for the imagination, the result is revolting, not titillating. Reports about corruption scandals at Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) have started having a similar effect. When the national flag-carrier's dirty linen started getting washed in public post-1990, any deal the airline involved itself was automatically perceived to have been sodden.

Deposing before US Senate Committee in 1973, Haigton, Chairman of the Lockheed Corporation, had stated: “If you get the context, it is a pretty good evidence that payments had to be made.” World over, the aviation sector is believed to be one of the most corrupt. It is only twenty-one countries like ours where the airline has no few examples of making any money without raising the hatches of either the donosi community or the general public.

Doors do not bother much about RNAC's reputation. They are too busy to deal with a slow and painful death. And the Nepali people will respond to dubious-jams, not to jams, because no few of them can afford to fly, anyway. Civil aviation is for the elite, of the elite and by the elite. And it is the capital's elite who take pleasure in using Royal Nepal Airlines to kit out each other, while making a certain Austrian charter company a household word in Nepal. Just like the name of a Japanese four-wheel drive became synonymous with corruption.

The same bunch of politicians who have run a perfectly viable airline to the ground by interfering daily with its functioning are the ones who will have a dry and rude to re-emburse their rivals. Since its inception, RNAC has been the employer of last resort for the unemployed progeny of Kathmandu's elite. Meritocracy, or social justice, has never been a criteria in the recruitment policy of this public sector enterprise. Mediocrities have. This means most employees are predisposed to interference by their benefactors.

Inferiority in the affairs of the corporation is not just tolerated, but required. You get less overall interference with the Herbal Corporation simply because you can't mess big boots there.

The result: general sales agents who don't pay their dues are habitually hired, lacking aircraft is a bush-bash activity, even the renewal of the maintenance contract for 757s attracts the attention of the high and mighty. Following a grand mauling started during the Panchayat era (not too blantly) the powers that be will not let this milk cow dwindle. The only difference is that unlike during the Panchayat there is more than one centre of power, complicating things slightly. The renowned Dhana Shahi scandal was the visible symptom of this terminal disease of institutionalised fraud. Cash flow was tacit. Money was paid to a logistic agent who can carry away it, and only the vigilance of a lawyer of Nepali origin in New York sawed some of the money. Today, even a contract to supply tissue paper or mineral water to the airline can be the source of enforce competition among political power centres.

The trouble is scandals are fantasied by rival groups that tend to lose the deal if they are afraid. And if this is the kind of dog eat dog competition that accompanies a leasing arrangement, wonder what would happen if the airline decided to actually buy brand-new planes. Governments would supply. No surprise, therefore, that the powers that be not do trust the airline with assure their near and dear. And everyone is in the act: tycoons with fingers in several juicy jajjas, intelligentsia at the back and call of the aviation mafia, politicians beholden to big business houses, investigative journalists for hire—all attracted to benefits to RNA's honey pot. It would be highly unrealistic to expect Royal Nepal Airlines to be an island of efficiency when the rest of the country is so rotten. The airline only reflects the country's rot.

So, if the root of the disease lies in the governance of the country there is no need to look elsewhere, just focus our energies on this arena. Its treatment (overhauling the national flag carrier) is so drastic that the elite rent-seeking class of the capital will never allow it. Why should they go of this source of easy pocket money? The sought after denizens toms on the success of Nepal Communist Party (UML) the better. Poor NRJ Lalab has lost his job in Vienna, but he has become an excellent political weapon in Kathmandu. This cannot be part of an opposition strategy during the winter season of the parliament—there are too many more vital issues at stake. KP Bhairadiya may be aware of it, but he doesn't present the world to the Nepali Congress can face the next general election. The only difference is that unlike during the Panchayat there is more than one centre of power, complicating things slightly. The proverbial Dhana Shahi scandal was the visible symptom of this terminal disease of institutionalised fraud. Cash flow was tacit. Money was paid to a logistic agent who can carry away it, and only the vigilance of a lawyer of Nepali origin in New York sawed some of the money. Today, even a contract to supply tissue paper or mineral water to the airline can be the source of enforce competition among political power centres.

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Why leap the digital divide?

At Davos this week, everyone spoke of the digital divide. What about the school divide, the housing divide, the health divide, the wealth divide?

What is more important: a high-speed data trunk line or a network of clean drinking water supply lines for villages?

I have been thinking about this a lot. I have a brilliant idea. Let us make a digital revolution in the Third World. The reason why this is so important is that technology can give the poor the power to transform their lives. It can give them access to information and knowledge. It can give them the tools to raise their voices and be heard. It can give them the means to connect with the world.

But the problem is that technology is expensive. It is expensive to build networks, to train people, to create content. It is expensive to do all of these things. And the poor cannot afford it. They cannot afford to pay for these services.

So what can we do? We can do something different. We can create a digital revolution in the Third World. We can make it happen.

The little that we have, let us get the next generation. Thank you for listening. We are looking forward to your questions. Goodbye for now.
**Organic growth**

Every Sunday and Monday morning, a group of vegetable farmers from Chautikot village in Siddharthanagar, Nepal, drive to the city of Kathmandu to sell their produce. The farmers sell a variety of vegetables at the city’s central market, including tomatoes, cucumbers, and carrots.

The farmers say that the demand for organic vegetables has increased significantly in recent years, and they are now able to sell their produce at higher prices.

**From Bhuj to Kathmandu**

There are stark choices before Nepal: social unity and self-help versus cynicism about bad government and a culture of entitlement.

By DANIEL LAK

Ahmedabad: There are lessons for Nepal in the aftermath of the earthquake in Gujarat—least, the value of central government that is politically institutioned to be doing well with the affected supercyclone in Orissa, and now a small city in the state media have been swept away.

The contrast between the two disasters cannot be more stark, and yet perhaps it is where they converge. Leaders and residents of Orissa need to make a choice: should the city be like Orissa, or Bhuj?

These are the two extremes of South Asian development. Here, amid the tragedy, drought and despair is a powerful spirit of self-reliance, and a unified sense of community. I've met countless local people, rich, poor and middle-class, who are "doing something." Women are cooking meals for those who are not their homes, men are using their hand tools to move concrete slabs and try to rescue people in the absence of lifting equipment.

Doctors are volunteering medical services. Everyone is trying to help their friends and clients.

There were, amid the unparalleled devastation of Orissa in 1999, a few similar stories that are not yet on any scale. For more than a week the sight was a sea of devastated people, squashing by the roadside, awaiting assistance, and doing little to arrange themselves. Nor were there urban middle-class clubs and offies of Orissa pitching in to help the devastated people of the countryside, or sending wood for help. I'm not suggesting that victims of the cyclone were in any way responsible for their immediate plight. But, are some people not sending any wood for help? I'm not suggesting that victims of the cyclone were in any way responsible for their immediate plight.
Do your roofs leak?

While the first Lethchampos began arriving at the Kakarabhati border post, Nepal and Bhutan have begun the preliminaries for verifying refugees. In the Joint Verification Team (JVT) that visited the refugee camps last week say the actual screening could begin as early as late February. The Nepal-JVT is led by Usha Nepal, joint secretary in the home ministry and the Bhutanese team by Sonam Tensing, director at the home ministry.

Brutish officials visited the camps and spoke to their counterparts as they've been in exile for a decade. We're told the Bhutanese asked some refugees where they came from, and when told seemed to know exactly what camp residents were talking about. They also asked the refugees why they left Bhutan. I camp residents were adequate.

Foreign ministers of Nepal and Bhutan agreed on the refugee "verification mechanism" last month and the JVT was as a result of this agreement. The two sides also agreed to help force security level talks to bolster the verification processes. Even so, it is uncertain where refugee repatriation talks could head from here.

Refugees began arriving in Nepal in late 1988-early 1989 and have been living in seven UNHCR-run camps since then. The UNHCR, in conjunction with the Bhutanese government, began setting up the refugees in a reintegration process. The UNHCR has been promoting citizenship to some of the refugees as an avenue to repatriation. In 1997, the UNHCR, in conjunction with the Nepali government, began setting up the camps.

An organization of Bhutanese in exile says 95 percent of refugees have either citizenship papers or land deeds or both to prove residence in Bhutan. Nepal says because all refugees have some proof of residence in Bhutan, verification is the only hurdle keeping them from going home.

It may not be as simple because screening can take months, involving piles of paperwork. There are also chances of repatriation especially if Bhutan insists on categorizing refugees as those who agreed upon in October. By that agreement the plans were to categorize refugees into four groups: bona fide Bhutanese; Bhutanese who have emigrated voluntarily, non-Bhutanese people and Bhutanese with original nationals.

The Nepal Red Cross Society numbers say that at last count there were 98,886 refugees from 15,025 families living in seven camps in Japa and Myang districts. Three camps in Belendi alone have 48,900 refugees. Between 1990 and 1999 the UN and other donors have spent Rs. 80 million on the care and upkeep of the refugees.

Six Green 'ayes'

Six green-peace organizations have come out in support of the government's move to ban old vehicles. A Martin Chauti statement says, Six the pro-environment NGOs that want the government to go ahead and enforce its decision are Leaders Nepal, Martin Chauti, The Nepal Group, Pro-Public, Clean Energy Nepal and the Councils Monitoring Group.

Meanwhile, transport entrepreneurs have announced a protest programme to force their demands, which include, among others reversing the government to November discussed that seeks to ban all 20-year-old vehicles in public transport, and two-wheelers, from the streets. The industry argues that the vehicles pollute not because they are old but because of the poor quality of fuel sold.

The six greens have asked the government not to allow any new vehicles into Kathmandu Valley without conducting a proper environmental study and to assess the "repercussions" of its earlier decision to substitute replacements for the diesel three-wheelers. They say the government not only lost Rs. 400 million in revenue but also put more pollutants on the streets.

Killer kils

Ask anyone who polluting Kathmandu's air, you'll be told it's the old car — six-wheelers, three-wheelers and all. This is true to an extent but there are other culprits that are as, if not more, guilty. Welcome to the Valley's booming brick industry, which has grown with urbanization, unchecked and unquestioned.

Environmentalists say Kathmandu residents breathe less oxygen and more pollutants throughout the year. Toxic intake touches a high December-March, which is when all the bricks needed for the city's expansion are baked.

Kathmandu has been growing every year and the kilns feed the construction. A 1992 study on kilns by the Metropolitan Environment Improvement Programme (MEIP) says there were 200 registered brick-makers in the Valley and none with any pollution control devices. Of these, 134 were operating in Lalitpur, 60 in Bhaktapur and six in Kathmandu district.

Clean Energy Nepal, a newly formed group that advocates reduced use of fossil fuels and promotion of renewable energy, is urging Valley residents who think this is a problem to speak up. The kilns burn anything-coal, rice husk, fuel wood, sawdust, lights and some time crip tynes. Coal accounts for 65 percent of the total fuel burnt. Also there seems to be no rules governing where one can set up a kiln; you find them next to schools, residential suburbs and dense settlements on the Valley's outskirts.

Pollution from the kilns is worst during the dry season when there's no wind to disperse the dust and smoke released by brick making. In addition to air pollution, the brick industry also degrades land. The report compiled by Clean Energy Nepal says one kiln occupies about 2.5 hectares of land for its smoke stack and another 3.5 hectares to prepare mud and organize brick making. This land serves brick making for a few years after which it is rendered useless for agriculture.
In Maoland

with banners for the first public meeting of the underground party to announce the setting up of the "District People's Government". To the north, there are thousands of people from all over the Himalayas gathering in the field, and squads of "People's Army" dressed in combat fatigues identical to army uniforms are squatting in the middle, their faces partly masked. One company that was in action against the police in Kathmandu and Baglung last month during which 12 policemen were killed destroyed.

By afternoon, there are about 200 guerrillas, and they stage a march past with rifles slung over their shoulders. The rifles are all 39's separated from the police and some of the bodies of the policemen are registration numbers on them. One is fixed with the name of a police post in Panga. There are about 20 female guerrillas in the company, and they carry the lighter weapons. The commander has two women in their late 20's and one even sports a sub-machine gun. The lower-ranking soldiers are not unfamiliar and carry long handmade machetes. The Marcs tell us that they are assisting themselves with machine guns and rifles because they know they have to take on the Army.

As night falls, the function marking the launch of the People's Government is announced. Electric lights powered by a government-run hydroelectric plant also supplies power to the district headquarters of Maolak three hours' walk away. This is the island of the Maoist-controlled area. Bridges are being built by the government, a health post under construction, the post office still functions. The schools still have classes, the army is busy with highway building. But the absence of the police, who withdrew after Maoist attacks on their remote posts and the guerrillas moved in, is gradually taking over.

The invited journalists are taken to the stage and questioned by the leader of the Maoist district government, Prithi Bahadur Gahatra. In his speeches, Gurung and others criticise the media for being sensational and irrelevant, that they are more than solicitous towards us, praising what we see as our professionalism and commitment. "We want to be reported, now we are the rulers," said the red-shirted Gurung in his speech, speaking clearly and forcefully with a face Manning the night air. In an interview later, he told us: "We are psychologically and physically prepared to take on the Army. And we will declare a People's Republic of Nepal, when we define the Royal Nepal Army and get rid of the United Nations Palace."

The meeting is still in session at night and is followed by a cultural programme with revolutionary performances presented for local folk music and dance. This goes on till in the morning, the villagers sit bedded around, speaking and showing with their children, and they watch the show in the chilly air. After 10 hours of non-stop speeches and performances, the programme ends. The entire proceedings are broadcast on the Maoists' "TNT" station. The Maoists are at pains to point out that they allow participation of representatives of other political parties in their rally. Local leaders of the UML and RPP are present, but there is understandable no Nepali Congress.

One camera is shooting the entire function with a Sony digital video camera. Female Maoists are actively involved in the preparations at Bungmati, both as militants and as "People's Army" soldiers. Kanu's father is the Maoist district president of the Maoist's women's wing and the wife of the "people's war" has embodied women in it. It is given as confidence, and we are treated equally. However, once in a while you do have male dominance in your meetings.

We spent a few hours of sleep and one meal gathering around the press conference inside the classroom of a local school. Some of the guards are sharp and blunt, and the Marcs took a bit of attack, and they hedge questions about seating and tackles. The Maoists' local commander, Kailash Adhikari Nuth, is a descendant from the Royal Nepalese Army and he broke journalists on the "people's war" saying: "We are forced to fight because we are exploited by feudal lords."

After the press conference, we are treated to a front row of chicken curry and rice, and the Marcs walk us down to the banks of the Sangu River. The maras forms the border dividing the "people's side" from the "stationary side". Once we get out to the government-controlled bank, there is still no sign of any police presence. But on the far bank we can see Marcs in the trees watching the government protest against the government in Kathmandu as its moral enemy, and which is murdering the next generation of Maoist supporters. But one question we can answer even these after the three day stay in Maoist territory is that the people have turned Maoist only because they believe in Mao-Tse Tung thought and because of the lack of power they get with a gun in their hands.

The district headquarters of Maolak is normally a three-hour walk uphill. But near the border town on the outskirts of which is the Marcs' cave headquarters, the police have found a house where several child laborers are hidden by the Maoists. We interview the local Civil District Officer, Nirmal Prasad Thapa, who is to speak with the Nepali government. It is a small government building, with the Maoists behind them. Unlike the political parties becoming active at the village level, there is no way we can begin to resolve the Maoist problem at ground level.
NATION

HEMILATA RAJ

“A touch between solar water heater and geyser is like choosing, between a heart attack and sexual relations. Now, people’s cooker saves fuel and money, but the initial investment is much higher than that for aluminum pots,” says Rajendra Bahadur Adhikari of the Centre for Renewable Energy. From a socialistic view, geyser is cheaper, but it takes an hour to heat enough water for about one to one and half people running on some of the most expensive electricity in the world. Studies show that the pay-back time for investment in a solar water heater is five years.

But factoring in the benefit of “green” water throughout the day and the frequency of frequent electricity and fuel fuel prices, the actual pay-back time is shorter.

These are neither laws nor monitoring agencies to regulate the industry, and manufacturers have been known to cheat consumers with the facts. So you need to arm yourself with important information before you have a solar water heater installed to get a better bargain and to ensure the consumer actually works.

The Valley is well-situated for domestic hot water machines. It has 280-290 sunny days annually. A 200-litre water heater can provide 80-90% of the water needed in Mustang. It has a running cost of Rs. 35-50 depending on the height and thickness of metal sheets, pipes and insulation is crucial. For a family of six, a water heater with a 200 to 300 litre capacity is sufficient.

About 100 Nepal’s 5-litre water heater manufacturers use the Kothamad Valley. Solar water heaters are presently too high and too much of the local population is not interested in installing them. The technology is easily adaptable and can be adapted for smallscale industries and business, but the design does not appeal to India." The owner of the company.

Is Melamchi watertight?

ADB sanctioned Rs.120 million for Melamchi, but questions about distribution remain.

29 DECEMBER 2001 - JANUARY 2002 NEPAL TIMES 7

Treking in Mustang, you pay Rs25 for a “sun bath.” Fancy name for something many Valley residents are familiar with: solar-heated water.

BINO BHATTARAI

The Melamchi Water Supply Board (MWSS) has submitted a Rs.120 million project to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for distribution in the Kavre, Sindhupalchok, and Dolakha districts. The project is expected to benefit about 65,000 people in the three districts.

The project is expected to provide water to about 65,000 people in the three districts.

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NRB report card

The private sector is borrowing less, food prices have softened, resource mobilisation has slowed and the budget deficit is gaping. That's the simplest possible translation of the economic jargon in the central bank's twice-yearly report on the state of the economy. Things are bad, even though the decrease in food and beverage prices has kept the National Urban Consumer Price Index (NICPI) low. Overall, prices increased by 2.6 per cent compared to the corresponding period a year ago. What the dip in food prices also means is that people have less to spend on other goods. The price rise was quickest in the Kathmandu Valley and the hills while in the tarai prices grew by just 0.7 per cent, due mainly to a sizeable slump in the cost of food and beverages in the plains. The overall decline in food and beverage prices was 1.3 per cent compared to last year's slump by 0.4 per cent.

Private sector credit grew slowly by 0.3 per cent, compared to last year (8.8 per cent), while government borrowing went up (the bank does not say how much). The Nepal Rastra Bank says demand for credit by the private sector was "sluggish," which in turn points to a deteriorating environment. The government was able to generate less resources, meaning it has had to borrow more to keep up with expenditures, which have kept growing. The government borrowed Rs 2.08 billion, increased treasury bills by Rs 95.5 million and obtained an overall Rs 33.5 billion.

The only sector that seems to be doing well is export, which grew by 29 per cent to Rs 44.6 billion, though the growth was lower than last year. Imports grew by 14.3 per cent to Rs 40.5 billion and there was a 6 per cent horizontal deficit, that is mainly because we imported less and not because the real trade gap had been narrowed by more exports. The Balance of Payments account registered a current account deficit of Rs 1.0 billion, attributed mainly to service and transfer income. But as always, the foreign exchange holdings of the banking system continued to increase, by 30 per cent, to Rs 105.5 billion in mid-December.

Exports grow

Nepal's export volume increased by 22 per cent in the last month, the Tiwari Promotion Centre said. Overseas exports reached Rs 6.6 billion in the four months since July, Nepal's main export—woolen carpets—has stagnated while perishable items continue to grow—by 26 per cent to reach Rs 2.18 billion and lentils have begun reappraising on the export statistics. Nepal exported Rs 196 million worth of lentils during the last four months of the fiscal year.

Cyberlearningnepal.com

The company has joined hands to collaborate with Cyber Learning Universe, a non-profit organisation that pioneered distance learning on the web, to launch Nepal's first Internet-based IT and business management education initiative.

The new venture, www.cyberlearningnepal.com, is a joint initiative between one of Nepal's largest companies and Mercantile, the company's pioneer of IT's IT industry.

The US-based Cyber Learning Universe specialises in providing web-based training worldwide.

"The success rate in distance learning is far higher than that through traditional methods," says Ranjith Bhalnand, CEO, Mercantile Communications. "We're attempting to convert the educational framework into an educational highway," adds Dhir Ramsharma, Managing Director of Tiwari Tobacco. Cyber learning combines the best teachers, state-of-the-art technology, high quality courseware and motivational rewards to help students learn faster and better, the company says.

Designed for beginners the web site aims to make available 300-600 advanced IT and management-related courses. All the students need for enrolling are an internet connection and a willingness to explore. For now, the fee for enrolling is Rs 12.00. This provides you with instructor-led or self-study options as well as access to a free online reference library. Initially, the learning opportunity will be available in nine locations and expanded later to 25 centres all over the nation.

Urea prices shoot up

The Agricultural Inputs Corporation has increased the price of urea by about 35 per cent to Rs 1,400 per quintal. The new rates will be applicable to Bhairahawa, Birgunj, Nepalgunj and Sharjah. The price at other locations would depend on transportation costs. A kilogram of the price was raised to take into account the price at which it imported 12,500 tons of the fertilizer from China. The increase brings the rate less than a month after ACC had increased it by about 15 per cent. The price of urea sold by ACC rose three years ago was Rs 740, but that included the government subsidy that ended December 1999.

IFC buys 24.4 per cent ILFC shares

The International Financial Corporation (IFC) has joined the international leasing and finance company as a 24.4 per cent equity partner for which it is putting up $200 million (about Rs 22.3 million). The new ownership structure at the International Leasing and Finance Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Korean Development Bank, will be as follows: Nepal promoters 35 per cent, Korean 21, IFC 25 and the general public 25.

ECONOMIC SENSE

Waning Shangri-la

The root causes of a languishing tourism industry are lousy marketing, a virtually defunct tourism board and, yes, over-supply.

The tourism statistics for 2000 are telling in and of themselves. Tourist arrivals have gone down by 11 per cent, mainly due to a decline in tourism coming from India. (The figure is down by 171 per cent.) The underlying factors are not just the aftermath of the killing of the frequent tourist, an event too recent in the past. The basic question is why shouldn't tourists still come to Nepal? What are we doing right?

A recent Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) publication contained a comparative study of the tourist arrivals in PATA countries in 1999 and 2000. Tourist arrivals on South Asia increased by 2.6 per cent in 2000 compared to an increase of 18.1 per cent in Northeast Asia and 41.5 per cent in Southeast Asia. Malaysia registered the highest growth with an increase of nearly 50 per cent over the years. Newest destinations like Cambodia and Laos have registered growth of 49 and 31 per cent respectively. It is said—striking— that these newer destinations in the region have been a step down in the number of tourist arrivals to Nepal.

Nepal has not really been marketed as destinations anyway, and with problems of all kinds—road conditions, constantly changing the tourism industry, development and access across the world is losing interest in us. Surveys repeatedly show that Nepal is not a destination for them anymore. Report visits are low. The average incentive per person per day has remained in the 1980s since 1980.

The major concern of some of the Indian market is the political turmoil. We try too much on with black market in the level of the income. In fact, in fact, the situation is very vicious and it is quite difficult. The situation is very difficult and it is quite difficult. The situation is very difficult and it is quite difficult. The situation is very difficult and it is quite difficult. The situation is very difficult and it is quite difficult.
**Scarred cityscapes**

Temple tops struggle to be seen behind brands of bottled beverages, cigarettes and home appliances.

RAMYATA LIMBU

"Scarred cityscapes, banners and graffiti are now festooning even historic temples everywhere," says Mahawanis. "It is not only about aesthetics, it is a huge problem," says His Majesty King Birendra.

One of several memoirs, or "Great Sayings" put up at the busy installation of faded letters, peeling Parag Pan Masala and Caravan paint and rusted tin is overshadowed home appliances at Thapathali of bottled beverages, cigarettes and tops struggle to be seen behind brands city's centre. Drive or walk from Temple complex—a landmark in the three layers of wall space at Bhadrakali to toothpaste and Konica films occupy beer, and whisky. An unsightly canvas for advertisers and its busy intersections have become Nepal's capital, Kathmandu's skyline the city clean—little realising that they are eyesores and driving distractions the city can do without.

Aesthetics. Despite its being illegal, everywhere conceding little to parties splash graffiti on walls that with Kathmandu city beautification programs in a World Class University of Windsor offers the border from the USA, students are choosing to Outstanding Nepali

Case in point: the Bhadrakali temple complex

According to its five-year agreement with the Bhadrakali Guthi Sansthan, Babu Krishna Sapkota leases wall space belonging to the complex for Rs 495,000 a year. He rents out space to advertisers, pays the guthis its fee and pays the City a fee based on the sizes and annual fee of Rs 60 per sq foot for a hoarding are willing to pay over Rs 35,000 to ensure that their (usually

to the owner of numerous temples and old monuments around the city, endorses everything except alcohol and cigarettes. "Hoardings are not a major source of income for the Sansthan," says Hanbil Acharya, the Sansthan's representative at Bhadrakali. "But since they've been there for quite some time, I don't see any harm in letting them be." Acharya's indifference is a widespread human problem, or as King Birendra puts it, "Mahawanis, samasyaa, the capital's citizens, caught up in the commercialism of the city, fail to understand. Against the canopy of overwhelming commerce, it's just not visible."

**HIGH QUALITY, GREAT VALUE**

Outstanding Nepali students are choosing to study in Canada. Across the border from the USA, University of Windsor offers Top Class Undergraduate (Bachelors) degree programs in a World Class environment.

Our Computer Science, Business, Engineering and Arts programs are among the best in North America. These are challenging programs. You have to be good at the beginning, because you will be great when you graduate.

![Image](https://example.com/image.png)
**Venice of the Information Age**

Building on the same foundation that marked an entrepreneurial and aggressive merchant economy, the UK is set to be the leading "smart economy" in Europe.

Microsoft to bolster firewalls

JANE MARTINSON IN NEW YORK

The FBI is investigating a damaging computer assault on Microsoft after hackers overwhelmed the company's connection to the Internet, leading to the closure of several popular websites such as msn.com and expedia.com.

The attack came after a difficult week for the Seattle-based company. Its services, used by millions of people and businesses, also broke down for two days last week because of a technical error, prompting complaints from across the globe. Microsoft said the two problems were unrelated.

The company called in the FBI yesterday when it realised that its system was the victim of a "denial-of-service" attack on last week. Hackers had managed to overwhelm the company's services, including those of online bank and stock exchange systems, because of a technical error, prompting complaints from across the globe. Microsoft said the two problems were unrelated.

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It was easier for Nepal to ignore the Khampas' presence and simply deny access to any journalist or brekker to Mustang. The Chinese wanted to keep the Chinese on the right side of the border and for that to happen they needed the Chinese to be convinced that the Chinese were not under threat. The Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat and the Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat. The Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat.

Diplomatic MOVES

The Chinese did not do all in campaigning in the field. On the first anniversary of the revolt, the Dalai Lama announced that he was preparing a new constitutional and economic system. The Chinese would probably Wish to see the new government, which they believe to be a threat to their interests, in power. The Chinese would probably wish to see the new government, which they believe to be a threat to their interests, in power. The Chinese would probably wish to see the new government, which they believe to be a threat to their interests, in power.

In November 1981, Washington ordered the ambassador to leave the US. Allen Dukas took the ambassador's position. Washington ordered the ambassador to leave the US. Allen Dukas took the ambassador's position. Washington ordered the ambassador to leave the US. Allen Dukas took the ambassador's position.

The Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat and the Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat and the Chinese had been told that the Chinese were not under threat.

Meanwhile, the Chinese had been told that the US government's relationship with the Dalai Lama in terms of Washington's larger objective. Senator Snavely argued that the Chinese had been told that the US government's relationship with the Dalai Lama in terms of Washington's larger objective. Senator Snavely argued that the Chinese had been told that the US government's relationship with the Dalai Lama in terms of Washington's larger objective.
SIMON MOORES

Tomorrow’s e-business will be dominated by a substantial number of successful service economies, themselves centred on ‘smart’ cities, such as Singapore or Munich. They will all benefit from the interaction of communications networks in much the same way that ports, such as Amsterdam, determined the commerce of the nineteenth century.

The UK government has set itself the task of becoming an information superpower, as Tony Blair’s ‘e-envoy’, responsible for driving forward the government’s ‘information age’, says. According to a survey of European cities, Britain is leading the pack in the development of an Internet-related infrastructure, with Germany and France in second and third places. A third of European managers perceive the UK as the leading European information economy, followed closely by Germany. Professor Jim Norton, head of e-commerce at the Institute of Directors and author of the e-commerce policy, said that the country is already the world leader in information technology. Mr. Hudson, the Cabinet Office’s director of e-communications, will bring together Ministers, senior civil servants and those with frontline responsibility for driving forward the digital television or personal source or another, whether that be infrastructure so that people can have access to the Internet through one’s home and workplace, or in the public sector, to be used by millions of people and businesses, such as Singapore or Munich. They will all benefit from the interaction of communications networks in much the same way that ports, such as Amsterdam, determined the commerce of the nineteenth century.

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Master race rhetoric

White supremacists claim “native” whites are being bred out as the US becomes ever more “mongrelised”.

What's at stake, they insist, is maintenance all along—that “native” whites are in danger of being bred out of existence.

“Native” whites are in danger of being bred out of existence.

“Ethnic pride”, not bigotry

Today’s image-conscious white-power advocates espouse heavy-handed master-race rhetoric. Challenging their in-group language that amounts to ethnic bigotry, they talk about preserving “their identity and preserving the rights of European Americans, which are allegedly under assault.”

“Europeans are the true white people.”

Ruth Geddis of The Progressive observed: “This is a different kind of racism.”

Attacking non-whites as “out of control” has long been a tactic of white-power advocates.

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The 1997 agreement calls on developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 5-20 percent by 2005, 20-30 percent by 2010, and 60-65 percent by 2050.

The EU, however, wants each country to agree to a tough national target. The table includes the US, which targeted a 60-65 percent cut on its own.

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The UN is working to create a “security belt” around Afghanistan, the source of most of the world’s illicit opium.

**Opium War III**

LIKE GIULIO, more and more Afghanis are becoming drug-takers. In 1989, according to UN estimates, 100,000 Afghans were drug-takers. Today, the number is estimated to be over 1 million.

The government has been unable to control the drug trade, and the problem has worsened in recent years due to the civil war and the Taliban’s attempts to control the area.

The United Nations (UN) is working to create a “security belt” around Afghanistan, the source of most of the world’s illicit opium. The UN is doing this by working with local communities and providing incentives to those who help in the fight against drugs.

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The CBDC program provides incentives to local communities who help in the fight against drugs. The incentives include financial assistance, training, and support.

The program has been successful in many areas, and has helped to reduce the number of drug-takers in some parts of Afghanistan.

However, the program is facing many challenges, and there is still a long way to go before the drug trade is fully controlled.

The government is working with the UN to implement the CBDC program, and hopes that it will be successful in the long run.

The UN is also working with other organizations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to implement the CBDC program.

The UNODC is working with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to implement the CBDC program.

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Radio Congress

Jana Thapa, 25 January

In today's Radio Nepal broadcast, 12th
the National Convention of
the Nepali Congress from Pokhara.
This is the first time in the history of
a national party that its leader has
jumped ship. It all goes to show that
everyone does anything to protect
their own positions. It is risky to
rely on the Left party. The members
there are tyrants and the
cumbersome hierarchy.

Show stealer Bam Dev

Saptahik Rastriya, 25 January

It appears that their strongest
candidate in the upcoming
election is Bam Dev Gautam. What
he said in his speech to the
delegates was telling. He said:
"Whatever needs to be done can
only be done by the Congress. If
the Congress cannot do it, then there
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"Whatever needs to be done can
only be done by the Congress. If
the Congress cannot do it, then there
is no need to come to this
country. Therefore the Congress
should move ahead and

Radio Congress

Jana Thapa, 22 January

In today's radio broadcast, the
Radio Nepal broadcast, 12th
the National Convention of
the Nepali Congress from Pokhara.
This is the first time in the history of
a national party that its leader has
jumped ship. It all goes to show that
everyone does anything to protect
their own positions. It is risky to
rely on the Left party. The members
there are tyrants and the
cumbersome hierarchy.

Show stealer Bam Dev

Saptahik Rastriya, 25 January

It appears that their strongest
candidate in the upcoming
election is Bam Dev Gautam. What
he said in his speech to the
delegates was telling. He said:
"Whatever needs to be done can
only be done by the Congress. If
the Congress cannot do it, then there
is no need to come to this
country. Therefore the Congress
should move ahead and

Sorbin Optics Ban Tele Tel 221894

Remember for sunglasses, frames, contact lenses and solution. Comfort Optics, Chhetrapati, Thamel. 266119.

House for rent

Bhasmapati. Three apartments. Three-storey building with dining, kitchen, three bedrooms, pool, servants quarters, guard room. Ring Prakash 9811024199.

The most intricately carved statues in Kathamandu. Handmade Nepal, #211, Sanchaya Kosh Building, Triivi Marg.

Himalayan weather

KATHMANDU

The most intricately carved statues in

Kathamandu. Handmade Nepal, #211,
Sanchaya Kosh Building, Triivi Marg.

Vehicles for rent

Himalayan weather

KATHMANDU

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_ITALICAL TYPOGRAPHY 19

Access

1. Inegal and attractive (3)
2. Friend of the court, partly (6)
3. Nimite the sman (3)
4. Kids vehicle (6)
5. Face a source of teenage (4)
6. Black Sea port, field away (6)
7. Simple and economical (4)
8. Sometimes a source of trouble (4)
9. Man’s great move (4)
10. Steal apple metal (2)
11. Hospital worker (2)
12. Send away annoyances with this insect in the ear (4)
13. Any and sundry (3)
14. New paint on eastern (6)
15. Lounge lizad’s shoe (6)
16. Somewhat Chinese (3)
17. Crackish shaker (6)
18. Same old buddy (6)
19. Patent suit of Scotland (6)
20. Porter’s writing implement (3)

Down

1. Nutty eyes (5)
2. Expresses proudly (5)
3. From, comprises fish (5)
4. Excited chattering (4)
5. Possessor, demonstrate (5)
6. Kill city (3)
7. Musical (3)
8. Small part of Big Dipper (4)
9. Drop (3)
10. Varying hire-purchase rate (3)
11. FIFA for the Yanks (3)
12. Not my girls, my sister’s (5)
13. Never ending. There’s no (3,5)
14. Delete (5)
15. English’s American (3)
16. Cleave the Kazakh capital (3)
17. Take, only temporarily (4)
18. Essential soul food tax (4)
19. Disappearing and to game (4)
20. Pavlos sometimes are (3)

_T GROSSWORD ANSWER 19

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No record of Buddha’s visit to the Valley exists other than hearsay attached to hallowed spots. Like a small courtyard in Patan.

A courtyard to the Buddha’s memory

by DESMOND DONG

Painting legend, it says, that the Buddha visited the valley of the great monastery and much on the spot he set down a stone and enshrined it.

The history of Sakyas that the Virgin Goddess Charumati in marriage to a local lord, and that his family, the Sakyas, vindicated the visit of the Buddha, and that a spider was left on his hand to enshrine it.

Legend has him received by the king forsook his royal living, and but he accepted a simple gift of food Buddha declined the gifts heaped

Pashupatinath. Charumati was also

The kneeling figures remain but the beautiful backdrop is now obscured by buildings.

The young man took me to a Himalayan woman – 2001 by Peter Schenk

No record of Buddha’s visit to the Valley exists other than hearsay attached to hallowed spots. Like a small courtyard in Patan.

A group of international artists is using Nepali material for a traveling exhibition called Made in Nepal: 2001.

Using Nepali paper, natural pigments and dyes, a group of European and South Asian artists are currently in Nepal producing abstract paintings of extraordinary range and depth. For each artist in this collective enterprise, a dominant characteristic is at play: for Jac Gijtenbeek it is energy; for Peter Schenk, it is space; for Rob De Graaf, it is dynamic; for Prakash Chandwadkar, it is the originating thrust of the stroke, and for Lalai Mookerjee, it is the priority of colour. Together their work portrays the possibilities of abstract art. Some paintings are already on display at Siddhartha Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited and work in progress can be seen through 10 February across the street at the Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal.

The artists intend to exhibit throughout the world, expanding the number of participants, using abstraction to explore the guiding theme of the project they have initiated: “Beyond borders and boundaries.” Paralleling their borderless journey is an inward exploration of the psyche and the world it encounters through colour and form. Though this is a group enterprise the questions raised and the execution of their painting is decidedly and idiosyncratically individual. We can determine this for ourselves by visiting the artists as they work. The completed exhibit, including an installation by Rolf Kluenter, known for his work on Nepali paper, can be seen at 4 pm 10 February.

The viewer can gain from the openness of this project not only insight into the execution of abstract art, but a genuine appreciation of what is at stake for the artist in his work. The work in progress displays a confrontation with an inner state that has as its basis a common underpinning, and yet an individual characteristic and resolution. Even as the artists are speaking of the world of nature and of human emotion, their mode of expression establishes a universal system of signs based on the interplay of colour, shape, space and movement. Jac Gijtenbeek, drawn to Hindu and Buddhist symbolic sources, establishes a dynamic that is shocking and playful. Intensely embodied in his colours, he places himself in a dimension that holds together through the encounter and stories of his circles, squares and oblong shapes.

Peter Schenk like a Zen contemplative at the river’s edge knows well how all things fall in place over time, one allows space its due. His emotions do not crowd the paper but what the eye is drawn to, and yet the flow of events is kept in the mind of the viewer. Rob De Graaf establishes within the framework of his painting a confrontation with chaos that is always present. One can hear the music behind this dynamic of circles and organic forms. Jac Gijtenbeek works where the elements are unified and transcended. What Rolf’s work-in-progress displays a confrontation with an inner state that has as its basis a common underpinning, and yet an individual characteristic and resolution. Even as the artists are speaking of the world of nature and of human emotion, their mode of expression establishes a universal system of signs based on the interplay of colour, shape, space and movement. Jac Gijtenbeek, drawn to Hindu and Buddhist symbolic sources, establishes a dynamic that is shocking and playful. Intensely embodied in his colours, he places himself in a dimension that holds together through the encounter and stories of his circles, squares and oblong shapes.

Prakash Chandwadkar feels empathized with the painting the movement through the brush against paper, and the encounter of paint with paper replicates his inner world. For Lalai Mookerjee, the absence of stroke, the absorbing of stroke into colour, the merging of colour into light, a sheen of many colours, a single evocation of colour establishes a world of beautiful beauty. Here the courage of Jac’s and Prakash’s work and the harmonies of Peter’s and Rob’s work are unified and transcended. What Rolf’s installation will add to this exhibit we can only imagine will be the richness of the Nepali paper he works on and its sense of how to use that medium to advantage, with colour, with simple form and the elaborate interplay of both. This project offers to the viewer an opportunity to enter the rich and unfolding world of the abstract artist.

Siddhartha Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal

Prakash Chandwadkar feels that his work is a kind of journey; an inward journey of the psyche in the midst of the world. Even as one is immersed in colour and shapes, a depth and richness is born of meditation. "Beyond borders and boundaries" is the project that the artists have undertaken. A blend of different styles and interpretations is being attempted, and the work is produced while on a journey.

Himalayan woman – 2001 by Peter Schenk

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former Pakistan Test star Qasim Omar has claimed that a bookmaker enticed players in New Zealand and Australia to throw matches by providing them with prostitutes.

Chief International Cricket Council (ICC) corruption investigator Sir Paul Condon has been given names and phone numbers of 23 women by Omar, who played 28 tests for Pakistan in the 1980s.

According to The Observer, Condon, a former head of the London Metropolitan Police, and his investigative team, will take the list with them when they travel to Melbourne for the ICC quarterly meeting next month. The investigation team, mostly former police officers, will brief the meeting before seeking to interview call girls and bookmakers on the list. On the same trip, they will interview former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe, one of several star batsmen accused by Indian bookmaker Mukesh Gupta of receiving cash for match information. Crowe has denied the allegations.

Omar, now living in Britain, told investigators about the sex for match-fixing set-up, claiming that from the mid-1980s, an Australian bookmaker in Sydney supplied prostitutes to players. "Omar has also provided information about an identical sex scandal in New Zealand, again organised by a bookmaker, who has been named," The Observer said. According to the investigation confirmed that there was a list, and that it would be among information taken to Australia.

Omar has alleged that prominent players, including team captains, had sex with the women. In Australia, prostitutes included doctors, nurses, travel agents and a "glamorous" television presenter, the newspaper said. All were Australian, apart from one Pakistani and a Chinese. The new revelations come as law enforcement agencies and cricket bodies seek to determine how deep-rooted match fixing is.

Scottland Yard’s Serious Crime Squad is already looking into charges made by former England all-rounder Chris Lewis, that he was approached by Indian sports promoter Aushim Khetarpal to help throw a test against New Zealand in 1999. Omar has alleged that batsmen were paid up to £3600 for throwing their wickets away, and received lavish presents as extra perks. One world-class batsman, who he named to investigators, was offered £9000 to go out cheaply in the first four tests of a five-test series. He also named an Asian bowler who underperformed in several matches in Australia, because he needed money to finish building a house.

The six-strong investigation team, which started its work in September, hopes to present an interim report to the ICC by mid-2001. It has been given three years by the ICC to root out corruption and it is understood that three tests will be called off from the PCB.
Rana renaissance

The rather masterful reproduction of Rana-era structures in Baber Mahal Revisited is about copying intelligently.

A (NEW) LAYOUT: Shirley Lundy (@angryfury) says (above) page out from a heap of papers at a Boulevard casino as aggressively resident of Boudha.

FAVORITE FOOTWEAR OFF THE MOUNTAIN: Multiple Everest summiteers (ofNepal,China,Taji, Kyi) and lips (shop page for their charity march against Nepal’sDarbar squares).
**Under My Hat**

by Kunda Dixit

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**DECLASSIFIED ADS**

**CONGRATULATIONS**
Heartfelt congratulations and cordial congratulations to Chagla on his grand success in being awarded a Canadian tourist visa on his fourth try. We wish you all the best in your future life. Hope you never come back. Voice loving family. Pappu, Mamua, sister Chandikumari and brother Ramesh.

**YACANcy**
Aland Landlock Himalayan Kingdom with a land area of $56,000 sq miles is seeking a motivated Chief Sub-contractor to take over the country under a Build Operate Transfer Scheme. Candidate should have at least two years experience in a senior executive position governing in a city-state in Southeast Asia that has banned chewing gum. Applicants answering to the name "Ee Kahan New" (or words to that effect) will be given special preference. Must have experience in designing beer packages of concept brands by influencing at least 35 beers with a wafer naked can on each. Since we received only one application for the post in response to a similar ad in the paper last week from someone named "Bibgy Dix" (disqualified for not giving his real name) we are asking anyone who feels even remotely interested in using up this challenging make-over project to apply. Please, please, please. Should be fluent in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Esperanto and also be a celebrated rocket scientist; a basic surgeon of international repute; and should hold at least a PhD in Medical Anthropology and/or Particle Physics.

Ability to speak Nepal will be an added advantage. Candidate must be over 70 years of age, but exceptions can be made for those older at 30 of similarly qualified. Although written are encouraged to apply, they will do no at their own peril.

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Safely: Negotiable. Preliminary benefits and side incomes are per standard operating procedure. Walk-in interviews. Come with CV and associated astrological certification to Singh Durbar West Gate by Friday afternoon.

**CAR FOR SALE**
A 1996 Mahindra Pipino in top condition belonging to an ex-MP is for sale in as-is-it condition to raise money for political house-keeping. Only not paid, and has failed three consecutive emission tests. Vehicle can be inspected in the parliament car park and towed away by the highest bidder.

**JULY WANTED**
Royal Nepal Airlines is Hiring, another global tender for the most lease of a jet in the colours of an obscure European airline to augment its rapidly-expanding collection of second-hand aircraft from international suppliers. Tender for each aircraft should be received by the undersigned by Saturday afternoon with separate earnest money in a sealed envelope. The envelopes shall be opened next week in a meeting at an undisclosed location. The bidder whose earnest money is found to be the highest shall be awarded the contract immaterial of the actual tender amount pledged. No questions should be asked, and none will be entertained. Jet in question will get indirect free parking at Kathmandu airport, and will not secretly have to fly anywhere since there are no passengers to fly.

**SEPT WANTED**
Nepal Airline is looking for exotic new hats for supply to an economic new airline with hat fishes who are fast running out of supplies. Interested parties should apply in person with sample headgear in triplicate.

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**Phuchhe PEPSI**

Rs. 8

200 ml

Pepsi 200 ml

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**Nepali Society**

Lochan Bhattarai was in yesterday last week on Shiveshwar – the festival dedicated to the goddess of learning. Saraswati. Her latest album, Lochan Bhattarai of Pisan Durbar, was being formally released by Nepal's senior musical figure Mr. N. Kaji. The album contains 16 songs which she sang to welcome the Nepal New Year 2057 at the ancient Kastha Manayan courtyard of the Patan Museum last April. The concert opened up new doors to Nepali musicians to organise such concerts in such exotic settings. The new album was released at the same place as the New Year concert.

At the ceremony, poet Durga Lal Shrestha said it all: "A song that should not let any unnecessary word sleep in. And a good singer should always understand the poetry within. Lochan's compositions are good music through and through. Lochan started her professional singing career 14 years ago. Later it was the song "Tadke taak naught jau" which brought her fame. She now has many singles, duets, soundtracks and folk songs apart from the CD album Svek.

Lochan also reflects Nepal's incredible ethnic diversity in her own life: she was born to a Bahun father and Magar mother. Husband Chhakki Chakka is a lecturer at Patan College. He is my mentor. My inspiration and above all a great soul friend who has always given me the warmth and support at all times," she says. Close friend, another "house-husband" of the family.

With modern music and satellite television, Lochan is worried about Nepali folk music turning festive. "Nepal Adhunik uses lot of Hindustani ragas," she says. "But there are many folk tunes and melodies we can add to our own style of ragas. In fact it has become necessary to compile all the folk tunes and write them in music script." Lochan has already taken up the preservation of Nepali folk as a personal crusade. She feels that once folk tunes are written in scripts they can be categorised and musicians can keep on adding improvisations till the whole thing turns into a rag of a new genre.

Apart from being known as a versatile singer – singing folk and Adhunik in various ethnic languages, Lochan has a great thumb as well. Her small house in Bagmara has a verdant surface that can be called the "Hanging Garden of Patan." Lochan likes to say she shares her house not only with her husband and a son, but also with the 500 or so flowering plants and creepers of 50 species. "Before I leave for any of my shows I touch these plants and energise myself. It is almost that we communicate spiritually," says Lochan. It certainly seems to help her music.