Parachute
Prime Minister Koirala has an 8 April deadline to get his pet Armed Police Force ordinance passed by parliament. But opposition parties have paralysed parliament to stop him from doing precisely that. Why don’t the opposition and the anti-Koirala faction want the ordinance passed? Good point. The answer to that may lie in the fact that while a paramilitary force would be most detrimental to the Maoists, the extreme left and right, the anti-Koirala faction and the UML, all agree on one thing: Koirala is too powerful. An APPF would make him even more dominant. Koirala says privately he wouldn’t mind giving up his ministerial post if it just wants a respectable exit. But no one is obliging him. A long shot—Parliament’s failure to approve the ordinance could give him the parachute he needs.

Mahat’s report
Ram Sham Mahat was as frank as diplomacy would allow while reporting back to donors this week on the country’s economic and development performance. He admitted things were bad, and blamed it on the political deadlock. He also admitted his report on budgetary performance was another reason: out of about 555 disbursement reports, Looks like “good performance was incomplete for the political deadlock. Bad, and blamed it on the country’s economic back to donors this week on the diplomacy would allow while reporting Ram Sharan Mahat was as frank as Mahat’s report he needs.

Bhutaneses have lost everything. All they have is that distant possibility of return.

Waiting for Indians
BINDU BHATTARAI
If you still think it is the memory of the anti-Hrithik Roshan riots in Kathmandu that have kept Indian tourists away, think again. It is now clear that Indians are avoiding Nepal in droves not because of security fears, but mainly because of a new rule enforced in October 2000 requiring Nepali and Indian travellers to have either passports, voter ID cards or certified government letters while travelling by air to each others’ countries. Overland travellers have no such restriction. The message season in India saw only a dribble of honeymooners in Kathmandu and Pokhara, and it looks the same for April-May when Indians used to find the heat of the plains by the thousands and fly up to Kathmandu. The monsoon months, which had stopped being a fear for many Nepali hotels because of Indian tourists, are not looking good either. “Coming to Nepal is not as easy as it was before,” Teik Bahadur Dangi, director at the Nepal Tourism Board, told us. “We don’t have exact numbers but Indian arrivals have gone down.” The passport rule for Dangi, director at the Nepal Tourism Board, told us. “We don’t have exact numbers but Indian arrivals have gone down.” The passport rule for Indians...

What is worrying some refugees is that even if the joint team begins interviews, at the most they can only manage ten heads of families on each working day. That would take at least five years to complete the process. Added to this is the fact that the forms to be filled out during the questioning are in English (as agreed to in the terms of reference for the Joint Verification Team), which could mean plenty of delays, and misunderstandings, while interviewing the predominantly Nepali-speaking refugees.

worldlink
World No-Water Day

Unbeknownst to most of us, World Water Day came and went on 22 March without much fanfare. There were a few speeches, some seminars and more platitudes. But we missed another chance to focus national attention on this precious resource which is going to determine our nation's economic growth, the health of Nepalis, and even political relations with our neighbours in the near future. It is becoming increasingly clear that although Nepal is regarded as a “water surplus” country, we suffer from huge shortfalls in the quantity and quality of water. In many cases, this is a life and death issue: Nepal has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Asia and most of the deaths are caused by water-borne infections. Three-quarters of potentially irrigable land is rain-fed and the huge energy potential of falling water is largely wasted. The taps in most Kathmandu Valley households are dryer this spring than they have ever been, and the water table has fallen to record lows because of excessive pumping.

With so much glaring gap between supply and demand, it is tempting to look for quick-fix technical solutions to increase supply for Kathmandu. And because it is politicians who make the decisions, there are attractive pecuniary incentives for them to go for infrastructure solutions. (No one we know offers kickbacks for making water use more efficient.) But, as the world’s foremost experts on freshwater resources, Peter Gleick, tells us on pages 10-11 of this issue, Nepal is ideally placed to make a paradigm shift in the way it looks at water from a demand-side approach. We can learn from the mistakes of others, and since we haven’t started making colossal blunders yet, we are ahead of the curve.

Green than thou

Hunters, it is said, make the best conservationists. Conservationists, on the other hand, make bad hunters. So, if it is true indeed that the army brass has been conducting target practice on banking deer in Chitwan, then they are doing very naughtily. One of the reasons behind Nepal’s dramatic success in protecting its national parks and nature reserves has been the deployment of the Royal Nepalese Army on guard duty. It is because of this that we have been spared the rampant poaching that threatens tigers, rhinos and wild elephants in parks across the border in India. No one has any illusions that using an army to guard animals is a permanent solution. Ultimately the protection has to come from people who value the wildlife and their habitat. But our army’s role in bringing back a nature reserve back from the brink is probably the best use an army has been put to anywhere in the world.

Having said that, let us also remind our men in uniform that just because their mission is to protect Nature does not mean they may desecrate the same. Military camps have destroyed many wetlands and some of the most critical research sites in the world. It is high time our soldiers are taught that conservation is a lot more than protecting a species or a habitat. It is also ensuring peace and harmony in a place. It is ensuring that the locals have access to their ancestral lands. It is ensuring that local communities are able to make a living out of the natural resources instead of looting them. It is ensuring that those who are living in a land rich in biodiversity are able to enjoy the same. It is ensuring the same for future generations.

In memory of hope

Where are you, all you doctors, engineers, artists and authors of the 1990 Kathmandu Spring? Where are you when the country needs you again?

Kunda Dixit

stated in this all-pervasive gloom, it is getting increasingly difficult to keep the memory of March 1990 alive. But we must remember that the Spring of ‘90 was a season of hope, an extraordinary time when Nepal rose up spontaneously to express its determination to build a new future for themselves and their children. On 16 March 1990 (Chaitra) a protest March went black hands over their mouths, marched through the streets and were hauled away in police trucks. A movement by students was mollifying into a water protest. Poets, novelists, artists, singers, theatre personalities breathed new life into the Janakpur. Those were the days when every little action mattered and even minor protests sent out powerful symbolic messages. Then the engineers, teachers, lawyers, nurses, journalists, airline pilots, bankers, traders, industrialists, government employees, even some members of the police took to the streets. In those fabled days of democratic decay when street protest has become so commonplace that people don’t even notice them anymore, it was some effort to recall how daring and brave those protests were.

Then on 20 March (Chaitra) a protest by nearby farmers led to a seminar in Kirtipur, another in series of protests that were becoming routine in the Kathmandu Spring of 1990. It was in fact an assembly of technocrats—dissenters, legal eagles, academics, engineers, career consultants, physicians and journalists. They were there at Tribhuvan University not just to protest, but examine the possibility of alternatives. Those elaborating the discussions were disrupted as the régime panicked. The Kirtipur Seminar has now come to be remembered merely as one of numerous protests of the pro-democracy movement. But to my mind, it was a seminal event—the first to look beyond protein at possibilities, the first to discuss hope, not despair. Even in those fabled days, people talked about the inevitable dawn that follows the night.

It’s yesterday once more. This time, a crucifixion instead of hope we have foreshadowed. There is ominous talk of the ideas of ‘March. I, of course, am far from being a genuine ‘anti’, but there is something unsettling about the泛滥 of this sentiment, especially since the prime minister must resign, and these “anti-Nepal” demagogues do not have the semblance of being democratic or even less so, a legitimate government. When asked about the alternative to Girija Prasad, his opponents in parliament say evasively: “Who, anyone else from Nepali Congress.” Can you get any more desperate than that? An opposition party running a mindless campaign for the express purpose of replacing one leader of the ruling party with another! Isn’t that a problem for the ruling party which is set to head the government? Let the Nepali Congress sort it out in its own mess (and what a mess it is). The Left needs the parliament House, unless they are trying to bring it to a paralyzing standstill.

Perhaps it is time to turn the page. We should really worry about the apathy of the intelligentsia. Wealth according to profligates of doom, but that does not dismay me either. To keep crying wolf is a part of their script, they are expected to show us which way to go, raising a red flag when society does so. Public intellectuals are expected to preach ‘Cowards’ neither true. Neither the socialists of the gullible, nor the capitalists riddled with inequalities. Ivory towers are not places to start dallying new roads, it’s good enough that they are just watch-poms.

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K Galden Thondup

K Galden Thondup was in his palace on the morning of 6 April, 1975 when the roar of army trucks climbing the steep streets of Gangtok brought him running to the window. There were Indian soldiers everywhere; they had surrounded the palace, and the short burst of machinegun fire that could have been heard. Basanta Kumar Chhetri, a 19-year-old guard at the palace’s main gate, was struck by a bullet and killed—the first woman involved: Indira Gandhi in Sikkim since.

But the RAW used the next two years to create the right conditions within Sikkim to make that happen. The government's only real choice was to use the propaganda. Hindu Sikkimese of Nepali origin who wanted to maintain their discrimination from the Buddhist kingdom and dite to rise up. “What we felt then was that the Chogyal was unjust,” says CD Rai, former editor of Gangtok Times. “We thought it might be better to be Indian than to be oppressed by the king.”

Desai said in 1978 that the merger was a mistake. Even Sikkimese political leaders who fought for the merger said it was a blunder and worked to roll it back. But by then it was too late. Today, most Sikkimese know their independence in 1975, and Sikligak and bound passengers in Gangtok say still they are “going to India.” The elite have benefited from New Delhi’s largesse and aren’t complaining. As-ex-chef minister BB Gangswang: “We can’t turn the clock back now.”

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Kaji Lendup Dorji (also known as L D Kaji) of the Sikkim National Congress, who had an affair with the Chogyal’s family, ended the fray. By 1973, New Delhi was openly supporting the Kaji’s Sikkim National Congress. Palden Thondup (LD Kaji): “He told us, we’ll help you with democracy and national integration, but don’t talk about merger now.”

Relenting to pressure from pro-democracy supporters, the 11th Chogyal was forced to recall in a five-member council of ministers, to sign a one-sided treaty with India which would never turn out the way it did.”

It is also said that the real battle was fought between the Chogyal’s aide-de-camp and Kaji Lendup Dorji, but between their wives. On one side was Queen Hope Cook, the American wife of the Chogyal and on the other was the Belgian wife of the Kaji. Elisa-Maria Sandford, “the American wife between the Chogyal and the Belgian, says former chief minister, S Sargent, “there was a void there.”

The 12th Chogyal: Indira Gandhi in Sikkim since.

And the winner is: Nepali scholars is a separate issue—nor Pratyoush Onta’s comments from Nepali readers. (Economic sense, #34). Artha philosophy is unable to govern? We would have been very interested to read Sharma’s and Sudhindra Sharma’s review of the book. On the other hand, the book's substance pertains to the life and perceptions of local people, not to the self-interrogation of the postmodern urban dweller. It is unfortunate that this was not read as something worth discussion.

The 10th Chogyal: Bhumibol of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal, getting too cozy with each other. The Chogyal attended King Birendra’s coronation in Kathmandu in 1971 and hobnobbed with the Pakistanis and the Chinese, and there was a lobby in Delhi that the Sikkimese might get Chinese help to become independent. In his book on the Indian intelligence agency, inside R & W, The story of India’s secret service, Ashok Raina writes that New Delhi had taken the decision to annex Sikkim in 1971, and that

Meanwhile in New Delhi, India Gandhi was going from strength to strength, and India was flexing its muscles. The 1971 Bangladesh war and the atomic test in 1974 gave India the confidence to take care of Sikkim once and for all. India Gandhi was convinced that Sikkim couldn’t show independent tendencies and become a UN member like Bhutan did in 1971, and she also didn’t want to invite the three Himalayan kingdoms, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal, getting too cozy with each other. The Chogyal attended King Birendra’s coronation in Kathmandu in 1971 and hobnobbed with the Pakistanis and the Chinese, and there was a lobby in Delhi that the Sikkimese might get Chinese help to become independent. In his book on the Indian intelligence agency, inside R & W, The story of India’s secret service, Ashok Raina writes that New Delhi had taken the decision to annex Sikkim in 1971, and that

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HEMLATA RAI

he upcoming national Census, officially called the "Survey on Population and Housing 2001," promises to bring women to the forefront of national statistics. And this number crunching will help planners adopt more specifically targeted policies to address women's needs in development projects and programmes. Women activists who work in gender-related areas hope that accurate statistics on women will also mean more realistic allocation of funds for their development and empowerment.

From 10 to 21 June, 27,000 census employees, including 20,000 women, will spread out throughout the country to find out more about the complex situations of individual and family.

Carrying out the census and processing the data will cost the government Rs 600 million. Census 2001 will provide an overview of the national economy through what development experts like to call "gender disaggregated data." Pakistan and India have revised their most recent census questionnaires to accommodate data on women's economic activities. Bangladesh's census this year focused on another area traditionally seen as gender-specific, birth control and infant mortality. What makes Nepal's census questionnaire unique compared with that of the Cape Town's neighbour is that it includes questions that will hopefully provide information about a woman's status within her family, in addition to her undocumented and unprecedented economic activities.

"The upcoming census is designed to reflect the condition and position of women within families," says Sara Joshi-Shrestha, gender training specialist with the UNDP-funded Mainstreaming Gender Equity Programme. Questions related to marital status have also been revised and seen some additions. Much to the delight of anthropologists and social scientists, the revised questionnaire asks questions about polygamy and polyandry, separation, divorce and re-marriage, and people's age at their first marriage. This census will finally shed some light on anthropologists' claim that widow re-marriage is not stigmatised among some ethnic groups in Nepal. Questions like this will come in handy in order to understand the status of women within the household in different ethnic groups/communities in to have more of a say in issues of family property even if it was registered in the name of a male family member. Another important revision made to the questionnaire is the collection of data about the cause of death. It is currently estimated that 539 of every 100,000 women die during childbirth. The census will help determine more accurately the maternal mortality rate, and also perhaps help in estimating how many deaths are due to unsafe abortions. The health sector also hopes to figure out the number of undiagnosed, unregistered AIDS deaths.

Donors and NGOs working for the empowerment of women will also take a look at the census to review and redesign intervention strategies. The census will focus on assessing the achievements of informed educational interventions in the empowerment of women. Unlike previous censuses, Census 2001 will also count "abstinent women"—previous censuses assumed that female family members do not migrate abroad. Empowerment agencies expect this question will help provide a sense of how many women have been trafficked, how many have willingly migrated for economic reasons either overseas or to other parts of Nepal, and how many have married across the border.

"Cultural differences and the literacy level of communities will make a huge difference to the quality of the final data," says Radha Krishna GC, deputy director of CBS. The outcome of the pilot census provides ample reason for concern. The 2000 Census was described as "a fiasco" in its design and implementation.

"We need, in Kathmandu, to look closely at how cities succeed against the odds, while we rot on the vine.

CAPETOWN: As I had just a day to explore this sublime city with perhaps the world's finest setting. Time enough to be enchanted and inspired. As we climb the ramp of Table Mountain, Cape Town spills towards two oceans across the neck of a narrow peninsula. The buildings are a divine mix of old colonial and assertive modern. The streets score with a multicultural melting pot. Did you know, for example, that the Cape’s Muslims have been here for four hundred years—longer than its black African inhabitants. The old Dutch stock has long since been lost. More recent arrivals are from south and southeast Asia, Madagascar, England and America.

Of course, the social tensions are many and powerful. Apartheid’s ugly scars still persist, but it’s the official termination after Nelson Mandela took charge. The crime rate is shocking. Whites blame blacks, blacks blame the system, and the mixed race “coloureds” are caught in between. But strangely enough, none of that takes away from the streets. Kathmandu municipal area. That’s a boundary drawn by a bureaucrat. Mine is etched on my heart. Why, oh why, do we tolerate decline, dirt, poisonous air and water, constant noise, and the slow death of aesthetic sense in a cluster of garish fifth rate supermarkets in commerce. Surely, if Cape Town thrives despite social tensions and harshly divisive economics, if Mexico City can cope with a population more than ten times that of our Valley, then Kathmandu can reverse its decline. And I don’t want it to be Jarrow's, a great poverty, Toronto’s fiercely anti-social climate, Sydney’s remoteness. There’s New York, once a competitor for murder capital of the world, now barely a presence in the league table of urban violence thanks to controversial new policing but effective urban policing and the creation of community spirit where once there was only cynicism and gloom.

I deliberately include in my thesis example of poorer countries to stifle the defeatist cries of “we can’t afford it” or “it costs too much”. Both are legitimate, and the environment must not be sacrificed to profit. But surely, if Cape Town will not leave the Valley. The other choice is to renovate the existing homes and surrender to the incoming tides of history. ✈
recognise a woman as the head of a household. Even educated urban women, for instance, may not be comfortable naming a female member as the head of the family even if the taken male head has been absent for a long time. The 1991 census reported only 13 percent women-headed households, which seems implausible given the higher migration trend for employment. The Nepal Labour Force Survey 1998/1999 shows that almost one million people, approximately three quarters of them male, migrated from far-western Nepal to India in search of jobs. The other major focus of this census, then, is women's participation in the economy. For the first time, Census 2001 will recognize household sector activities, such as primary and secondary processing of goods, as economic activities in line with the UN System of National Accounting (SNA) 1993 and the recent International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of “work”. SNA 1993 greatly widens the definition of “production” to secondary processing like tailoring and manufacturing for household use, and activities like fodder- and firewood-collection, fetching water and food-processing—all these are now economic activities. This shift in the definition of work has major implications in calculating women's economic contribution. But Census 2001 isn’t as radical as it seems. Unlike this year’s Indian census, domestic activities like cooking for the family and looking after children and the elderly—women's contribution to the social sector—will remain unaccounted for.

To ensure that women's social and economic realities are questioned from a female perspective, the CBS wants at least 20 percent of the enumerators in all districts to be female. Teachers are one of the main groups mobilised as enumerators, and at all primary schools are required by law to have at least one female teacher, it shouldn't be too hard to maintain this percentage. But people like Mena Acharya, an economist crusading for gender disaggregated data, the Census 2001 will also ask questions about ethnicity, the situation of disabled people, child labourers and children at risk.

“Recruiting 20 percent female enumerators does not help much. We should focus on increasing the number of women at the supervisor or area supervisor levels, if not at the level of district census officers,” she said. Her concerns will not be addressed for some time—of the 90 district census officers appointed so far, only five are women.

Apart from its focus on creating gender disaggregated data, the Census 2001 will also ask questions about ethnicity, the situation of disabled people, child labourers and children at risk.

Essential services

One more sector has been declared an essential service. Strikes are now illegal in hotels, resorts and other tourism-related businesses. In 1999, the cabin crew of Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation went on strike demanding that they be allowed to fly leased aircraft, and that the national flag carrier should purchase its fleet rather than obtain them on long-term lease. The government revoked the antiquated piece of legislation to force the employees back to work. The 43-year-old law came in hand again recently—to ban strikes in hotels on 15 March, after hotel workers, demanding a 10 percent service charge, decided to stop work. Again on 17 March, the government included the transport sector under the same law. That was after employees of the Nepal Transport Corporation decided to halt trolley bus services, pressuring for the reversal of a recent government restructuring (and downsizing) decision. The number of services declared “essential” so far has reached ten.

Communication services, including the postal service, airports and related services, print media and the government press, arms and military related sectors, telecommunications, including fax and telephone services, and electricity and drinking water distribution are now to be strike-free.

Keeping peace

Keeping peace was a main point on the agenda Nepali officials discussed with the United Nations during Koli Annan’s 12-13 March visit to Kathmandu. Perhaps, as an outcome, the Royal Nepalese Army is to deploy 900 soldiers for UN peacekeeping duty in troubled Sierra Leone in June. They will partly replace the 4,000 Indian and Jordanian peacekeepers there now. This will be the first time Nepali soldiers will be deployed in Africa. At present 800 Nepalis are serving in Lebanon and 200 in East Timor. Since its first peacekeeping assignment under the UN in 1956, over 36,000 Nepali have served under the UN’s command. Defence Ministry officials say the soldiers are expected to earn Rs 150 million in their six months in Sierra Leone. Nepal UN peacekeepers in Lebanon and East Timor currently bring in about the same amount.

Food aid

Germany says it is giving $1.08 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) for use in Phase II of the Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW) programme. The RCIW, now operational in 35 districts, combines food aid with community development projects that the locals participate in building. The RCIW was launched in 10 districts in 1999. The project purchased rice worth $113 million in the five years of Phase I for distribution to 250,000 food-deficient families working on irrigation, fishery, flood control and soil conservation projects. The RCIW is a joint initiative of the government of Nepal and Germany and the World Food Programme. The WFP says the activities supported with food aid have helped increase local production and also connect many rural areas to markets. The RCIW now plans to move into the far-western hills and support communities in rural road-building and other activities to increase food security—mainly by helping increase local production.

Long way to go

Forty-years after the first shovel hit the ground, another 22 km section (4.75m wide) of the Bandipur-Bardibas road has been completed. The 158-km stretch to link Banepa, east of Kathmandu, and Bardibas on the East-West Highway in the tarai to the south-east, has been on and off drawing the boarders for the past four decades. The Banepa to Bukadebesi section was opened to traffic last week.

The project has been a priority of the Nepali Congress because BP Koirala initiated its construction. But it was no longer a priority after the royal coup of 1960. It was back on track again after the Nepali Congress came back to power after 1990. The road is to be built in four phases. The first 37 km section linking Sindhuli Bazar and Bardibas was opened to traffic in 1997. A track has been completed to link the 39 km stretch from Sindhuli Bazar to Khurkot, as has a 32-km stretch to link Khurkot and Nepalthok. The Bande-Bardibas road is expected to be completed by 2003.

The road will help open the hinterland of Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Kavrepalanchok districts and also ease traffic on the Prithvi Highway. Upon completion, Bardibas will be just 170 km from Kathmandu. The distance from Kathmandu to Bardibas on the East-West Highway is now 350 km. Japan provided Rs 5.88 billion for the construction of two sections of the road, while the government chipped in Rs 185 million for land acquisition and administrative costs, and Rs 10 million for maintenance.

Nepalese Picnic Bonanza

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Mahabir Road, Birgunj, Parsa
Tel: 24078
Bhairahawa Branch
Pothana, Tole, Bhairahawa
Tel: 24395

Nepali Times
23-29 MARCH 2001
This is a huge undertaking," a Nepal home minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, said. "Also, this is the first time both teams have been involved in something like this. Once we start, we'll see what kind of problems come up and try to solve them," she says. While both sides have agreed to conduct the refugee identification and verification process on a bilateral basis, on Bhutan's insistence, the role of a third party or mediator hasn't been totally ruled out. "Somewhere in the margins, we've kept that option open, but no one's been identified, yet," an official said.

The Bhutanese refugee groups are keen to include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a third party to ensure a fair identification process, and the refugees themselves are looking to the Bhutanese Refugees Representative Repatriation Committee (BRRRC) as their champion. This two-year-old Japa-based committee, elected by refugees in the camps, is trying hard to maintain its apolitical image, and keeping above the fray of the fractious refugee organisations. Like the Bhutan and Nepal teams, BRRRC is keeping a low profile. "We don't want to jeopardise the verification process," says a BRRRC member in Japa. Refugees we interviewed had pinned their hopes on the committee. Said one 30-year-old Bhutanese: "When it comes to the crunch, I'm counting on BRRRC to help us."

"Like many others, he was forced to sign papers that they were migrating to Nepal voluntarily, and this could complicate the verification process. When he was home minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba agreed in 1993 with his Bhutanese counterpart Dago Tsering to a controversial categorisation process. Deuba agreed to four categories of refugees:

- forcefully evicted bonafide Bhutanese
- Bhutanese who emigrated voluntarily
- non-Bhutanese
- Bhutanese who have committed criminal acts

Indrawati Rai, secretary of the Refugee Women's Forum in Beldangi I, is also concerned about how the categorisation process will affect orphans, dependants and other adults without families. "Many of them don't have papers, who is going to look after them on their behalf" asks the once-asy housewife who is now a firebrand activist in the camps.

But by far the most sensitive issue is the one of resettlement of northerners in the southern parts of Bhutan from where the refugees were evicted. Refugee families have heard reports filtering out of Bhutan that their homes and farms are now occupied by thousands of farmers resettled by the government. "I have heard that my home in Chiring Bushi has been taken over," one refugee, who did not want to be named, told us. "Even if we go back, where will we live?"

One Nepali verification team member preferred anonymity admitted to us that there is vagueness in the definition of dependants and orphans. The member is convinced some of these issues can only be resolved through third party mediation. Says a refugee activist, "These points have been raised with UNHCR and the Nepali government's Coordination Unit. But as long as there's proof, we'll try to force them."

Under the present circumstances the Nepali team would have the role of a bystander. "We're basically present to see what happens."

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Facing page: Living up for water, Chandra Subadhir (left) and Lashmi Maya (right) in their shop.

A tale of two wars

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back, what's really wrong? Why?

Culinary fire hazards

25 years of burning my tongue at home and abroad allows me to talk with authority on chillies.

Thanks to Sujata Tuladhar for making my mouth water, like 26-year-old Chandra Subedi. He told us that verification was in January and time again that the main Bhutanese tactic is buying time, lingering, allowing things to drag on. The verification team could hurry things up and handle 50 families a day. The verification could take a long time, but Nepal is interested in getting it over with and move to the next step: the four categories. Bhutan is reported to have committed itself to taking back everyone except category 2; those who left “voluntarily.” But it is not as straightforward as that because the criteria for categorisation are subjective, and many thousands of genuine refugees could fall through the net. Nepal had, in the past, been talking about a “harmonisation” of the categories. But at present no one wants to talk too much about categorisation because that was the biggest stumbling block in the past years of fruitless negotiations. International pressure and Bhutan’s own problems with Bodo and ULFA rebels in Assam seem to have softened Bhutan’s stance since December, and even if Thimpu brought up categorisation again, it may not be as rigid.

Says a senior Nepali official in Kathmandu: “We have seen time and again that the main Bhutanese tactic is buying time, lingering, allowing things to drag on. The verification team could hurry things up and handle 50 families a day. The verification could take a long time, but Nepal is interested in getting it over with and move to the next step: the four categories. Bhutan is reported to have committed itself to taking back everyone except category 2; those who left “voluntarily.” But it is not as straightforward as that because the criteria for categorisation are subjective, and many thousands of genuine refugees could fall through the net. Nepal had, in the past, been talking about a “harmonisation” of the categories. But at present no one wants to talk too much about categorisation because that was the biggest stumbling block in the past years of fruitless negotiations. International pressure and Bhutan’s own problems with Bodo and ULFA rebels in Assam seem to have softened Bhutan’s stance since December, and even if Thimpu brought up categorisation again, it may not be as rigid.

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**TIPS OF ICEBERGS**

**by Narayan Manandhar**

We hear the most about the tip of an iceberg; what is less obvious is the substance, the bulk of what is hidden below. This is no less true of the Nepal hotel industry.

**Scenario:**

As we generally assume, the Nepal hotel industry has a problem. Hoteliers believe their demands are not being heard. And they are not alone in believing that. What is less obvious is the amount of work that is going into the machinery. Waiting for the appropriate time to come around.

Here is one way out of the hotel impasse: scrap the present two percent tourist tax service fee and replace it by ten percent to be shared by government, hotel management, and the unions.

**Reasons:**

1. The government has classified four sectors of the economy to be most important: hotel, beverage, hotel-beds, and hotels. The government has already decided to have a conference on the hotel business and has invited the hotel industry to attend.
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**Conclusion:**

The government action has restored normalcy—by having the unions to file a case in court. In fact, the hotel law, which is an essential service, is being enforced by the government. If the issue is not resolved with any certainty or finality, the government will force the hotel industry to pay for the strike to crip hotel operations and continue to maintain the already widening gap of hotel

The Himalayan Bank Limited, a Nepal-Pakistan joint venture, has announced that profits in fiscal 1999/2000 were up 25 percent over the previous year. Profit reached Rs 196.2 million, up from Rs 165.2 million in fiscal 1998/99. The bank has also announced an interim dividend to shareholders, to be reconciled with the profits expected in the current fiscal year. The bank's deposits in the first six months of this fiscal year reached Rs 16.1 billion and investments, Rs 9.7 billion. The Himalayan Bank, which began operations in January 1993, now has nine branches and one contact office. It also plans to venture into development banking.

**Nepal business expo**

The Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) is organizing a trade fair 10-14 April together with the Tradeex, an annual affair of FNCCI's partner the event. Everest Exhibits P Ltd. The Nepal Business Expo 2001 is expected to showcase products through 350 stands. The organizers say the fair will likely be an annual affair.

**Viewpoint**

By ARTHA SEED

**Airport taxi tangle**

Here's something for all travelers. The government has approved a proposal from the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) to raise the airport tax at departure. Passengers departing from the Tribhuvan International Airport for a destination in South Asia have to pay Rs 700. For all other destinations the departure tax is Rs 1,000. The tax for foreigners on domestic routes is Rs 500 and Rs 1,200. The new tax for flying within the country is Rs 150, Rs 125 and Rs 50, depending on what category the destination airport falls into. CAAN has also raised the fees for airline companies for the use of airport facilities and the rates applicable for renting office space at airports.

**Himalayan Bank profits**

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**Anti-smuggling patrol**

Royal Nepal Army units have begun patrolling two customs check points along Nepal's borders with India and China. The units are already doing rounds at the border with India at Birgunj, and that with Tibet at Tatopani. The government's plan is to mobilise patrol troops at four more customs points and the surrounding areas.

**NEPALI ECONOMY**

The government's action turned this Beef's thoughts to the Act. The Act was promulgated in 1957, and needless to say, remains there to this day. It has outlived in its imprints and nationalization. It is the main text during Partition rule or after the renegotiation of democracy. The Act is basically a two-page document that just lists essential services, says that in these sectors are not allowed by law, and ends with a reminder that if strikes were to be taken place they would be treated as criminal offences. The FEED is really only a small sum of money, and even so, it's quite difficult to actually find cases where people have been prosecuted under the provisions of the Act. As most of our cities seem to do, the government and its citizens forced the government to turn its attention to yet another aspect of the economy. It's time the Essential Services Act was reviewed and brought up to date to cover not only telecommunication that are essential to services, but also economic services essential to the nation. If, for instance, we have IT companies doing well, and we feel that ICT could be the backbone of tomorrow's economy, then we need to put in place legislation deeming the essential services to such sectors.

**Jobs in the Nepali economy**

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**Essential acts**

The amendments to the Essential Services Act should have been an action of first, not last resort.

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MARY MAKARUSHKA

The lure of 34’ screens and the miraculously obtained copies of most nominated films make Thamel the best pre-Oscar destination in Kathmandu—blackouts, smelly toilets and all.

Oscar Nominees
Best Picture
Chocolat
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Erin Brockovich
Traffic

Best Director
Stephen Daldry, Billy Elliot
Ang Lee, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Steven Soderbergh, Erin Brockovich
Richard Scott, Gladiator
Steven Soderbergh, Traffic

Best Actor
Tom Hanks, Cast Away
Russell Crowe, Gladiator
Javier Bardem, Before Night Falls
Ed Harris, Pollock
Jeffrey Rush, Quills

Best Actress
Juliette Binoche, Chocolat
Cate Blanchett, The Aviator
Halle Berry, Monster’s Ball
Cate Blanchett, Elizabeth
Frances McDormand, Fargo

Best Supporting Actor
Jeff Bridges, Contender
Willie Nelson, The Contender
Philip Seymour Hoffman, Capote
Javier Bardem, Before Night Falls
Jason Isaacs, The King’s Speech

Best Supporting Actress
Juliette Binoche, Chocolat
Halle Berry, Monster’s Ball
Hilary Swank, Million Dollar Baby
Frances McDormand, Fargo
Kate Winslet, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind

Library of Thamel

Thamel can be a tough place to watch cult favourites like Road Trip and The Matrix. Best Special Effects goes to its menu, which cleverly glows under blacklight so you can pick your dinner in the dark. All the menus are variations on the standard pizza-burger-curry mix, and none is going to be nominated for Thamel’s Best Cooking.

Mary Makarushka is a freelance journalist and former editor at Entertainment Weekly.
We drink it, we generate electricity with it, we soak our crops in it. And we're stretching our supplies to breaking point. Will we have enough clean water to satisfy our needs? One of the world's foremost experts on freshwater resources takes stock of this precious liquid.

PETER GLEICK

More than one billion people around the world lack access to clean drinking water; some 2.5 billion do not have adequate sanitation services. Preventable water-related diseases kill an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 children every day, and latest evidence suggests that we are falling behind in efforts to solve these problems.

Massive cholera outbreaks appeared in the mid-1990s in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Millions of people in Bangladesh and India drink water contaminated with arsenic. And the aqueifers are being pumped down faster than they are naturally replenished in parts of India, China, the US and elsewhere. And disputes over shared water resources have led to violence and continue to raise local, national and even international tensions.

At the outset of the new millennium, however, the way resource planners think about water is beginning to change. The focus is slowly shifting back to the provision of basic human and environmental needs as the top priority—ensuring some for all, instead of more for some. This means existing infrastructure in smarter ways rather than building new facilities, which is increasingly considered the option of last, not first, resort. The challenges we face are to use the water we have more efficiently, to rethink our priorities for water use and to identify alternative supplies of this precious resource.

This shift in philosophy has not been universally accepted, and it comes with strong opposition from some established water organizations. Nevertheless, it may be the only way to successfully address the pressing problems of providing everyone with clean water to drink, adequate water to grow food and a life free from preventable water-related illness.

Damage from dams

As environmental awareness has heightened globally, the desire to protect—and even restore—some of the river systems destroyed by dams and embankments has grown. In many developing countries, grassroots opposition to the environmental and social costs of big water projects is becoming more and more effective. Villagers and community activists in India have encouraged a public debate over big dams. In China, where open disagreement with government policies is strongly discouraged, protests against the monumental Three Gorges Project have been unusually vocal and persistent. Until very recently, international financial organisations such as the World Bank, export-import banks and multilateral aid agencies subsidised or paid in full for dams or other water-related civil engineering projects—which often have price tags in the tens of billions of dollars. These organisations are now more accountable to local people and their environment than in the past. And in regions where new projects seem warranted, we must find ways to meet demands with fewer resources, minimum ecological disruption and less money.

The fastest and cheapest solution is to expand the productive and efficient use of water. In many countries, 30 percent or more of the domestic water supply never reaches its intended destinations, disappearing from leaky pipes, faulty equipment or poorly maintained distribution systems. The quantity of water that Mexico City’s supply system loses is enough to meet the needs of a city the size of Rome, according to recent estimates. Even in modern systems, losses of 10 to 20 percent are common.

When water does reach consumers, it is often used wastefully. In homes, most water is literally flushed away. Before 1990, most toilets in the US drew about six gallons of water for each flush. In 1992 the US Congress passed a national standard mandating that all new residential toilets be low-flow models that require only 1.6 gallons per flush—a 70 percent improvement with a single change in technology. Even in the developing world technologies such as more efficient toilets have a role to play. Because of the difficulty of finding new water resources for Mexico City, the city officials launched a water conservation programme that...
involved replacing 390,000 old toilets. The replacements have already saved enough water to supply an additional 290,000 residents. And numerous other options for both industrial and non-industrial nations are available as well, including better leak detection, less wasteful watering machines, drip irrigation and water-conserving plants in outdoor landscaping. The largest single consumer of water is agriculture—and this use is largely inefficient. Water is lost as it is distributed to farmers and applied to crops. Consequently, as much as half of all water diverted for agriculture never yields any food. Thus, even modest improvements in agricultural efficiency could free up huge quantities of water. We can conserve water not only by altering how we choose to grow our food, but also by changing what we choose to eat.

New approaches to meet water needs will have to be based on using economic and institutional structures that encourage the wasting of water and the destruction of ecosystems. Among the barriers to better water planning and use are improponsibly low water prices, inadequate information on new efficiency technologies, inequitable water allocations, and government subsidies for growing water-intensive crops and regions on building dams.

Part of the difficulty, however, also lies in the prevalence of old ideas among water planners. Addressing the world's basic water problems requires fundamental changes in how we think about water and such changes are coming about slowly. Rather than trying endlessly to find enough water to meet hazy projections of future desires, it is time to find a way to meet our present and future needs with the water that is already available, while preserving the ecological cycles that are so integral to human well-being.

Peter H. Gleick is director of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security, a non-profit policy research think tank based in Oakland, California. Gleick co-founded the institute in 1987. (The article is adapted from the original that appeared in Scientific American, February 2001.)
A restaurant worker is suspected of using the identities of some of America's richest celebrities to pull off the biggest theft in Internet history.

Abraham Abdallah, 32, a convicted fraudster, has been arrested, accused of infiltrating the financial accounts of over 200 people on Forbes magazine’s annual list of richest people in the US.

His alleged victims include Steven Spielberg and Oprah Winfrey from the world of entertainment, and Ted Turner, Warren Buffett, George Soros, Michael Bloomberg and Larry Ellison from the financial world.

Abdallah is accused of using the web and his local Brooklyn library to track down confidential information and access bank, brokerage and credit card accounts. One piece of evidence found by the police was a well-worn copy of Forbes magazine with home addresses, telephone numbers, bank accounts and mothers’ maiden names scrawled beside the billionaires’ biographies. In several cases their all-important US social security numbers had also been written down.

Abdallah allegedly used web-enabled mobile phones and virtual voicemail services to track packages ordered in his victims’ names and pick up messages from anywhere in the US. Detective Michael Fabozzi of the New York Police Department (NYPD) told the New York Post: “There were so many packages going to so many places at one time, it’s impossible to figure out how he kept track of it all...but he did.”

The department believes Abdallah cloned the identities of his victims, setting up hundreds of bogus New York addresses for postal deliveries, before raiding their personal accounts. The police, who arrested their suspect as he picked up a delivery a month ago, are still trying to discover the extent of the fraud, which they believe lasted more than six months. Abdallah has been charged with criminal possession of forged devices and stolen property, and criminal impersonation. He denies the accusations.

The case began in December when the NYPD was alerted to a suspicious request to transfer $10 million from an account belonging to Thomas Siebel, founder of Siebel Systems, an electronics firm. Merrill Lynch, the brokerage firm, had contacted Siebel about the request because it conflicted with the requirements of the account. He said he knew nothing about it. The fraud squad traced the request to two Yahoo! email addresses.

Merrill Lynch then found the same email used for five more billionaire clients. Requests to other Wall Street firms, which handle the personal accounts of America’s wealthiest people, uncovered similar coincidences. The police found that many of the business addresses given to set up the accounts either did not exist or were shared by two billionaires at a time.
STOCKHOLM - Two hundred years ago in his essay "Perpetual peace: a discussion of a project for perpetual peace," the French philosopher and statesman Immanuel Kant envisaged a future "union of liberal republics". In 1795, however, liberal ideas were still largely abstract ideas, yet Kant envisaged our present reality of flourishing liberal democracies. Moreover, Kant's ideas of perpetual peace seems even less feasible because no democracy has ever made war on another. Indeed, "No War between Democrats" is as close as we are likely to get to an immutable diplomatic law.

Scholars have demonstrated the truth of this. Professor J. Rumfolt of the University of Hawaii investigated 395 wars of combat between 1801 and 1991. Democracy fought no democracy in 155 cases. Dictatorship fought dictatorship in 198 cases. He found no examples of two democracies fighting each other. Moreover, Kant's idea of "union of liberal republics". In 1795, the number of people killed was too low (Germany in 1914), or that the participant was not a real democracy (Cambodians was not deplorable in the case of Cambodia's population. What he meant was that the mass murder of Cambodians was not deplorable in the same way as the mass murder of Europeans. It is this inverted racism which seems to impact on society in our times when, in fact, you despise them. Indeed, those in the West who praised Mao, Cameroon Honecker, Saddam Hussein, or the leaders of apartheid South Africa, the former Yugoslav republic since the two months ago—came as world headlines.

The general call up—put out by the former Yugoslav army—said that the war in Macedonia that threatens to become a regional conflict in the region, is horrific and was exacted in places other than the battlefield. The international community fears the massive refugee crisis in the region, will host talks with the foreign minister. He said the EU was attacking some of the main root causes of conflict: poverty, democratic pressure and competition for scarce natural resources such as water and land, and that the EU was also ready "to make capacity-building, hard-core, big-money" development cooperation. "We are dealing with weak states requiring institutional capacity-building. After all, a crisis of state legibility is at the origin of many rebel movements," he said. Nielson added: "It is argued that military capability gives them a better chance of succeeding in their fight, and the EU must be ready to support them." Nielson said, "In Europe, the EU's role in the Balkans has often been seen as a failure, but in reality, it has been a success. The EU has played a crucial role in stabilising the region, and has helped to bring about a new era of peace and stability."

The Balkan states, which are still recovering from the conflict, have made significant progress in recent years. However, there are still challenges to be overcome. "To our partners, the EU has shown that it is committed to helping them build a brighter future," Nielson said. "We will continue to support them as they work towards achieving their goals."
The Penang River in the Washkaudah district.

SIOK SIAN PEK

In THIMPHU, the nomadic Brokpa yak herdsmen, inhabiting a remote area that is reached after driving across hills, away from the nearest watering holes. Instead, they migrate to pastureland in a small valley in Guna Dzong, at the foot of a Himalayan glacier in the north of the country, where they can now read ancient scriptures at night thanks to solar light. The monastery now has a computer, powered by solar electricity.

India’s scouts in the ever stronger Bhutanese appeal to the world to{

PENANG – The recent ethnic violence did not erupt in the upper-class, multi-ethnic residential area of Damansara near Kuala Lumpur, or in its trendy Bangsar neighbourhood with posh nightclubs and watering holes. Instead, Malaysia’s worst ethnic clashes since 1969, when violence erupted between Malays and Chinese Malaysians, broke out in some of the poorest areas just outside Kuala Lumpur. The clashes have been largely ignored as the country is exporting power. Ironically, rarely have the ethnic groups been so starved of electricity even as the country is exporting power. Bhutanese power officials are quick to point out that hydropower projects are in keeping with the country’s strong commitment to environmental conservation. Most of the projects are run-off-the-river hydroelectric projects and not dammed up in a reservoir. Bhutan is known for its thick forests, with 70 percent of the country under green cover.

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Hindustani, inhabiting a remote area that is reached after driving across hills, away from the nearest watering holes. Instead, they migrate to pastureland in a small valley in Guna Dzong, at the foot of a Himalayan glacier in the north of the country, where they can now read ancient scriptures at night thanks to solar light. The monastery now has a computer, powered by solar electricity.

For several years now, some academics have been pointing to a growing underclass in Malaysian society, the result of an unbridled, lop-sided approach to “development”. During his 20-year tenure as prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad has pursued a model of heavy industrialisation, complete with towering skyscrapers, a glittering and impressive Foreign Investment Promotion Board. But he has neglected social security nets for the poor.

Three out of every four people define poverty in the country is problematic to struggle. With the official poverty line in peninsular or western Malaysia, where Kuala Lumpur is in, is 1997 was 460 ringgit ($121) a month for a household of four, is 6,600 ringgit, or 9 per cent overall in 1998 with urban poverty less than 5 per cent. But most households need a combined income of 8,400 ringgit ($2,357), to meet the demands of modern urban living, figure shows.

Some ethnic groups when poor are affected by unemployment, poverty.

The Malaysian government’s Resettlement Fund Scheme (URIS) was designed to provide a measure of income to displaced persons and their families. But the fund is underutilised and has not been effective in alleviating poverty. A report added. There have been rural poverty alleviation programmes, but few specific targets related to urban poverty, it noted.

Spending and low-income housing in Malaysia are congested, high-density areas. The spatial configuration of poverty in squatter areas are breeding grounds for gangs and drug addicts. There’s little space for weddings, funerals and other public functions. Tempers are easily frayed even among the same ethnic group when neighbours infringe into one another’s often un-declared private zones.

The Bhutanese, however, are the only group in the country which has been able to come together in the past and form a common front. The Bhutanese are one of the smallest ethnic groups in the country, but they have always been able to unite when necessary. The Bhutanese are also the only group that has never been forced to migrate to Malaysia or Singapore.

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Army against smuggling—maybe
Nepal Parch, 16 March

Finally it is not in the open that the government has always suppressed the actions and workings of public servants. Stating that there is unlimited and uncontrolled smuggling of goods along Nepal’s borders with India and China, the government has started deploying the army at these check points to monitor border crossing. Many of the provisions of the government proves that the bureaucracy has so far been very inactive. The army has posted the army at Birgunj and Tapovan borders. The Finance Minister will have overall command of these forces which will be used at discretion. Earlier, postsmugglers at most customs areas in the country were transferred when the finance minister changed. This has now stopped, but it is said that the army may not be the very effective underestimates against the Finance Minister. Although the army has been deployed, their hands are tied. This action of the government has bewildered black marketeers, but has received the support of all legitimate business people. In the initial stage, forces are being posted only at the Tapovan and Birgunj customs areas. Seventy soldiers have been posted at Birgunj and 30 at Tapovan. Army stations, latest forces personnel will be deployed at all the customs check points of the country. The Finance Ministry has expected to collect close to Rs 52 billion in the first six months of the current fiscal year in customs revenues, but was able to collect only Rs 23 billion. This is a shortfall of over 55 per cent. The army has been deployed for the purpose of revenue collection. The armed forces posted at the check points will examine all material entering the country. They will be allowed to carry out sudden inspections if anyone tries to obstruct their functioning, they are allowed to open fire. The catch is in carrying out all the above functions, they will have to get permission from the chief of police. So what actually happens is that the army will not be able to work independently. Their hands will always be tied by the customs, which are a civil authority. So, in most cases, work hand in glove with major political parties and business people.

Jajarkot’s terrible schools
Mabhisraya Yadav

Jana Aastha, 14 March

Are people in the army “people’s army”? The answer should be “no”, but it seems that personnel of the army are used as such, because of the greed of people in the army. “Are people in the army ‘people’s army’? The answer should be “no”, but it seems that personnel of the army are used as such, because of the greed of people in the army. “Are people in the army ‘people’s army’? The answer should be “no”, but it seems that personnel of the army are used as such, because of the greed of people in the army. “Are people in the army ‘people’s army’? The answer should be “no”, but it seems that personnel of the army are used as such, because of the greed of people in the army. “Are people in the army ‘people’s army’? The answer should be “no”, but it seems that personnel of the army are used as such, because of the greed of people in the army. “Are people in the army ‘people’s army’? 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ALOK TUMBHANGPHEY

The Valley is crawling with snooker and pool parlours filled with would-be and wannabe rulers of the game. And it’s not just within the Valley but the game has made its presence felt. From Namche to Tatopani the balls are rolling.

“There are snooker joints even in places like Namche where there aren’t any roads and the tables have to be carried up there,” says Rajan Bajracharya, joint secretary of the Billiards, Snooker and Pool Association of Nepal (BSPAN).

“This is a small town but the game and the pranksters have improved,” says Bajracharya. “But it’s kind of sad that every time a tournament happens we forget our impression that snooker, billiards and pool are a sport and not just a pastime.”

Billiard and snooker associations whose work has been tarnished by commercial charges of corruption, the BSPAN has a cleaner image. To be sure, the financial stakes are not very high, but given the limited resources of the Association, the members’ attempt to promote the game is more than dedication than the promise of wealth. Their efforts are paying off, and there are a host of private companies willing to sponsor championships and tournaments.

The new governing body of the BSPAN, with industrialist Suraj Bajracharya as president, was elected two years ago. In this short time, the Association has already organised four major tournaments, all sponsored by private companies like Surya Tobacco, Carbberg, Toyota and San Miguel. These tournaments are very popular, and the bigger the cash prize offered by the sponsors, the greater the excitement. At the Surya Nepal Snooker Challenge that ended last Saturday, Rajan Lama of Chorten Snooker, Bandhu and Tabi, Wangchuk of Heaven’s Snooker also in Bandhu, played out a game that had the packed hall at Cosmos Solarium in Tripureswor resonating with oohs and aahs. Rajan defeated Wangchuk 7-4 in the eleventh frame in a set of thirteen games, and walked away with a trophy and cash prizes totalling Rs 62,000—Rs 17,000 for first place, and Rs 11,000 for the biggest break of 58 points. Llama bagged the Carbberg Snooker Championship last year on the same date. But there’s more to come. They have a 12-hour practice and parlours are usually open at least 12 hours a day. Even the markers who keep the points of each player and are responsible for each board make decent cash. “I make around Rs 400 a day in tips and I also have a monthly salary,” says Sona Thapa, a student who works as a marker during the day at Royal Snooker in Kamaladi.

People are making money, players are honing their skills and the increasing professionalism of the sport, snooker, like basketball, seems set to stay in Nepal. The BSPAN recently took four players to Bangladesh to participate in a tournament. The association plans to send at least one competitor to the Asian Snooker Tournament in June in Pakistan, and also organise a SAARC Snooker Championship next month.

“Right now we cannot expect much from our players when we take them abroad, but it will give them some exposure and help them in the game,” says Bajracharya of BSPAN.

The controversy that has dogged English coach Stephen Constantine, Nepal’s beloved football to a higher plane, is Coach Constantine—the national football team’s remarkable improvement is proof. Nepal football seemed to be going somewhere and now we’re back to ground zero. Constantine has resigned from his position as Nepal’s national coach. The shameful controversy surrounding the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA), fueled by an inefficient and, by some accounts, corrupt National Sports Council (NSC), has the English coach so disgusted and unsure of being allowed to do any good, that he quit last weekend.

Says Constantine: “I’ve been waiting for several months for ANFA to resolve the crisis but people seem more worried about their personal benefit than about the game.”

The controversy lost Nepal the chance to host the World Cup Group 6 preliminary matches. Instead, they’re being played in Iran and Kazakhstan. It also looks as if Nepal might not even get to play, being coach-less and subjected to the relentless pull and push of the Geeta Rana-Ganesh Thapa dispute. Where Nepal football will go is anyone’s guess, but few people are betting on the future. Football enthusiasts will miss the coach, and doubtful many are thinking: Shame on you, ANFA.

(Follow the trajectory of the scandals, mismanagement and allegations: see Rs13, 19, 26 and 32 for ANFA-related information, Rs25 for the state of the NSC, and Rs29 for a profile of Stephen Constantine.)
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Quickword 25
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8 Black bug (4)
9 Image, as a scale (4)
10 Sweet juice (3)
12 Mad scientist's home (30)
13 Young man with a hat (5)
15 Magi came, bearing those (5)
16 Expect, for sport (5)
17 Uncle Sam's bread ministry (4)
18 Beyond capacity (7)
19 Shrimp, its parts were down (4)
20 Better (4)
21 Teen girl (3)

Terms and conditions
1 The contest is open to everyone, except employees of Himalmedia Pvt Ltd and/or/and/or/and/Altare.
2 In case of a tie, the winner will be decided by lucky draw.
3 Entries have to reach Himalmedia, by 5 pm, Tuesday.
4 The winner will be announced in the coming issue.
5 The prize has to be collected from Himalmedia within a week of the announcement. Please call on 12.

The winners are...
Nepal’s justly famous Gorkhas are falling in number. They want to preserve their history, but it’s an uphill battle.

Gurkha memorabilia

Gurkhas shot to international prominence after the first and second world wars, but few people outside of Nepal are aware that their alliance with the British Army started a century earlier, during the conflicts of the last century in which Britain was involved. The Gurkhas have won 13 Victoria Crosses, the highest decoration for gallantry given by the British (another 13 have been awarded to British officers in the Gurkhas).

It is a legacy we’re proud of and it was rightly so that many current and former Gurkhas felt it was time to begin preserving their heritage. On 5 February 1995, during a reception at Kathmandu’s royal Nepal Academy for five Gurkha VC awardees—of whom only four are alive today—talk turned to this new reality and it was decided to set up the Gurkha Memorial Trust. “At this is a national asset, the government helped set up the museum by providing Rs 1 million,” recalls Captain Yeknarain Gurung, chairman of the museum. The museum has two small display rooms with memorabilia like medals, uniforms, hats, cap badges and badges from different regiments, all donated by Gurkhas from the British Army, the Singapore Police, the Indian Army, the Assam Rifles and the Royal Nepali Army. The items are in simple display cabinets, with the medals occupying centrestage.

There are old journals and diaries written by Gurkhas from all over the world, and the museum even has a small library with regimental magazines and books. Much of the collection provides a sense of the history of the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles regiments (disbanded in 1994 to form the Royal Gurkha Rifles), which provided the impetus for the museum. The museum has received three loads of contributions from the Gurkha Museum in the UK. The curator of that museum, Brigadier Christopher Bullock, is an Honorary Adviser to Nepal’s Gurkha Museum, and officials here hope he can help them solicit donations from the Imperial War Museum in Britain.

Nurturing the collection is a long-term effort, but there really won’t be space to display or store new contributions appropriately, not in the flat it occupies at present. The museum committee is on the lookout for a better location—‘they want to start again, in a way, and build their own space.’ We haven’t had any success finding sites in Kathmandu, and now we’re looking at Pokhara instead,” says Major Yambahadar Gurung. “Pokhara is better—there are fewer tourists there, so the Gurkha Museum would be a good addition, and could perhaps generate much-needed income.”

Dhurankar is another possibility. That might be a good move given that there is a better chance of getting government land in Dhurankar or Pokhara than in ever-crowded Kathmandu. For now, Pokhara would make more sense because of the number of tourists visiting. The chairman of the Pokhara Tourism Development Committee has already applied for permission to allow the project to proceed, and has even allocated land.

The museum hasn’t been designed yet; the consensus seems to be that it should be a simple and tasteful construction in the Nepali style. The museum has been budgeted to cost £500,000 for the first four years, and gradually become sustainable on entrance fees and gift-shop merchandising after that. There is a possibility that the Gurkha memorabilia could be housed in the existing Pokhara Museum, but it’s falling apart and is badly maintained. It may not be a bad idea to upgrade the existing facilities instead of building a new museum from scratch. New parking space, two museum galleries, a souvenir shop, a presentation room, a restaurant, offices and toilets could be added. The plans are heartening, but they’re a long way from fruition, given the financial situation of the project. In addition to the fund-risers in the capital, the museum plan to stage a Gurkha cultural show in Pokhara mid-year, and also raise funds overseas.

“We’d welcome serving and retired officers and soldiers to visit the museum, but visits by plenty of tourists would spread the word about the Gurkhas. If we can find a suitable site, we could generate enough income from entry fees to pay for the running of the museum. Government grants can’t be relied upon.”

These plans will probably work out, but it’s best to go and check out the museum while it’s still in Lainchaur. And if you like it, go to a fundraising event. It can only get better.

Gurkha Museum, Lainchaur: 422910

HAPPENINGS

DIGANT GURUNG

Gurkhas shot to international prominence after the first and second world wars, but few people outside of Nepal are aware that their alliance with the British Army started a century earlier, during the conflicts of the last century in which Britain was involved. The Gurkhas have won 13 Victoria Crosses, the highest decoration for gallantry given by the British (another 13 have been awarded to British officers in the Gurkhas). After a particularly fierce engagement in which General Amne Singh Thapa was defeated, the British command offered Amne Singh’s men service in their company. Since then the Gurkhas have fought alongside the British Army in most of the major conflicts of the last century in which Britain was involved. The Gurkhas have won 13 Victoria Crosses, the highest decoration for gallantry given by the British (another 13 have been awarded to British officers in the Gurkhas).

It is a legacy we’re proud of and it was rightly so that many current and former Gurkhas felt it was time to begin preserving their heritage. On 5 February 1995, during a reception at Kathmandu’s Royal Nepal Academy for five Gurkha VC awardees—of whom only four are alive today—talk turned to this new reality and it was decided to set up the Gurkha Memorial Trust. “At this is a national asset, the government helped set up the museum by providing Rs 1 million,” recalls Captain Yeknarain Gurung, chairman of the museum. The museum has two small display rooms with memorabilia like medals, uniforms, hats, cap badges and badges from different regiments, all donated by Gurkhas from the British Army, the Singapore Police, the Indian Army, the Assam Rifles and the Royal Nepali Army. The items are in simple display cabinets, with the medals occupying centrestage. There are old journals and diaries written by Gurkhas from all over the world, and the museum even has a small library with regimental magazines and books. Much of the collection provides a sense of the history of the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles regiments (disbanded in 1994 to form the Royal Gurkha Rifles), which provided the impetus for the museum. The museum has received three loads of contributions from the Gurkha Museum in the UK. The curator of that museum, Brigadier Christopher Bullock, is an Honorary Adviser to Nepal’s Gurkha Museum, and officials here hope he can help them solicit donations from the Imperial War Museum in Britain.

Nurturing the collection is a long-term effort, but there really won’t be space to display or store new contributions appropriately, not in the flat it occupies at present. The museum committee is on the lookout for a better location—‘they want to start again, in a way, and build their own space.’ We haven’t had any success finding sites in Kathmandu, and now we’re looking at Pokhara instead,” says Major Yambahadar Gurung. “Pokhara is better—there are fewer tourists there, so the Gurkha Museum would be a good addition, and could perhaps generate much-needed income.”

Dhurankar is another possibility. That might be a good move given that there is a better chance of getting government land in Dhurankar or Pokhara than in ever-crowded Kathmandu. For now, Pokhara would make more sense because of the number of tourists visiting. The chairman of the Pokhara Tourism Development Committee has already applied for permission to allow the project to proceed, and has even allocated land.

The museum hasn’t been designed yet; the consensus seems to be that it should be a simple and tasteful construction in the Nepali style. The museum has been budgeted to cost £500,000 for the first four years, and gradually become sustainable on entrance fees and gift-shop merchandising after that. There is a possibility that the Gurkha memorabilia could be housed in the existing Pokhara Museum, but it’s falling apart and is badly maintained. It may not be a bad idea to upgrade the existing facilities instead of building a new museum from scratch. New parking space, two museum galleries, a souvenir shop, a presentation room, a restaurant, offices and toilets could be added. The plans are heartening, but they’re a long way from fruition, given the financial situation of the project. In addition to the fund-risers in the capital, the museum plan to stage a Gurkha cultural show in Pokhara mid-year, and also raise funds overseas.

“We’d welcome serving and retired officers and soldiers to visit the museum, but visits by plenty of tourists would spread the word about the Gurkhas. If we can find a suitable site, we could generate enough income from entry fees to pay for the running of the museum. Government grants can’t be relied upon.”

These plans will probably work out, but it’s best to go and check out the museum while it’s still in Lainchaur. And if you like it, go to a fundraising event. It can only get better.

Gurkha Museum, Lainchaur: 422910
n efforts to gird up our lions, roll up in the ring and doubly redouble our operandi. We must throw our hats facto we cannot sit idly by and let hoping to hear is “no”, and ipso be governed? The answer I am about not allowing this country to bodyguards down.

Are we or are we not serious about not allowing this country to be governed? The answer I am about not allowing this country to bodyguards down. And to stay ahead of the

all over our landlocked Himalayan kingdom took part in this important event which, RSS reports, was presided over by the Central President of Reiyukai Nepal, who told participants, and I quote: “The 21st Century is the age of Joint Efforts.”

But, seriously, even though the news report does not give away the punchline of the winning candidates, we have some delayed reports trickling in from Pokhara that the winning wisecrack in the chicken category was awarded to: “Q: Why did the chicken cross the road? A: To show his girlfriend he had guts.” Nyahahahahahaha.

Coming a close second in the revolving door round was: “Q: What happened to the couple that met in a revolving door? A: They

At this juncture, we must take note of the commendable efforts put in by ungovernmental organisations like the Gaaganganda branch of Reiyukai Nepal which, according to an RSS report printed in The Rising Nepal on 19 March, held the first-ever All-Nepal Jokes Competition this week in Pokhara on the occasion of the 56th Auspicious Birthday of His Majesty the King. Twenty-seven jokes from

Jokes for all by 2020

Jokes contest in Pokhara

The popular folk song Rato Baha Kyaya Kyaya may not be a favourite among today’s MTV generation in Nepal. And few today might remember that it was performed by musician Arjun Chainpure. A madal player and singer, Arjun’s rendition of the folk song gave it a new popularity. “We early musicians had dreams. We were motivated to keep alive the folk traditions,” says the 40-year-old percussionist/singer who earns his livelihood selling musical instruments from his shop in Thamel. “In this age, the madal, sarangi and the panchar baja don’t play too well. They weep,” he says.

Arjun Chainpure was born Arjun Shrestha in Chainpur in eastern Nepal. He started playing music at 14, a year after he left home for Kathmandu. “My first jagir was at the Sanskritik Sansthan as a madal player in 1974,” he recalls. “I really had a hard time because I did not know the art of chakari,” he says about not being able to butter the bosses at the “Cultural Corporation”. Chainpure considers himself lucky to be finally doing what he set out to do—play folk music, teach others and tour the world. Chainpure venerates the likes of Ambar Gurung, Gopal Yonzon, Narayan Gopal, Hari Bhakta Katwal, Bhupe Sherchan and Nagendra Thapa. “But ultimately, I respect every musician who can see beyond greed, jealousy and the ego,” he says.

Chainpure is thrilled to play for visitors in his shop who come to marvel at his collection of Nepali percussion instruments, sharing space with the African djembes, subcontinental instruments like the dholak and mridangam, damaru, sitar, guitar, didgeridoo, and singing bowls. A fairly large number of tourists take time off during their stay here to take lessons from the madal maestro. You might wonder why he never takes off his shades—we don’t know either. There is something he doesn’t want to remember concerning his left eye. As with many early Nepali musicians, who made a name for themselves through sheer devotion and sincerity, Chainpure struggled to find his place. “But it all paid off. With effort and the company of my madal, I have travelled all over the world. His album, Rhythms of Nepal, instructs one on the intricacies of playing the madal while the forthcoming Nepali Jharna Jyoti is fusion—percussion beats of ethnic instrument from Africa to the high mountains of Nepal. And his parting shot: “I am a rich man because I have many friends. Friendship is my faith, music my soul.” All we can add to that is: Dhinkang! ♦

For more on Chainpure, visit: <www.thamel.com/affiliates/96.htm>