**More guns**

The Royal Nepal Army is in the market for 50,000 new assault rifles for its troops over the next five years. The deal is worth $10 million and several manufacturers have been here for demos. Sources say the top brass is leaning towards the G36 made by German company, Heckler & Koch. The G-36s are highly sophisticated and built for city and forest environments, but are untested in Nepali terrain and climes. The army uses on peacekeeping duties abroad, Israel's Galils and which the army uses in the mid-1970s. The army is clearly reluctant to turn to a new rifle without a clear chain of command, rules of engagement and realistic goals.

Behind all this is the larger polarization of those who support parliamentary democracy, and those who feel the country is in a mess and the time has come to restore strong rule. This is how this latest round unfolded: 27 April: The Maoist massacre 70 policemen in the central district. The police chief says he has tightened it on him as an extra. 9 April: Kotahra calls his party and generals support for mobilizing "all" security forces to tackle the Maoists. The NSC holds a series of meetings to assess the situation. 11 April: King Birendra hosts a court with a group of ministers, generals, the army and police chiefs and discuss the pros and cons of the government's plan to use the army. 22 April: King Birendra likes the plan to partially deploy the army to deliver a hearts- and-minds programme in the eastern districts hit hardest by the insurgency. Ordinances for regional administrators and a paramilitary force were promulgated. 30 April: Commander-in-chief Prem Jirka Rana makes a controversial speech in Tokha saying the army will be involved if there is a unity among political parties. The government's plan is to tackle the main opposition UML, and it doesn't like the hearts-and-minds plan. So this is where we stand a military solution to the monarchy is not listening to an elected government to tackle an insurgency that seeks to topple parliamentary democracy. The government is putting into practice a plan fashioned after the US Army's Vietnam era counter-insurgency strategy known by its acronym IDEAD—the Integrated Security and Development Plan (ISDP). Prime Minister Girija Koirala has given the ISDP up and running since December, and got the backing of the king only after the last visit by the Maoists. The Rs 400 million plan would build roads, carry out development work in Maoist areas, and be protected by a 10,000-strong Army deployment headquartered in Subit. It took a long meeting on 11 April at the Royal Palace of ministers, government officials and security chiefs to convince King Birendra that the ISDP was the most desirable plan. According to some officials present, the king listened attentively to the briefing, and had some tough questions on the "total picture" before giving the plan his official nod. A top government source explained: "The basic idea is to use the army to defend positions and create space for government, political parties and NGOs to go back and work to win back the people with serious development work."

The army has already begun planning deployment in six mid-western districts and Gorkha, even as the skirmishes continue in Kathmandu's corridors of power. Meanwhile, the army's top brass has been downplaying the C-in-C's Tokha speech, calling it "media exaggeration" and "political overreaction.

One senior army official told us: "All we were trying to say was that we have to be clear about the chain of command, we have to be sure the people are on our side. Because bringing the army out of the barracks is a last resort, it can't fail." But the early controversy does not bode well for the ISDP. The government's plan has not been sought out to the army's liking, and the opposition UML and a coalition of left parties has declined to even discuss the ISDP. "The Maoist problem is mainly a political one and maximum efforts should be made to resolve it through dialogue. The Masons have also said they will come to talks, but don't want the prime minister. He has failed in the trust of anyone," says Madhur Nepal, UML general secretary.

The ISDP is said to detail a week-by-week plan of action on how the process should move. Meanwhile, the army has also been preparing its scenarios, operating up its two battalions trained in jungle warfare, and deploying weaponry. Military sources told us that the Maoists' strengths and strategies are being studied, and the army has drawn up a plan to locate hideouts and camps. Said one source: "We will not call them 'enemy', they are Nepalis and the idea will be to put pressure on them to give up arms and come to the negotiating table."
Something rotten

Something is definitely rotten in the state of Nepal. Our erstwhile warriors of democracy have wasted 12 precious years quibbling about who gets to be on top bunk, making people more and more disenfranchised with this thing called democracy, feeding frustrations on which the Maoists have shrewdly cashed in with some classic grassroots mobilising and periodic senseless slaughter, and with a little bit of help from like-minded friends from the right the Maoists are on the verge of throwing parliamentary democracy into the dustbin of history. That is the story so far.

A year ago, this could have been termed alarmist, but not anymore. The country and people are in danger of regressing by a decade. Meanwhile, even when they are faced with the prospect of systemic erasure, our political parties haven’t stopped playing games. There they go, bickering over power which will give them the opportunity to top up their war chests for next year’s local elections. After the last bout of blood-letting in Rukumkot and Rumaune, you would have thought they would have learnt their lessons and agreed on some fundamentals. But no, it was too much to expect from these visionless, self-centered ostriches. The Nepali Congress has shown some signs of squirming out of its alabaster, but dragged down by a year of lethargy, forward movement is slow. The majority party in Parliament has the stature and moral standing of a toothless lion.

The plot has thickened. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala brought the party into a huddle and announced a Plan. He put it to a cabinet meeting which the Army and Police chiefs also attended, and approved the Integrated Security and Development Plan (ISDP). He then took the whole group over to the royal palace to meet King Birendra. The broad outline about the rules of engagement for this army-supervised hearts-and-minds programme seemed to have been reached. But then a day later in Tokha, the C-in-C backtracks. Now, now, says he, let’s not get carried away here. Addressing cadets in this former sanatorium, he lectured Nepal’s civil political bosses on the need for the unity. Without a political consensus, he said, the boys would stay in their barracks. There has been an uproar in the media and unity. Without a political consensus, he said, the boys would stay in their barracks. There has been an uproar in the media and

Another one has any illusions: even if it finally gets off the ground, the ISDP is just a band-aid to stop a haemorrhage. So, and here we are back at the fundamental question which is what has given the Maoists such an edge: Which darbar controls the army, Raj or Maoists such an edge: Which darbar controls the army, Raj or Maoists? The Maoist leadership: Do you want to rule over a nation

Domestic Conflict and the Crisis of Governance in Nepal

The third book in the so-called Atmabrittanta series delves into what ails our democracy, the history of civilisation could be written in terms of the kinds of containers that were used. The history of civilisation could be written in terms of the kinds of containers that were used. In separate chapters, the book delves into what all those democracy, the shortcomings of feudal institutions, and the fatal flaws of our elite. The book then peers at exact and possible conflicts insurgency, ethnicity, minority politics, economic dependency, resource rights, and geo-political compulsions of an urbanisation that flows as a Newar culture

With our conscience.

The Ancient Settlements of the Kathmandu Valley

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Kathmandu Valley's flowered as Newar society of kings and prelates, soldiers and pages, servants, tradesmen and artisans.

A first-hand account of an epoch by its between the forces of a discredited democratic leadership with a

discarded autocratic leadership. The Maoists are waiting in the hills beyond the Valley rim to take on the victor, as their leadership made clear in Sindhupalchok this week. Of unsolicited advice to the army, the present government may be lousy, but it was elected by the people and it holds your bills. So if the government says go, you go. To the government and opposition: you fellows have not been able to inspire confidence in the army, which is the institution of last resort. So get to it.

To the Maoist leadership: Do you want to rule over a nation fragmented and ruined by war? If not, this is the time to join the mainstream and convert your bullets into ballots.
**The reasons behind the chronic political instability in Nepal may not be solely internal.**

Everyone now agrees that Nepal’s current political situation is alarmingly complicated and getting out of hand. What people don’t agree on is the cause for this. Some find fault with the constitution, others blame the expensive process of elections, still others argue for the direct election of the prime minister with a fixed tenure, and they blame the current deterioration on the lack of a visionary prime minister. There are visible and invisible reasons for the current political instability. Nepal has had the basic infrastructure of state, but it seems to be an obstacle for the politicians who have been elected at enormous cost to lead the nation seem to have lost their way. They may have abandoned the job the people entrusted them with, and they have become like captive agents to further destabilise and manipulate. They may have abandoned the job the people entrusted them with, and they have become like captive agents to further destabilise and manipulate. The constitution envisages a prime minister with the powers to provide a democratically strong government. But by an authoritarian interpretation, he has been turned into a shutcock at the mercy of a Muslim majoritarian policy. The result: we have had seven prime ministers in five years. There is a crisis of confidence in the system. The foreign policy of a country is measured by its stability and the security arrangements. If it is not seen that kind of propaganda gets place in the Indian media. It is clear that Nepal has now become the target of Indian propaganda at par with Pakistan. It is logical to infer that by spreading such propaganda among the Indian public, it will be easier to implement certain designs against the people of Nepal. Unbeknownst, Nepal has been engulfed in a cold war-like situation between its neighbours. Indifference to the crisis may prove to be very costly for us. The historical peace which Nepal had enjoyed with both its neighbours vanished soon after China’s military control over Tibet. The reason for this is that China has since tried to involve Nepal under its security system. This is being forced through various overt and covert operations that have gone hand in hand with all-round instability and disorder within Nepal. Several historical documents and memoirs testify that every decision, political change, upheaval and overthrow of the government, have necessarily reflected the conflict between Nepal’s two big neighbours. Both India and China have pursued their policy regarding Nepal, not on the consideration of any particular political system, but their national interests.Communist in Nepal may not be to China’s strategic advantage. Similarly, even a self-declared pro-Indian democratic force in Nepal may not be considered by India to be in its security interests. Communists can be a good camouflage for covert operations and, pro-Indian elements or persons of Indian origin may be an useful cover to promote Chinese interests. For example, China may support the traditional institution of monarchy, but may not necessarily be for the king of Bhumt. Similarly, a democratic India may not give the kind of support it reserves for the king of Bhumt to do away with him. There, both powers compete against each other keeping their national interests on their minds, and this includes their policy towards Nepal. The reason behind the chronic political instability in Nepal may not be solely internal.

We have seen history change and in our own region that excessive militarisation hurts democracy. Small countries with armies have inherited armies, intelligence agencies and bureaucracies which were designed for protection of colonial rule. Preserving democracy has never been a part of their ethos. Democracy is preserved only when the army, and intelligence and bureaucracy remains under the control of a popularly elected civil leadership. India and Pakistan, separated at birth, have maintained their army for purposes of partition, are paying the price of their hostility to each other. Because of this, both countries, China has always considered a threat to Pakistan’s survival. Excessive militarisation due to this threat perception has put Pakistan under chronic military rule and forced the country to seek close alliance with China. This triangular rivalry has set off an arms race in the region. India’s extra-territorial militarisation followed the brief India-China border war in 1962. A country with world’s largest number of poor and illiterate people today is the biggest buyer of conventional arms. This has consequences for India’s politics. If there is any serious difference between the army and civilian leadership, the decision of the army seems to prevails. Its security apprehensions pervade all other considerations, and India’s security agencies have the last say. India has expanded and diversified its secret services to focus on various areas of a target country. A study by journalist Salamat Ali, points out that India has about a dozen intelligence agencies active in its neighbouring countries for dirty tricks and information gathering. The three wings of the military, and each state government have their own spies in neighboring countries who are unknown to each other. Despite covert operations including the Sri Lankan mini-adventure under Rajiv Gandhi, exporting terrorism and destabilising regimes has not abated, and are an indication that these activities are beyond the reach of a popularly accountable civil leadership. Soon after becoming prime minister in his present term, Girija Prasad Koirala complained that a foreign power had a hand in his election defeat on a conspiracy by RAW, and there have been allegations within India that the agency has been misused to destabilise internal political rivalry. A country with a tradition of democracy in this region is in a serious stage of metamorphosis from a liberal democracy to an aggressive military power. India is at the crossroads and it carries the fate of this country between civil rulers and military strategists. Nepal cannot remain unaffected by this crisis. Nepal has enough internal problems trying to plant the roots of an alien concept of democracy in adverse socio-economic soil. But our external challenges are much more serious, and may thwart our attempts at development and democracy. If there is no hostile treatment from its nearest neighbour, Nepal will be able to build democracy brick by brick. If civilisers cease control over India’s security apparatus, democracy may have a future in the region. On the other hand, if national security interests prevail, and the spoils are allowed to run wild, democracy in the region doesn’t stand a chance.

Ganesh Raj Sharma is a senior advocate.
Ruined by bureaucracy，corruption and humiliation to adopt Nepali babies

From one Alpha Male to another

The development business is murky, opaque and over generous to criticism.

They'll tell you emphatically, and truthfully, that things have improved vastly since the late ’80s when Hancock uncovered tawdry tales of cynicism，corruption and incompetence in the multilateral agencies.

The World Bank，for example，is doing great work in the field of public health，and，thanks to the campaign against the Arun III project in Nepal，steering clear of large dams. The Asian Development Bank is finding ways to fund infrastructure that involve locals and give them services they need quickly. However, in a country like Nepal，where aid and loans are so crucial to the country，there is still far too much unaccountability and lack of transparency. Much development money now goes towards encouraging good governance and peoples’ awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

But are similar standards applied to the internal activities of the agencies，and more crucially，are local people—nor just their elites—given the right to inspect budgets，assess impacts and choose what they want given the right to inspect budgets，assess impacts and choose what they want? Nepal’s own civil society，they probably had more problems understanding the phrase of the letter. It is unusual for the referring country to ask for a guarantee letter after the stringent screening process parents have been through，” says Tania，who is optimistic that the matter will soon be sorted out. Until then，it is a US State Department flier strongly advocating for adoptive parents to be allowed to pursue adoptions in Nepal until further notice. Says a prospective American adoptive parent，”We’ve been chasing Bal Mandir the summer before last.

There are plenty of people who want to adopt kids from Bal Mandir. However，bureaucratic frictions and pettiness on the part of the US and Nepalese governments have effectively prevented these children from being adopted by Americans.”

The procedure is already complicated，and unnecessary demandson like this one make people—particularly those who’ve had really
A child waits to find a family, Skeele, who runs "Children who need families," says. "To extend the safety net for adopted Nepali children, or are interested in adoption in Nepal, have an email group. Members are families interested in adoption in Nepal, have adopted Nepali children, or are thinking of adopting.

Skeele, a single parent, adopted Mimi privately four years ago when the child was fourteen months old. She adopted her second child, three-year-old Tsering, through Bid Grah last year. "To be approved as adoptive parents in the home country you go through hell. It's a very stringent process," she says. "It's always more emotional for parents who opt for adoption after trying to have their own kids." Skeele, who owns and manages a software development company in Nepal, is intent on dispelling misconceptions about foreign families adopting Nepali babies. "Sometimes adoption is misunderstood. Adoptive families are giving a child a home and not taking them to be servants as can often happen when a Nepali family takes in a child. People shouldn't apply their worldview to us," says Skeele. "Of course, there are international boundaries and the occasional story of molestation haven't helped!"

Bourke and Tsering call Skeele "mummy." Mimi's in contact with her birth family, "I prefer private adoption — maintain direct contact with the birth family — because I want my children to know their birth families. It is in the best interests of the child. Sometimes it is difficult tracing them through a home," says Skeele as she and Mimi look at pictures of Mimi's siblings and birth mother. "They're meeting them for a school project that Mimi has decided to present to her class," says Skeele. "There are many families who love Nepal, who have a bond with the country and given a choice would rather adopt from Nepal than China, Eastern Europe or Vietnam. Of course it would be ideal if the children were adopted by Nepali parents, but given Nepal's economic situation and the strong influence of the caste system, I don't see that happening."

Skeele probably holds the record of someone who adopted Mimi privately four years ago. "She was lucky, as were the others. Everyone is, and they most often don't give gifts. She made it clear that Americans didn't give gifts. Everything was clear, legitimate." She was lucky, as were the others. Everyone is, and they most often don't give gifts. Everything was clear, legitimate."

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Kathmandu 19 April calling for a cleaner environment. But their writ petition.

Dangerous study

Superintendent of Police Chuda Bahadur Shrestha ran into trouble when he chose the subject for his doctoral dissertation. For the last two years, SP Shrestha has been working on a thesis that analyses how the "People's War" waged by the Maoists can be managed by mobilising community. The police officer, who has worked on small number of cases, has also helped to curb the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summoned twice to the headquarters of Nepal's police force for his work towards curbing the trafficking of women, has already been summone...
Red star over Mt Everest?

There are two Nepals: the Nepal of glistening mountains and temples and wide-eyed tourists, and the Nepal that has never seen a doctor known never full stomach.

By BARBARA ADAMS

There are two Nepals: the Nepal of glistening mountains and temples and wide-eyed tourists, and the Nepal that has never seen a doctor known never full stomach.

The.pm's minister like Krishna Prasad Bhattarai or Sher Bahadur Deuba who are herding their own flock within the fold. At a lower rung, you can see people like Khum Bahadur Sherpa or Ganesh Prasad Poudel who are searching their car boot within the fold.

For a country that has had decades of bitter experience with multiparty and partyless politics, an evolution to a one-party system might turn out to be just what we need.

For a country that has had decades of bitter experience with multiparty and partyless politics, an evolution to a one-party system might turn out to be just what we need.
Development Bank Nepal (ADB/N) that used to power homes to set up turbine-powered food processors and induction generator combo was compact, known as the Peltric set. Akal Man’s pelton turbine and generator are very small, locally-made hydro units are lighting up villages. There are about 700 such systems now in operation in Nepal, and people power seems to be driving micro hydropower. A 1997 study on micro hydros by Prof. Frank Kapil found that most of the cost, after subsidies, was between Rs 6,000-15,000 per household. The power output is area- and river-dependent. An individual or farmer group who charge tariff based on the electricity used. “Very small villagers pay about Rs 25 a month for a 25 watt lamp, which is variable pay for kerosene for their Tulsa,” adds Shrestha. But there are problems slowing the march of the piece unavailability of start-up capital and inadequate support personnel for repair and maintenance, for example. Another major issue is the quality of the systems, says Desdemona Adhikari, coordinator of the Energy Sector Assistance Programme, funded by the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA). “After 25 years of doing micro hydros we think we need to have certain quality standards in place.”}

Tiny is even more beautiful

Very small, locally-made hydro units are lighting up villages. People power seems to be driving micro hydropower.

“I’m satisfied with what has happened”

Dipendra Purush Dhakal
**ECONOMIC SENSE**

**Shocking pejilence**

The bottom line is consistent, adequate power for consumers charged one of the highest tariffs in South and East Asia.

E very year, when quoting is in the air and summer is a mere whiff, we're nowhere near finding a solution. Businesses only seems to wake up only in times of crisis and after engaging in constructive efforts at all times to help the government come up with a rational power policy. The time has come to see if the totals add up. Numbers are important, but so is quality.

Power is a consumer item and consumers pay for quality. There has to be continuous supply at a certain frequency and voltage. If one has to invest in other back-up devices and rely on them for a significant part of the year, what's the point in spending money on a minimum frequency and meter rental? The tariff in the utility company like the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is based on the assumption that there will be uninterrupted power supply. If the company can’t deliver, there should be a penalty. The costs to the consumer from erratic supply and blackouts should be factored into the bills. NEA is proposing a hike in tariff while it ought to consider payments to consumers on account of disrupted power supply. Activist consumer forums must look at this closely.

Businesses only seems to wake up only in times of criticism of engaging in constructive efforts at all times to help the government come up with a rational power policy. The time has come to see if the totals add up. Numbers are important, but so is quality—businesses would do well to realise this.

An obvious answer is increasing the efficiency of the NEA. This could be done byunloadings the utility into separate generation, transmission and distribution units. We keep harping on this, but it needs to be done.

Reducing transmission and distribution losses alone can provide a good amount of additional power to combat the daily shortage. At the risk of sounding like a repetitive doer, I will say in this case also that we need to work out a long-term strategy. We've seen two big private sector project up and running. —clearly more are required. The time has come to see whether, experimentally at first, to be sure, distribution cannot be outsourced to private networks. The bottom line is adequate quality power for consumers charged one of the highest tariffs in South and East Asia.

Readers can post their views at artha@yahoocom.

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**BIZ NEWS**

**Industry losses**

From the initial three-hour daily power cuts, it is now up to six. We have been told that blackouts could stretch further if it does not snow or if the Himalayan snows don’t melt fast enough. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) says that daily daytime powercuts are inconvenient, they are preferable to load-shedding at night for security reasons.

There was no other option, but what is the fallout? NEA says it has been unable to supply over 54,000 units of electricity, but on the other hand it has to make “take or pay” payments to Independent Power Producers, whose bills will soar once it begins to rain and their production peaks. On the other extreme, some of NEA’s buys of bulk supply, mainly large industries and mom-and-pop stores and factories, are facing new cash flow problems because of work stoppage caused by power cuts. Losses may add up to billions of rupees.

What kind of losses are we talking about? Here’s an example: Between 26 March and 11 April, the Udye Nagarpal Cement Factory was shut down for 28 hours, leading to losses estimated at Rs 11 million. That means that for every hour without power supply, the factory lost Rs 411,000. The cement factory wrote to the NEA implying that supply be restored to previous levels to allow it to operate without disruptions. The factory’s worries were not limited to lowered production but also over the safety of equipment whose replacements, it said, are not available even in India and China. The NEA has made new arrangements to supply power in industrial districts and areas with industrial clusters from 8am to 5pm, but that will not solve problems facing industries located in cities and using power from the supply for households. The NEA has also asked industries to captive power supply and back-up systems to help it meet the present shortage by running their power supply systems from 6pm to 10pm.

**NEPALI ECONOMY**

Inflation, which remained at a low 3.5 percent in 2000, is expected to rise and reach 5.5 percent in 2001. This is because decline in food prices, mainly rice, would be offset by the price of non-food items that would reflect higher fuel costs. The bank also thinks the food prices, mainly rice, would be offset by the price of non-food items that would reflect higher fuel costs. The bank also thinks the

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**Ad war dogfights**

The Airline Operators Association of Nepal announced this week that it was suspending the membership of Buddha Airlines for putting out misleading information regarding their flights and services. The action followed a prolonged media campaign by Buddha Airlines that said their aircraft did not figure in the list of aircraft operated out by Flight International in their Ageing Airliner Census 2000.

The campaign was met with a disclaimer by Necon Airlines, which said their aircraft did not figure in the list either and urged customers not to be “led astray”.

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**ADB’s outlook**

The Asian Development Bank says Nepal’s economic growth rate this year could be in the range of 5 to 5.5 percent, lower than the 6.4 percent achieved last year. The forecast hinges on continued growth in agricultural production that grew by 5 percent, due mainly to a favourable monsoon and increased use of fertilisers. The Asian Development Outlook of the ADB also projects continued growth—albeit slow—for Asia as a whole, and faster growth in South Asia (5.8 percent). The ADB expects a slowdown in Nepal’s agricultural production and slower growth in manufacturing. While the ADB expects a slowdown in agricultural production, it still expects growth in industry and services. The action follows a prolonged media campaign by Buddha Airlines that said membership of Buddha Airlines for putting out misleading information regarding their flights and services.

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ARTHA BEED

#Nepali Economic

**27 APRIL - 3 MAY 2001 NEPAL TIMES**
The state of Royal Nepal Airlines always indicates the state of the country. And Nepal's condition is realised in the state of Royal Nepal. At present both are in a sorry state.

Royal Nepal has one of the best-trained and experienced pilots, engineers and managers. In recently a 6-year history, the airline has performed a small domestic airline into an international carrier. And for a brief period the airline was getting ready for take-off, but not long, it was bankrupt at a time when it had spent huge amount of money on a jet lease.

And when political appointees with large international airlines, it has hired every make of jet from just 35 to 15 days. By now, airline sources say, Royal Nepal has spent more than 150 million a month just on the Lauda 767. "If we retain both leased aircraft, the money will be wasted on the lease. And to save, you are not regarded as a politician, and so you are trapped, it can't cancel the lease agreement without big penalties. Says the official: 'I don't think anyone knows how to stop this. I doubt if anyone even wants to.'"

Royal Nepal has always been a source of bush funds for politicians. Where politicians have remained aloof, their relatives have walked away from the politicians, and the honest staff, and the police, and the ground staff in remote airports for flights are made in the airline's hangar in Kathmandu. It has earned the appellation: 'Lauda 767. If we retain both leased aircraft, the money will be wasted on the lease. And to save, you are not regarded as a politician, and so you are trapped, it can't cancel the lease agreement without big penalties. Says the official: 'I don't think anyone knows how to stop this. I doubt if anyone even wants to.'"

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Go on, massage your ego

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

There is no love like massage. Stop staring, now. It’s almost like associating massages only with sleazy back alley storefronts where furtive-eyed men go. Today, all sorts of people undergo a range of massage treatments for a variety of reasons—from generic stress to that nagging tug of the ankle that’s been bothering you for years. And if you think deep in your soul that this is make-believe nonsense, you have another think coming.

Many biomedical doctors are happy to have their patients use complementary medicine, as this is called—in the US and Europe, they work correspondingly with trained masseurs to treat people living with cancer and AIDS. But try getting a “holistic” lifestyle means more than just stepping over to the barber to have your back cracked or hanging out at a beauty salon with mud on your face. In the world of massage, as in life, things have got a little complicated—you must now be specific and find out whether it is aromatherapy that draws you in (which usually means a Swedish version). Where to begin? Yes, there are loads of massage parlours in town, especially in Thamel, that offer the relaxing pressures of Swedish massage or the rather interestingly painful Swedish version.

If you want a pro, a pro you can trust, there are professional therapists who not only will get you back cracked but also offer everything from herbal cures to hormonal balancing (just how this “hormonal balancing” is done is a matter of some debate and appears to encourage furtiveness). Most of the better masseuses and masseurs are women with just enough ideas to make their customer—usually male—feel good. The price is right and for as little as Rs 600 (and as much as Rs 2,000) per hour you’ll get all you want, and sometimes more than you asked for. Masseuses and masseurs at these places have handled the human body for years but, alas, their professional training is usually inversely proportionate to their experience. Chance are, you will feel relaxed and idiotic after one of these sessions, but few will ask you about your medical history or know too much about pressure points or connecting nerves—not much use for chronic ailments like a back or rheumatism.

If you want a spa, a pro you can get. Most work in five-star hotels, but their rates are surprisingly expensive. The Yak & Yeti Hotel, for example, charges Rs 1,571 for 40 minutes of Swedish massage or Rs 2,020 for an hour-long Thai massage. A Swedish massage at the Shangri-La will set you back Rs 674, and at the Everest Hotel, even less—Rs 561. Not very expensive, true, but terribly addictive.

If you’re serious about wanting to make such treatments a part of your life, it’s best to find someone like Denise Tomecko, a professionally trained masseuse from England who loves to massage. Tomecko describes herself as a therapist rather than a masseur, because all the work she does is related to purifying the body and soul. She even offers some of her more regular clients-counselling if they want it. Tomecko, who’s been doing such work for over twenty years, started out teaching yoga and meditation. She felt that it was just as necessary to heal the body and soul as it was to teach philosophy. She took courses designed by the International Therapists Exam Council and the British Registrar for Complementary Practitioners. She wishes others also received professional training, as the word “massage” is never a source of embarrassment or salacious smiles.

“Therapists are among the main problems in Kathmandu—a lack of professionally trained masseurs who know their subject.”

Tomecko’s favourite methods are aromatherapy and reflexology. Aromatherapy is the practice of using essential oils derived from different plants and herbs to heal the mind and the body. These volatile substances that evaporate easily, releasing their aroma, and each oil has a specific quality that has a corresponding effect on the human body. While aromatherapy uses the olfactory cells to trigger electrical energy sent to different parts of the body, reflexology is based on the principle that certain points on the hands, feet and ears correspond to the rest of the body through energy lines. These pressure points or “reflex points” when stimulated have a corresponding effect on the respective internal organs.

Beij Ram is another reflexologist practicing here. A graduate of the Technical University in Munich who also received pre-related training from Munich’s Naturschule School, Beij Ram has been practising the science in New York for the last two years. She is here because her association with reflexology began in another strange manner. She was trekking in the mountains about ten years ago, and a local woman gave her a foot chart and told a few people in German. Beij Ram, then a raving enthusiast, was intrigued and decided to find a different river, one that flowed inside the body. “There is no real proof that it really works but from my experience clients usually end up feeling better after a session,” she says.

Nepalis in general are deeply into holistic regimens, but sometimes people do feel better, and there’s little chance of the kind of side effects that allopathic drugs can pose, they’re attractive propositions. Take the case of Ram Beij, an Indian national working at the Vogue Inn Leisure Club in Kathmandu. From Gorkha, in Uttra Pradesh, this former metal welder chanced upon Arogya Mandir, a naturotherapy centre in Gorakhpur, and was hooked. He trained there to be a professional healer and eventually moved to Mumbai. Beij Ram claims to have worked on everybody who’s anybody—from cricket star Sachin Tendulkar to movie star Dharmendra. He snows in Kathmandu where he worked with all sorts of people. He says he’s even cured a woman after a paralytic stroke. “Twice this woman was paralysed and both times I cured her,” recalls Beij Ram. He’s a typical holistic healer, in some ways, he has not had much formal education, but he has had some training. “I believe in balancing everything so that one neither goes beyond the limit nor is left too far behind. If you can bring this balance you have a happy life,” says Beij Ram.

And that, really, is what massage and related complementary therapies are all about. Okay, perhaps, they’re also an insurmountable grid for the joke mill, but the effects they can have on a stressed-out life are far from funny. You can be rejuvenated and detoxified. What more can you ask for?
SUSAN KUROSAWA

and so there I was lying face-down in the sand, being pummelled, prodded and sat upon by an iron-fingered beach boy who, for a grand finale to his super-special-economy-deluxe massage (discount rate for beautiful ladies), ran up and down by spine slapping me with his grimy hand-towel and yelling, "Two tents! Two tents!" all of which was met with much amusement by onlookers who may well have thought he was ordering a couple of circus tents to accommodate the growing audience. In fact, he was saying, "Too tense! Too tense!" which is, of course, the mantra of masseurs and masseuses from the beaches of Bali to the sterile salons of Beverly Hills.

I have been massaged in many foreign parts. Of the globe, that is. It’s one of the great pleasures of a resort-style holiday to treat yourself to "the works". Which will variously be described as Royal Spa Treatment, Rejuvenation Therapy, Imperial Massage or, if you are in Chennai, India, in a back street near the Taj Coramandal Hotel, "Mr Chatterjee’s First-Class Fingers by Royal Appointment."

Promises will be made of unlocking the time-misted secrets of eternal youth and finely balanced yin and yang. "Exfoliation" will be uttered as a mystical password, an entrée to the stripping of not just dead skin but years of anxiety, tension and failed fake tans. As’s milk, papaya, pulp, avocado oil, honey from queen bees, lotus petals and heady herbs and spices will be involved. You will emerge smelling like just about anything you can imagine, from a mixed fruit salad to a giant dill pickle.

On the sandy shores of Goa, freelance beach masseurs offer ayurvedic massages which are bliss of a sort, especially with the character of the chap involved, could be far more sensual than mamash would necessarily want.

In a Dead Sea health club, you’ll be lathered with great lobs of viscous mud and left to lie on a stone slab like a marinated piece of meat. A matronly woman in a nurse’s uniform and plastic raincoat then appears with a watering can. If the mud has been left a mite too long and it’s started to set, she’ll call for a hose. Then you must grip the sides of the slab and hang on for dear life while she holds the mighty rubber serpent and comes at you as if you were on fire.

Weeks later, you realise you still have stray bits of mud about your person—nosed, ears, underarm creases, unmentionable crevices. The growth of the massage and aromatherapy business can be easily correlated with the stress of modern lifestyle. We have this ridiculous situation where half of us are doing the jobs of two people while the other half can’t even find a job for one person. That is, unless the under-employed become masseurs and set up shop to cater for the over-employed—a nice full circle of revenge, really. 

(Asia Pacific Business Traveller)
Can you see me?

The videophone is an important milestone in the history of telecommunications, but the challenge has long been to make a personal system that is cheap enough to tempt those early converts who drive widespread technological change. At the moment, the state-of-the-art model for personal and working purposes is the *Motion Media mm225 videophone*. This little beauty not only lets you speak to your callers you can also watch them do all those other things they do while talking on the phone—or, rather, it does if they have the same $1700 device as you do. Failing that, or until others catch up with you at the forefront of technological innovation, this videophone is hardly a white elephant. If connected to an ISDN line, it can be used to watch television programmes, films and sporting events, wherever you happen to be in the world.

Lights! Camera! Action!

Casio will give a whole new meaning to the word “watch” when it launches the next generation of wrist technology in July. The device includes a digital camera, allowing the wearer to store up to 100 images, display them on its 20mm x 20mm screen, or download them onto PC by infrared. Enough already? In just a decade, adds Casio, we’ll be wearing simultaneous conference and fingerprint recognition watches for security control. Oh, and for telling the time. $260 only.

Fast talker

The shape of phones to come might just look like the new *Trium Mondo*, released across Europe earlier this year. Actually a lightweight combination of mobile phone and Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), the Mondo weighs just 200g and offers 200 hours stand-by and up to three hours talking courtesy of a rechargeable lithium battery. The PDA uses the familiar Windows CE operating system and offers a watch and alarm clock as well as calculator, currency converter and three address books. The phone has a T9 directory for the fast composing of SMS messages and is pre-set for the upcoming GPRS technology.

GPRS is this year’s incomprehensible acronym from the mobile communications world. It is a non-voice service which enables information transfer up to 10 times faster than previously available on GSM (three times as quick as a standard land-line connection). The data is transmitted in separate “packets” and reassembled at the other end. Internet users will benefit from instant connections (no dial-up is necessary), giving the impression of always being connected. Users will require both a network and a device that supports GPRS (not ordinary GSM phones). The price depends on the contract and the supplier.

Night time is the right time

If you want night vision goggles (and frankly it is becoming increasingly difficult to think of a legal reason why you might), then you want the best. ITT Industries has supplied more than 70 percent of current US military stock and also provides the light-amplifying device of choice to the US police forces. Its *NightQuest 260* is matchless when it comes to tracking wildlife—as it should be, at $2,700. It uses light amplification rather than thermal technology and claims to boost vision on nights with just a silver of moonlight from 50 yards of visibility to 850 yards—in an eerie greenish glow. But be warned—you’ll need an export licence to comply with an international traffic in US arms regulation. Which, of course, only makes it more appealing.

Eye in the sky

Before remote planes become the norm, tiny spy ships are likely to lead the way in unmanned surveillance. The latest prototype measures just 15 cm across and weighs less than 60 g. The *Black Widow* surveillance device still manages a sizzling 70 km/h and has a flying time of around 15 minutes. Built by the Californian contractor AeroVironment, the disc-shaped micro-air vehicle (MAV) flies with the aid of battery-operated propellers. On board is a video camera weighing two gm. Controlled by remote, developers are close to devising a way for MAVs to operate autonomously. They also plan to fit them with navigation systems or sensors to sniff out radioactive materials, body heat or biological weapons. Price on demand.
Who threatens our identity?

PRAGUE - Identity and sovereignty are often discussed nowadays. But what do they actually mean? Both probably consist of feelings that a community can only be true if we can be without hindrance—in the sense that we derive in our own fate.

Today's talk about identity and sovereignty is often rather gloomy. Both are allegedly endangered by an EU that wishes to assimilate “us” as much as possible; by the European Commission with its standards; by the United Nations; by foreign capital; by Western ideologies; by Eastern mafias; by American corporations: they are marketed by citizens to fellow citizens. That is immensely contagious. But it is also blind pursuit of profit is not the invention of anything, but of time. True, the blind pursuit of profit is not the invention of anything, but of time. True, the

COMMENT

by VACLAV HAVEL

If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. If a nation's identity is jeopardised, it is placed in that position primarily from within by choice, neglect or negligence. 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If a nation's identity is jeopardy...
JONATHAN WATTS
claimed. On Friday, the mutilated bodies were badly charred and restrained in their response—and hundreds of Bangladeshi villagers made grim reading. In particular, one image shocked: that of a dead pole by Bangladeshi villagers across a shallow river. His hands and feet were tied with rope. On the dead man’s colleagues watched all 16 were cremated on a series of wooden pyres. Nine of them were so badly mutilated they could not be identified. The incident could have been expected to plunge relations between India and Bangladesh into turmoil. In fact, both Delhi and Dhaka have been remarkably restrained in their response—and have blamed the border skirmish on “local authoritarianism”. Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh’s prime minister, telephoned her Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee to express her “regret” at the deaths. What now seems clear is that Major-General Faxaul Rahman, the chief of the Bangladesh Rifles, deliberately orchestrated the skirmish. Bangladesh’s general election is only two or three months away. The country has been paralysed in recent months by a series of opposition-called strikes. It is little secret that General Rahman is not a friend of Sheikh Hasina’s. Like most of the Bangladesh military, Rahman’s allegiance appears to lie with the Bangladesh opposition leader Khaleda Zia, the widow of the former military ruler Ziaur Rahman. Since Sheikh Hasina was elected in 1996, the influence of Bangladesh’s generals who enjoyed unbridled power during 16 years of military rule has waned. They have privately opposed her policy of improving relations with India. Were Sheikh Hasina now to sack Gen Rahman, the opposition could parade him as a patriot who had the guts to stand up to Bangladesh’s overweening neighbour, sources in Delhi have suggested. As one Indian newspaper put it: “The military had been quietly preparing the ground for a major showdown using the classical route - India baiting.” The BNP (Khleda Zia party) in its supporting cas: are clearly trying to cash in on the deep divide in the Bangladeshi consciousness over India’s designs. The 2001 Bangladesh elections will decide if the play has worked.” The gruesome incident last week shows that Bangladesh’s armed forces are prepared to act in defiance of their political masters in Dhaka, a worrying trend. Back in 1975 the army assassinated Sheikh Hasina’s father Sheikh Mujibur, the country’s independence leader, together with most of his family. A long period of military rule followed. As Bangladesh prepares to go to the polls, following an exceptionally acrimonious pre-election campaign, could another coup be on the cards? (Guardian)
FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

"The bare facts of jet leasing"
Narayan Singh Pun, MP, Nepal Congress
Saptahik Bimarsa, 26 April

I have already mentioned earlier that I was associated with the aviation industry for more than two decades and therefore I know something about this industry. People already know about my experiences in this industry, in the air while I was flying, in the ground while I was working with a private firm. I got a chance to study the ways in which these deals were done and was at times myself a member of the committees formed to lease planes. It is on this basis, the basis of my experiences in the aviation industry, that I want to lay bare the actual facts concerning the whole Lauda Air issue.

The Royal Nepal Airline Corporation (RNAC) has been functioning for a long time and is a well administered corporation. The RNAC has played a major role in the national economy. It began in 1958 with only one Dakota and by 1960 had a fleet of 15 planes, which included four jets. At the present moment it has a total of nine planes. Of these nine planes, only two are jets and they fly international routes only.

Nepal is already established as a tourist destination in the international arena and the number of tourists is rising with the years. Air agreements have already been signed with 31 nations and more than 15 different airlines in our country. Qatar Airlines flies seven days a week using a wide-bodied jet. Thai Airlines flies a Boeing 777 seven days a week. Singapore Airlines, Transasia, Condor and Gulf Airlines all fly wide-bodied jets to this country, and this shows that Nepal has already established itself as a tourist spot on the world map. It can be seen that all these airlines are slowly increasing their flights to our country, while the RNAC, on the other hand, is slowly cutting down on the number of flights it offers because of a scarcity of planes. Actually the RNAC should be increasing its flights but it’s doing the opposite as said before, so they are not capable of buying its own planes, it will continue leasing them, like the one it has just leased from Lauda Air. If the planes that have just been leased flies according to the present schedule, then within 18 months it will generate a profit of Rs 650 million. If it flies direct to Osaka without stopping in Shanghai, then it will generate a profit of Rs 905 million. Statistics show that this jet carries a total of 258 passengers per trip, which translates into an increase of 65,000 passengers or tourists per year. If one tourist spends $500 during his stay, this means that $132.5 million dollars will be generated as revenue, which is a big amount. Let us not forget the indirect assistance and help this will provide to the nation and the national exchequer. Organisations that are associated with the tourism industry have understood this aspect of the deal and have therefore welcomed this lease happily and with open arms.

Now if we go into the technicalities of leasing a plane, then let me make clear that there are no clear cut rules, laws and regulations, neither with the government nor with the RNAC. From 1994 to 2000, the government has leased 19 times planes of various sizes with different companies—this means 19 agreements have already been signed during these seven years. All these leases were done through direct contract and not through a tender system. After the Chao Air scandal, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) recommended to the government that at the time of all leases should be done through a tender system. Following this recommendation, the cabinet passed directives to the concerned ministries and agencies. According to these directions, all companies that want to lease out their planes, put all their specifications on the Internet in months advance. Now if any government wants to lease a plane, it has to contact the different websites and directly finalize a deal with any company that gives it the best offer. Plane owners are not interested in anything that talks of tenders, guarantees and counter guarantees. It is because of this system, that although the RNAC called for tenders four times within the span of eight months, no one responded. It is only after this that the government decided to directly lease a jet from a private company. Everyone accuses the government of corruption in this case. They state that a cheaper jet was available, and ask why the government wants to lease a plane. The less any government wants to lease a plane, the less copy paste do the different websites and directly finalize a deal with any company that gives it the best offer. Plane owners are not interested in anything that talks of tenders, guarantees and counter guarantees.

The present government is and the two Maoist leaders have raised a lot of questions and suspicion in the minds of the people. This is mainly because of the basis of that meeting, what was discussed and what conclusions were reached have not been clarified. According to sources that are at the moment unavailable, recently, Ramsh Thari Pandey, the royal nominative to the Upper House from the Maoist party met with Prince Gyanendra recently. It has been stated that a very high ranking army officer was also present. It seems Pandey was the coordinator, the mediator.

"Why did members of the royal household meet Maoist leaders?" is the question everyone is asking. Both parties agreed to keep the issues discussed at the meeting a secret. This was given to the media.

What are members of the Maoist organisation very keen to meet with members of the royal family. Almost a month ago, members of the Maoist party met with Pandey, the royal nominative to the Upper House. The meeting of the Maoist and Pandey was a complete success. Now, after the successful meeting of Prince Gyanendra and the Maoist, there is more suspicion in the minds of the people.

At present both Prachanda and Bhattarai are in the capital. Rumour has it that they are meeting with different political leaders. Both Pandey and Bhattarai are in the capital. Rumour has it that they are meeting with different political leaders. Both Pandey and Bhattarai are in the capital. Rumour has it that they are meeting with different political leaders. It is public knowledge that Babu Ram Bhattarai and Prachanda of the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) have met many leaders of various political parties. Now it has come out in the open that two Maoist leaders also met Prince Gyanendra recently.

The meeting between the prince and the two Maoist leaders has raised a lot of questions and suspicion in the minds of the people. It is mainly because of the basis of that meeting, what was discussed and what conclusions were reached have not been clarified. According to sources that are at the moment unavailable, recently, Ramsh Thari Pandey, the royal nominative to the Upper House from the Maoist party met with Prince Gyanendra recently. It has been stated that a very high ranking army officer was also present. It seems Pandey was the coordinator, the mediator.

"Why did members of the royal household meet Maoist leaders?" is the question everyone is asking. Both parties agreed to keep the issues discussed at the meeting a secret. This was given to the media.
Jamaican, winner and gentleman

Courtney Walsh's brilliant test career comes to an end, in one of the most touching farewells ever in the game.

Courtney Walsh's final moments as a test cricketer will stay with him for the rest of his life. A Jamaican through and through, a winner and a gentleman, he was able to experience and indulge in all three pleasures as he helped West Indies to a 130-run victory over South Africa in the fifth and final test at Sabina Park this week.

When South African last man Paul Adams sliced a delivery from Steve Bucknor to part with the match ball and sprint towards Walsh and embrace and was immediately embraced by him. Walsh was hugged by every one of his team mates and then, left briefly gaping void created by Walsh's departure, leapt into his mentor's embracing arms,姬银 pregnant before his final match, the 38-year-old Walsh plans to take a complete rest for about six months before deciding where his future lies. “I spoke to Allan Donald six months before deciding where his future lies. “I spoke to Allan Donald months before deciding where his future lies. As Walsh finally reached the pavilion he was greeted by another guard of honour, team mates and South Africans alike lining up to applaud him as he made his way into the dressing room where he contemplated a couple of champagne straight from the bottle. Walsh said after the game. "When I broke the record (for most wickets) last year it was a tremendous occasion, I broke a record, we won the match and it was a series win as well. It was fantastic to finish it all here, on home turf, but that was probably a bit more special." Walsh said when asked about his favourite memory from a career spanning 132 tests in 17 years. Walsh thanked "everyone involved with West Indian cricket, from the very top to the very bottom, but most importantly the fans who have down through continuity and stuck with me and supported me through thick and thin."

The cheers were deafening. Walsh noted, too, the "good sportsmanship" of the South Africans who formed a guard of honour when he came out to bat for the last time on the fourth morning and joined the applause and back-slapping congratulations immediately the match ended. "To my own team mates, who have always given me their support through thick and thin, I want to thank you. You have answered the call for me in this test match...thank you." As promised before his final match, the 38-year-old Walsh plans to take a complete rest for about six months before deciding where his future lies. “I spoke to Allan Donald and recommended his six months off, put the feet up, play a little golf...I'm going to spend some time with the family at home, some time with my sun and daughter. I'm just going to refresh myself, exchange my batteries and then focus on the next stage of my life from here on in.” It's a credit to the nature and spirit of the man that no one seemed to be sad as he said goodbye.

Maybe it was because West Indies had won their first test in 14 attempts, but more likely the noise, the vibe and the unrestrained joy pulsating from the pavilion he was greeted by another guard of honour when he came out to bat for the last time on the fourth morning and joined the applause and back-slapping congratulations immediately the match ended. "To my own team mates, who have always given me their support through thick and thin, I want to thank you. You have answered the call for me in this test match...thank you.” As promised before his final match, the 38-year-old Walsh plans to take a complete rest for about six months before deciding where his future lies. “I spoke to Allan Donald and recommended his six months off, put the feet up, play a little golf...I'm going to spend some time with the family at home, some time with my sun and daughter. I'm just going to refresh myself, exchange my batteries and then focus on the next stage of my life from here on in.” It's a credit to the nature and spirit of the man that no one seemed to be sad as he said goodbye.

Courtney Walsh Factfile

1982: First-class debut for Jamaica.
1984: August - English county debut for Gloucestershire.
1989: 100th Test wicket against Australia, Sydney.
1990: Tries 200th Test match wicket against Pakistan in Bridgetown, Barbados.
1994: Appointed West Indies captain for India and New Zealand tours against Australia and New Zealand in Wellington. August - 300th Test wicket, sixth Test v England at the Oval.
1995: Named West Indies captain after Richardson resigns at the end of the World Cup.
1996: January - Sacked as captain after West Indies lose all three Tests on 1997 tour of Pakistan.
1997: March - Becomes first bowler in history to take 500 Test match wickets. April - On his home ground at Kingston, retires from international cricket after fifth Test against South Africa with 519 Test wickets.

Cosmic Air... every flight is a refreshing experience.

Pragya Raj Rajbhandari National President Nepal Jaycees

As the National President of Nepal Jaycees with 72 chapters all over Nepal, I have to travel quite frequently - sometimes on very short notice. Because of Cosmic Air's wide destination network and their energetic and courteous staff, I like to take their flight whenever possible. Every flight on Cosmic Air has been a refreshing experience.
I went to the famed Pashupati mystic Shivrula Baba, a jovial old man with a flowing beard who claimed to be 150 years old. He remembered Queen Victoria being crowned empress of India, and had seen the first train in India.

Today, Pashupatinath is a twostored pagoda temple with heavily gilded roof, heavy silver doors that are closed to non-Hindus, and is the centre of vast conglomeration of temples, shrines, dharamshallas, burning and bathing ghats held together by an aura of religious fervour and the smoke from funeral pyres. The windows of even the humblest dharamshalla are ornamented with wasp-waist deities and intricate floral designs. Temple spires writhe with golden serpents, and on two of the platforms on which they stand, termites have eaten through the temples, shrines, and intricate floral designs. Temple spires writhe with golden serpents, and on two of the platforms on which they stand, termites have eaten through them. Pashupatinath more brightly than the full moon at night, scattering pilgrims, along the ghats, across the river, up and down stairs through the temples, feasting off votive offerings and sometimes exploding into flames.

The light of many suns shining through by termites.

In the beginning, when gods walked the valley of Kathmandu, there was a mound where the temple now stands, and to it daily came a cow to offer her milk. A bewildered cowherd tentatively begins. Pashupatinath, however small the original shrine, was there when the first settlers raised a picturesque town of wood and mud about it on the banks of the sacred Bagmati. The earliest remains are Licchavi, from AD 500 to 1000. Licchavi rulers were in close relationship with Gupta India, so Sanskrit was the court language with a growing interest in Hindustani. Chinese representatives of the time, visiting the Kathmandu valley, described the fabulous court, carved and ornamented with pearls and gems, as being near the holy temple of Pashupatinath, where the king daily worshipped the deity that protected him. Long before, when the Mauryan king Ashoka visited the valley, he married his daughter Charamati to a local prince and founded the city of Dharapani, close to the most sacred shrine. In the fourteenth century the temple was shrouded by the invincible army of Chyga and Tagyl; three hundred years later it was eaten through by termites.

I proclaimed unnaturally loudly in my ‘I'm from the Netherlands.’ He was most definitely not amused. "And you have made a great effort and sacrificed your red hat is beautiful,” I said again, but this time he was not unduly concerned. "Your red hat is beautiful," I said again, but this time he was not unduly concerned. "You have made a great effort and sacrificed

Dharamshalla, burning and bathing ghats held together by an aura of religious fervour and the smoke from funeral pyres. Temple spires writhe with golden serpents, and on two of the platforms on which they stand, termites have eaten through them. Pashupatinath more brightly than the full moon at night, scattering pilgrims, along the ghats, across the river, up and down stairs through the temples, feasting off votive offerings and sometimes exploding into flames.
BOOKWORM


Weather, the Texas climber who survived the 1996 Everest disaster and who Jon Krakauer wrote about in In The Room, with his whole story. Left for dead, he staggered back to Camp Four with no food, no shelter, his companion thought he would make it. He began descending bodily, and Malan KC could carry out what was then the highest helicopter rescue ever attempted.


This guide, part of the Gobobette Adventure Guide Trekking and Climbing in Nepal series, is aimed at trekkers and climbers at all levels of experience. It includes detailed original cartography, strip maps and topographical photographs of 12 climbing peaks. The 25 routes range from Nup la to Kang in the east, classic treks to newly charted expedition-style routes. It includes a discussion on trekking and climbing style, mountain photography and local ecological concerns.


The great climber Messner pays tribute to Maurice Herzog’s pioneering summit of Annapurna 50 years ago. But for the first time the “Death Zone” — above 8,000m — did not highlight the most exciting and significant achievements on the Annapurna since 1950, including climbs by Chris Bonington, Erhard Loretan and others.


Every mountaineer dreams of climbing all Seven Summits — Everest, Aconcagua, South America; McKinley/ North America; Kilimanjaro/ Africa; Elbrus/ Europe; the Fourteeners, Antarctica; Mount Everest/ Australia, Kawasaki/ Australia. Either Bied doesn’t say which of the last two should be the seventh summit, but includes both. The book has information on each summit, with illness, essays and comments.

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

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Different Strokes

If, after viewing the show, you shut your eyes, the colours and forms are imprinted, as Nabokov’s Humbert said of his muse, on the inside of your eyelids. The basic colours people have incorporated in their culture and lifestyle are intriguing,” says the peripatetic artist who, in between his extensive travels, spends a few months in his native United States and in Prague, where he is based. “Kathmandu for me is vibrant and life-giving, like a laser show projected against the night sky. I consider the projection of every innermost feeling, even death, as pure beauty,” he says.

Breiman has been working exclusively with reverse image painting since 1981. Basically, the image is first painted on to the back of the Plexiglas, and worked from the foreground to the background to enhance depth and texture. The spluttering of colours in Faces of Shakti gives a dynamism to the texture, while the undulating lines in Nag are the geometric patterns in Yeats’s poetry. “I try and avoid the matches that every human carries. I observe faces wherever I go. Faces are my subjects,” says Breiman of his unique perspective on human visages. He dims them or exaggerates them to reflect the influence their surroundings have on them.

Occasionally, this requires a departure from rich, deep colours. “I like white. It is very pure,” he admits. In the collection of 31 paintings currently on show at Indigo Art Gallery, there are sparkling tints in The Guardians. And, that is at the core of what one takes away from the show: the colours Breiman uses together with his lines delineate figures, particularly, in Ishwar, Kachchhi Pilgrim and Devotee, that are unforgettable. If, after viewing the show, you shut your eyes, the colours and forms are imprinted, as Nabokov’s Humbert said of his muse, on the inside of your eyelids.

Nepal Vision II: Paintings by Roy Breimon and Václav Pívejc. Until 29 May. Timings: 8am-6pm daily. Indigo Gallery, Naxal. #413880
Here is the daily weather report. Roughly speaking, there may be some chances of partly cloudiness here and there in isolated parts of the kingdom in the next 24 hours or so approximately. Or there may be not. Let’s face it no one really knows. In fact, there is a fat chance that strong storms will make the not-so-isolated parts of the kingdom as well, but we can’t say that because this is a government-controlled weather report, and we have made it a habit to err on the side of caution. But what we can say with some degrees (between 30-32 Celsius maximum and 10-12 Celsius minimum) of certainty is that the temperature on the streets of Kathmandu will rise as a result of a high-pressure system bringing a lot of hot air from a system bringing a lot of moisture-laden clouds in the Himalaya.

Meanwhile, across the Himalaya, monsoon’s showers that could bring some welcome relief are stuck in moisture-laden clouds here-and-there in isolated parts of the vicinity which certain large country is experiencing. There may be not. Let’s face it: no one really knows. In certainty is that the temperature on the streets of Kathmandu will rise as a result of a high-pressure system bringing a lot of hot air from a system bringing a lot of moisture-laden clouds in the Himalaya.

The Minister of Culture and Agriculture has stressed the role of media in the under-development of the country. Speaking at the inauguration of the All-Nepal Non-working Journalists’ Society (Counter-revolutionary) he said: “Journalists should try not to make anything up. But if they want to, they should check with me first.”

The executive committee of the Nepal chapter of the International Union of Parliamentarians Who Boycott Parliament but Still Collect Their Daily Allowances (ICPWBPCDA) held a meeting in Singhda Durbar this week. The meeting was presided over by the parliament party’s Chief Whipping Boy, who demanded a CIR inquiry into the detensioning-quality of the samosas served during executive committee meetings.

The meeting also prepared a strategy. White Paper to be presented by a 14-member Nepal delegation attending the NCPWPCDA World Congress to be held in Acapulco which this year has the theme: “Case Studies of Effective Methods to Bring the House Down.”

The World Meteorology Day Celebration Main Committee held its preparatory meeting today and decided to celebrate World Meteorology Day in a grand manner by hosting various programmes, walkathons and talksathons. A sub-committee under the Chairmanship of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is organizing a special prayer vigil to draw up a petition to Lord Indra to ensure a hale and hearty monsoon this year so that things will be generally unfair throughout the kingdom.

Mainly unfair throughout the kingdom

AMBULANCE

What is a German fire truck and ambulance doing crossing into Nepal from India? Well, they have traveled overland all the way from Germany, and are part of a campaign by a Nepal neurosurgeon and his wife to upgrade emergency equipment in Nepal. Bhawani Narishma Rana (‘BN’ to his friends) and his wife Renate have so far brought seven ambulances and three fire trucks for different hospitals and municipalities in Nepal. BN’s sons, Renate’s brother or friends of friends have driven the vehicles across Europe, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and through India into Nepal. That is a lot of trouble, but for BN wanted to help disadvantaged people back home and for her husband the prime minister recently. The couple also conduct an international conference on medicine in Kathmandu every year. The next one is scheduled end-2001.

BN left Nepal in 1960 to study medicine in Heidelberg. After specialising in neurosurgery, he began perfecting new medical techniques for patients with nerve disorders. Ali along, BN wanted to help disadvantaged people back home and the prime minister recently. The couple also conduct an international conference on medicine in Kathmandu every year. The next one is scheduled end-2001.