Perhapes there was really no doubt that this SAARC Summit would ultimately go ahead. Perhaps all the sabre-rattling of the past weeks between India and Pakistan was in fact nothing but a bid by both to make this summit happen. Whatever the case, the two South Asian nations nearly went to war over this Summit in Kathmandu. They have stepped back from the brink. Will Kathmandu be where they patch up?

More importantly, will Kathmandu be where they will find some mechanism to prevent a risk of escalation like this in future?

Not likely, say experts and officials from the region who have gathered in Kathmandu this week prior to the Summit. “We shouldn’t be too ambitious,” one senior South Asian diplomat told us. “The fact that the Summit is taking place is already a miracle.” Indian and Pakistani officials are coy about the question on everyone’s lips—will Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf shake hands in front of the television cameras after the Nagarjot retreat? “Let’s wait and see,” is all they say.

As the tit-for-tat cancellations of trains, over-flights and satellite transmissions show, things can get pretty petty between New Delhi and Islamabad. Even in Kathmandu, organizers said, there was at least one request for a change in seating arrangements by one of the countries which didn’t want to sit next to another. Ironically, participants said the atmosphere during the preparatory meetings was one of surprising friendship and camaraderie. “Outside they are about to go to war, inside they are best of friends,” one Nepali participant told us. “We have Pakistan receding Indian proposals and the other way round. Despite everything everyone wants SAARC.”

by all accounts, the draft declaration of the Summit and other conventional meetings have been surprisingly smooth sailing through the committees. “There are no hitches, no needlessly long debates about commas and brackets that we saw in previous summits,” another delegate told us. The reason could be that everyone wants this on-again-off-again Summit to go without a hitch.

The meetings discussed giving the 1987 SAARC anti-terrorism convention more teeth by making it compatible with national laws, and agreed with provisions of post-11 September United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373. But what if one nation’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter? The answer from one delegate: “We did not go into definitions.”

Officials in the preparatory meetings also agreed on deadlines: having the SAFTA framework treaty ready by end 2002, re-starting SAARC meetings at different levels to keep dialogue open. More could happen by the time we reach the Summit because everyone, including leaders, seem to be under a lot of pressure to show that SAARC works.

“The timing may have worked perfectly for all because despite tension, the Summit provided an opening,” says Sridhar Khatri, executive director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu. “It looks like Churchill’s jaw-jaw being better than war-war is at work inside the closed doors. There is little doubt that the entire spotlight during this summit is going to be on Vajpayee and Musharraf. In fact, their every gesture and eye contact (if not shoulder contact) is going to be meticulously recorded for signs of thaw. The danger is that the media glare in Kathmandu may tempt both to play to the domestic galleries. But for SAARC’s sake, everyone is hoping for a truce.

Sixteen years of SAARC have made not just the leaders of India and Pakistan, but the smaller countries as well guilty enough to at least show they can meet during these annual summits—even if it is just to deliver speeches. This time, the added complication was India’s ban on overflights by Pakistan International Airlines which forced Gen Musharraf to take a roundabout route via China. India denied it is being petty, one senior Indian diplomat told us: “We have taken terrorism for so long, we just had to show the line.” But Pakistani officials say they have gone out of their way to assuage India on terrorism. “There is real mistrust. They don’t want to believe we are acting in good faith,” said one.

Former SAARC Secretary General, Nepali diplomat Yadav Kant Shrestha, saying most of this is posturing. He is a true-blue believer in SAARC: “This is the only answer to South Asia’s troubles. There is no other road.” But going on this road has been painfully slow, and SAARC appears to need new vision and commitment if it is to survive the self-inflicted injuries. Kathmandu should mark the beginning of this process.
The daily ceremony at the India-Pakistan border crossing where Punjab-based brothers go through an extravagantly choreographed flag-kissing ritual has now come to symbolise the vacuity and swag-ger of the relations between these two countries. What they think is a patriotic pageant at Atari actually resembles a cock-fight. While people on both sides cheer, the ritual of the lark is over: At birth, the governments of these twin nations are so consumed by their envious trafficking for each other that they are holding their own people and the rest of South Asia hostage. Come on, guys, grow up.

The latest brinkmanship came in the run-up to the 11th SAARC Summit. Just look at the inane chest-thumping. Calling these two governments infantile would be an insult to children. With the Afghan war drawing to a close, the conflict is now threatening to creep eastwards. New Delhi, which felt pleased and left out as Washington boasted Islamabad for support in the anti-Taliban campaign is now trying to get back the world's attention. (We're here.) They seem to say when they mass troops along the Pakistan border, or cancel the overflights of Pakistani aircraft. In trying to influence America's war on terror, the Indians are making the same mistake: not addressing the roots of extremism. And in Indians case it has (for the past 50 years) always been the struggle for autonomy in Kashmir. Resolve Kashmir and everything else will probably fall into place. Let Kashmir fester and this corrosive extremism will consume us all. But now they are playing with rubies. And the rest of us are quickly trying to figure out prevailing winds so we won't be downwind when the firecrackers go off.

There is a fundamental unity between the cultures of this region, the inheritor of a civilisation that once extended from Kashmir to the Himalaya to Beijing. Despite the rise and fall of several empires, cultural identity goes to the very soul of a person, an identity that is the legacy of agents of an imperial power in retreat. The Himalaya to Beijing. Despite the rise and fall of several empires, cultural identity goes to the very soul of a person, an identity that is the legacy of agents of an imperial power in retreat. The Himalaya to Beijing. Despite the rise and fall of several empires, cultural identity goes to the very soul of a person, an identity that is the legacy of agents of an imperial power in retreat. The Himalaya to Beijing. Despite the rise and fall of several empires, cultural identity goes to the very soul of a person, an identity that is the legacy of agents of an imperial power in retreat. The Himalaya to Beijing. 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The Subcontinent of Sub-Saharan Asia

In this article written before he died in 1998, Mahbub-ul Haq argued South Asia would not get ahead until it started investing in its people. Never truer than today.


global military expenditure, which was $1,000 billion in 1987, is down to $750 billion dollars today (in 1996), a $4 billion reduction each year. The two poorest regions in the world increased their expenditure. Not the Middle East or Latin America, but Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Thirty years have to be highlighted to somewhere policymakers into action. South Asia is just not prepared to enter the 21st century. It does not invest enough in its people.

The goddess of growth

India hopes to be a regional superpower, but cannot become one with the scale of sheer poverty that exists. Indian policy-makers must swallow the Chinese growth rate of 12 percent, and see how China is investing in its people. The lesson of Cold War rivalry is not that capitalists triumphed over communists, but that political power was not backed by economic strength is unsustainable. The Soviet Union collapsed because it could not feed people. All in tank armies and armoured warfare wanted nothing. India has the largest number of poor people in the world. If it can deliver social justice while it maintains an expansion in defence expenditure, India is welcome to become a regional superpower. But it cannot, and so should choose between broad and guns. Fifteen years ago, in 1980, the ratio of military to social spending was highest in Iraq (+ 4 times), Somalia (five times) and Nicaragua (5.5 times). Yet some could effectively define its national security. Costa Rica abolished its army in 1948, and now spends one-third of its national income on education, nutrition and health. Today, it is the only prosperous democracy in a troubled Central America. However, economic growth alone is not enough, there has to be a distributive justice. Three decades ago, Pakistan had one of the highest growth rates in the developing world, 7 percent a year. So, why were people protesting in the streets? Economic growth had not touched their lives—inequality distribution led them away. In high growth West Pakistan, it was in the hands of landlords and industrialists—22 families dominated the economy. The lesson was clear: you have to stop worshiping the goddess of growth, put the people at the centre, enrich their lives, provide them with options. Aside all the glooms, South Asia itself provides examples of the dynamism that can be released when human lives are made the focus. In Bangalore, once they started training people in computers, the industry took off and India is now the second largest exporter of software in the world. It presently sells a billion dollars’ worth, and may top five billons by 2000. Before 1977, what was then East Pakistan did not have significant industry. Bangladeshis businessmen went into ready-made garments, past their skills into it, and today the country has not competed India and Pakistan, and is exporting two billion dollars worth of garments to North America and Europe.

Towards civilian rule

India and Pakistan must take the lead and learn from the abyss. The SAARC organisation, which has remained an exercise in protocol, must be energised. Each member must agree under a multilateral agreement to cut five percent of military spending annually, and earmark the money released for education and health.

Why spend millions a day to control the friction heights of Siachen? Why not withdraw the troops a few miles down the ridge, continue to argue across a table, and save some money? India and Pakistan must also come to an understanding on the nuclear issue, rather than keep embellishing such other issue in others of UN forums, so that an enormous packet of funds can become available for social needs.

The existing political structures of India and Pakistan are not conditioned to accept such proposals, which require rationality and statesmanship. The people take the lead, through energetic advocacy and use of the increasingly powerful and borderless media. It is time for civil society to conduct a “propaganda operation” against redundant politicians, who are never willing to bale their lives and reputations for social justice.

Of course, there are tremendous structural obstacles: the archaic governance structures of the two countries, among policy-makers and military officers. That is given. People are hesitant to challenge defence expenditure because it is camouflaged under the brand of national security. There is little understanding of the social opportunity cost of living more and more in and armaments. But why should we assume that these things are immutable?

Only the people of South Asia can change the complexion of the region. The sway of human deprivations can become a frontier of human hope once we begin to invest in education, training, and the spirit of the people.

Sarah Acland Kathmandu

ECONOMY

Binod Bhattachariya says in “Economic emergency” (474) that the government will have to spend over Rs 3 billion for security. I really don’t understand where this money is going to come except by diverting it away from development. Money for weapons and guns and helicopters will not permanently solve the security problem, the long-term answer to that lies in spending more on human capital. The late King Birendra had the right idea, by pushing for Nepal as a Zone of Peace. War never solves anything, negotiations are the only way.

Bikesh Adhikary by email

Sarah Acland Kathmandu

POLITICS

The internal feuds and hatred of the leaders of the Nepali Congress have manifested many times over past 12 years, and have played a pivotal role in leading corruption, discrediting democracy and inviting the present emergency. We are fed up with Kisunji and Girijababu, they are finished intellectually, and they have failed the nation. Girijababu is now calling for an “impressive democratic alliance” where there is no winner without the winner in his own party. The two of them should retire from politics, and help save Nepal democracy.

Kumar Regmi Kathmandu

BULLETS

No, it is not because of the state of emergency that my wife and I have quarantined our son at home. Nor is it because there are dangerous Moscas (or is it terrorists?) out there. Actually it is because last week, two of our neighbours in Chun Devi found stray bullets in their yards, one still warm. The next time you are strolling in town and you see a guy in a green suit behind sandbags packing a huge weapon, you may wonder: is he providing security or is he a safety hazard?

Pablo Bonetti Chandrapo

REASON

The misgivings of the AK party team about their editorial role (Animated suspension, #37) are misplaced. In this age of unreason, when cynicism, passion, demagoguery, disinformation and falsity rule the roost, your weekly editors stand out as a beacon of hope, a clarion call to reason and the voice of reason. Keep up the good work.

Saradchandrika Sharma

PK Campus

CORRECTION: The pie chart for the poll in #474 was incorrect. This is how it should have been:

Q Do you think the SAARC Summit will be held as scheduled?

Yes 4- 10 January 2002 NEPALI TIMES 3

MILITARY

While I appreciated the candid responses by Gen Prakashwala S/LB Rana in the interview (This is not a Royal Army, but the Royal Nepalese Army, #473), I wish Vijay Kumar had asked other pertinent questions like the lack of transparency within the military. The army must change with the times, reform its old ways, and not just stick to its old boy’s traditions. We should also look at whether we can afford such an expensive institution, and whether it can do more for development.

S Nepal Kathmandu

CIVIL

I was impressed by the article by Seema Tamang on basic civil rights and the responsibility of civil society (Emergency soul searching, #473). Hope that the article found its way into Nepali language papers too. It would also apply there.
Not all gloom and doom

In a country where the control government has not credibility, this could be the answer to Nepal's ills, including the Maoist insurgency. "When decentralisation has worked, there have been little problems even from the Maoists," Krishna Prasad Sapkota of the Karnali Development Committee told us recently. "What happens when people's expectations are raised and there is no delivery?" he asked, and answered: "It will just turn young people into extremism."

The vision thing

Unusual, by the rest of the world, Nepal has also mastered the craft of providing basic care, reliable and world-class ophthalmologic care. Twenty years ago, if a Nepali developed cataracts they either went blind or had to go to India for treatment. The thousands of patients from India line up at Nepali eye hospitals and specialised centres in the capital for treatment. It is one of those little-known success stories of development, today Nepal is a regional leader in eye care. In 1981, there was only one eye hospital in Nepal, today there are 17 hospitals and 32 other eye care centres. Snala Shrestha, the director of the Nepal Eye Program who pioneered low-cost modern cataract surgery, and has trained doctors in Nepal, Cambodia, China, Vietnam and Burma. He says: "In a country like ours, the trick is to provide

Widow at Chitwan being pursued for transplantation

Despite all the bad news, Nepal has shown considerable progress in the past 12 years. We review some of the little-known success stories.

Step back from the brink

Mr Vajpayee does not want war. Nor does General Musharraf. But do they know just what is at stake here?

Wherever we are the answer on the Indian parliament on the 1st of December wasn’t on outrage. As an attack on democracy and openness, it was evil. But General Musharraf understood that the days of supporting your border militant groups in Kashmir are over! That any organisation advocating violence against India can no longer be based on Pakistani soil. It has to stop, and not just because Washington or London is worried about nuclear war. No—one—including nuclear scientist like Ahsan Iqbal and others—should be allowed to think that violence works. Full stop.

It is for that to us, we all have to feature less emotionally, with more of an eye to the future and the fate of our children. Just because the Americans have chosen to use brute military force against the Al-Qaeda doesn’t mean that is the answer to everything. Indeed, many of the west’s war in Afghanistan to dislodge the Taleban, precisely because of the lack of multi-headed worms that now open gaps.

India—with full justification—was until rather deeply involved by an act of terror, the attack on Parliament. It extended similar acts into the past, and even a territorial invasion by Pakistan forces around Karachi in 1999, and did not threaten the region with use. Now, with Afghanistan still under US occupation and racial and social divisions in Uttar Pradesh in February, even a small modernised like Aatish Bhanvari Vajpayee can better resist hostile and populist pressure to beat the worst actions as badly as possible.

I believe that those decisions are what’s pushing the current situation past critical mass. I talk to Mr Vajpayee does not want war. Nor does General Musharraf. It’s wrong, but the rest of us have no choice to argue that we all people, all nations, all children and this region back a hundred years or more. The two leaders are the key to this crisis. They hope they know just what is at stake, and where their place in history will reveal, whatever they do.

I feel with them on behalf of the world thinking young population of South Asia, South Asia, the people who create peace and prosperity, not radiation shots and assassinations. Step back from the brink, the final common ground, into the Nobel Peace Prize. Or go down in history as a war.
Kathmandu finds friends

Mountain Air

Fake certificates

Declaration of wealth

ELD Training
A home of one’s own

S

anta couldn’t have been more generous. That’s what Anwula Koirala, founder of Maiti Nepal, must be thinking. Never in her dreams did Nepal’s nationally and internationally-known social worker—she’s been on Oprah—think she’d be able to house her extended family of over 200 women and children under one roof, and a large one at that.

But it’s happening.

One day in November 2001, the 56-year-old Maiti Nepal supporter, instrumental in contacting Dr Kill with the idea of helping the organization, “I never expected such a thing to happen. We didn’t even have a plan for a separate children’s home.” Wagner first came to know of Maiti Nepal’s work through a documentary on sex slavery in Asia. Initially Wagner, an independent business consultant from the same city as Dr Kill, approached the millionaire for funds to set up a cafe that Maiti Nepal girls would manage. “The

Maiti Nepal is getting ready to move into brand-new premises, with a little help from a German friend.

Ramyata Limbu

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Naipaul, Udit and Tenzing

What if Sir Vidiadhar refuses honorary Nepali citizenship?

Given the national mood of reawakening it has produced, VS Naipaul's apparent acknowledgement of Nepal's roots seems to have come as a bulwark for Nepalis bruised by Udit Narayan's bruising. Their desire to reclaim the yellowish studio with that other crooner from Birgunj. Their delight at the prospect of his voice in the actor's blockbuster debut. Since his accent and complexion were not entirely inaccurate, though. The Koshi river is Sapan's Sorrows. If perennial floods forced Udit and his family to flee the safety of their maternal grandmother's home on the southern side of the open border for part of the year. Names, Mother Nature or the fathers of the dead project. Udit might not have wanted to hurt us as much. Even if the film did make him want to go back to those recording studios at Radio Nepal because his accent and complexion were a bit different. Or maybe he could's forget those musicians who deliberately ganged up on his greatest weakness just to make him record extra tunes. Nepalis unacquainted with those studio machinations might have been pleased if Udit could've risen above those slights. But, again, it's nay to portray the virtues of magnanimity when you're not the one warning the grievances.

Udit may perhaps move more Nepal than the actors in Bombay who happen to have a politically prominent Nepali surname. That's not my shot, by the way. I'm just parroting another Indian newspaper interviewer who responded to the leading lady's suggestion last year that she was the first Nepali in Bollywood who didn't have problems acknowledging her origins. This brings us to where origins really do matter. How many politicians, ministers and foreign ministers can you name who were born outside Nepal? Three, four—or more? Count as many as you want, but you have to acknowledge that they didn't choose their birthplaces. When their ancestors were humiliated in Bangladesh or even further south after each shift in the power equations of the Nepali court, our forefathers didn't rally in place for compassion. If you can live with foreign-born leaders, can't we realize the family of origin in the character of the boy from Bhadra who started out radicalizing patriotic songs for Radio Nepal and needed to redefine himself as he moved along his career path? As the Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad, the Trinidad-born author long sought of India as either an area of origin or a resumed civilisation. Many Indians nonetheless looked to see the day he got the Nobel Prize. Such adulating knighthood must have inspired Naipaul to revise his views about India. Even then, the best he could do was come up with a portrayal of a country in the make of a million statues. When he finally got the Nobel last autumn, a cautionary note was paid off. But Naipaul had other ideas while preparing his acceptance speech. Two years ago, somebody asked him papers suggesting that his ancestors might actually have lived in a country call redefined by the critical acumen Samrat Upadhyay got in the West. Naipaul's revelation had to endure the Nepali page-another display. One excellent reader urged the government to extend Naipaul honorary Nepali citizenship. Other commentators were already thinking a step beyond, wondering whether any determination left us to move or if he declined. Udit could have done what a prominent personality of an earlier era did in a similar situation. When Tenzing Norgay became part of the first duo to conquer Mount Everest, there was much political controversy between Nepal and India. We wanted Tenzing to assert he was our and the Indians wanted him to affirm he was theirs. Tenzing, who at the age of 18 left Nepal for Darjeeling where he hoped to be able to join one of the British expeditions to Everest, was fed up with the feeding. "I was born in a country," he said. "I want to live in the land of the Nepali," he once told a reporter. No doubt, the game of seeking reassurances continues, with one author claiming as recently as a year ago that Tenzing actually might have been born and raised in Tibet. But since the man himself had already spoken, we didn't have to be too distressed by endless speculation. Udit's dilemma is different. And not only because he's the one seeking reassurance whether depending on which side of the border he happens to be on. But the singer's identity crisis is not unlike that of Naipaul's protagonist in his 1979 best-seller, A Bend in the River.

Still Nepal Oil Corruption

There was a sabotage scare at the airport two weeks ago. The army crewfulness fulfilling a helicopter that was on ferry Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba discovered unidentified floating objects in the aviation fuel. A swift examination revealed that the dodge had resulted from a ruptured safety valves in the storage tank. The problem was corrected immedi-
ately because the army crew showed the sample to their VVIP passenger. But such speed and efficiency is a lot more uncommon in matters concerning adulterated fuel at the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC), which has the dubious distinction of being one of Nepal's most corrupt public sector undertakings with fuel adulteration kickbacks up and down the line.

When government last week announced that it was setting up a task force to recommend improvements at the NOC, there seemed to be hope that Nepalis might soon be able to buy unadulterated fuel. But those who thought the commi-
tee would also look into fuel adulteration and the corruption associated with it were mistaken. Sher Bahadur Pandey, head of the task force, told us his study was a way to respond to the changes taking place in the business of importing and selling fuel, and would make recommenda-
tions on making the NOC "more effective." He told us: "It will not be an investiga-
tion. Then why bother?" Just over a year ago, after a series of reports on fuel adulteration in the press (including "Nepal Oil Corruption", NT #19), the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies ordered a probe into that was end of that. The probe committee decided its fact-finding mission would consist of writing to some newspapers, asking for evidence of their reports. The committees also issued public notices calling on people to report adultera-
tion. Meanwhile, during the middle of a state of national emergency, one of the most blatant and open forms of corruption in the kingdom goes on unabated.

The official reason the investigation flared out was that there were no complaints. Some gas station owners had openly admitted that the only way to make a living selling oil was by mixing undetected liquefied petroleum gas in diesel and petrol. The gas station owner told us that the record-weeks adulteration was 50-50. The adulteration of fuels is said to be costing around Rs. 2 billion in kickbacks paid to NOC staffs and politicians, and maintenance of vehicles that run on poor quality oils. Besides, there are the longer-term health and environmental impacts that are impossible to quantify. The mafia that is responsible for adulteration and corruption in the NOC are at large. Some anti-corruption activists say the govern-
ment should use its emergency powers and clean up the act. It is impossible to set price aside with it unless you have friends at the NOC who eat and certify your supplies.
**SAARC occupancy**

Three years after Nepal began focussed tourism marketing, 2001 was as bad as it could be in terms of arrivals. A lesson for the tourism promotional campaign that registered losses for several countries这座行间。 1999, Indian arrivals dropped by a whopping 30 percent and those from third countries by almost 17 percent. Pradeep Raj Pandey, Chief Executive Officer of NTB says all this has happened despite increased efforts to market tourism in both India and overseas. The effort had begun to pay off in early in the year when arrivals had begun picking up. The numbers began tumbling after the 1 June royal massacre, and were pushed further down after the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. The emergency has also taken its toll on tourism: the year-end total arrivals were 43 percent full ten percentage pointlower than the declining figures in the first ten months of the year.

Government last week announced some measures to bail out the industry, especially hotels, whose overdues therefore have to be restructured, and there is also a talk of banks rescheduling bank loans. The government will even waive visa fees for overnight visitors, though industry sources say that won't make much of a difference. In the industry, an attempt to reduce overall package costs to Nepal had asked the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation waives visa fees for three-day visitors. However, when immigration statistics were extrapolated to assess how much that could cost in lost revenue, it turned out that the fees for about 100,000 tourists would be lost, hence the one-day free gimmick. Still NTB officers are hoping they will get transit passengers hereafter then be able to lure them for a longer return visit. The NTB Executive Director says the policy will also step up its marketing efforts in the 12 countries that provide 75 percent of Nepal's tourists. The primary markets are India, USA, Japan, United Kingdom and Germany. France, Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Australia are the major secondary markets.

**Euro currencies**

The central bank discontinued maintaining separate exchange rates for several European currencies starting 4 January. That means banks will stop exchanging German Marks, Dutch Guilders, French Francs, Austrian Schillings, Belgian Francs and Italian Lira. Commercial banks with stocks of these currencies will have to sell them to the central bank by 15 January. The exchange of these Euro currencies will in future be based on their 'mark-up' rate with the Euro, the Nepal Rastra Bank said.

**Paddy prices**

The price of the new rice crop has fallen to the lowest levels in recent times, much of the drop taking place in the first ten months of the year.

**“Regular” tourism**

Three years after Nepal began focussed tourism marketing, 2001 was as bad as it could be in terms of arrivals. A lesson for the tourism promotional campaign that registered losses for several countries这座行间。 1999, Indian arrivals dropped by a whopping 30 percent and those from third countries by almost 17 percent. Pradeep Raj Pandey, Chief Executive Officer of NTB says all this has happened despite increased efforts to market tourism in both India and overseas. The effort had begun to pay off in early in the year when arrivals had begun picking up. The numbers began tumbling after the 1 June royal massacre, and were pushed further down after the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. The emergency has also taken its toll on tourism: the year-end total arrivals were 43 percent full ten percentage pointlower than the declining figures in the first ten months of the year.

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BINOD BHATTARAI

ECONOMY

4 - 10 JANUARY 2002 NEPAL TIMES

The National Planning Commission seems to be suited to more authoritarian times. Is there still a role for it?

Shankar Sharma

Mohan Man Sainju

Ram Sharan Mahat

Dipak Gyawali

Engineer-economist Dipak Gyawali was sounded out for NPC membership but turned it down. He does not mince his words about why: “The NPC has a basic structural flaw. It has little, or no role today.” Gyawali’s main criticism is that the NPC doesn’t have the institutional mechanism to analyze and learn from past failures. “I have not found any analysis done by NPC on major projects such as the three EL or even Mahakali,” says Gyawali.

“What is the point of decisions on such important projects with serious implications on the country are made without even getting the NPC’s representation. NPC insiders admit that the professional team of technocrats, all well trained and experienced, end up being government speechwriters or proposal writers for donors. They are convinced there is no way the NPC can be reformed without a clarification on the chain of command.

Today even NPC members don’t hesitate to admit that the institutions could have done better. Many are also convinced it is not possible within the existing governance mechanism. Still, most people we spoke to for this article agreed on the use of an agency to do the ‘big picture long-term thinking.’

Says Sharma: “There is no question that we need a vision or a plan, or whatever you want to call it. Someone has to do it. One concern should be why the plans haven’t worked.” One of the reasons could be the NPC’s overall incompatibility with the changed polity after 1990, which reflects on plan implementation.

Governments, for example, was the priority of the 9th plan but according to Sharma, investment in the sector in real terms was actually down by almost 36 percent during the plan period. And every plan is detailed because of funding gaps caused by disorientation of trends to new politically tipped projects. Despite all this, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat, who was once vice-chairman in the early 1990s, remains a strong advocate of retaining the NPC. “That is one place where we get professional analysis done. There is still a role for planning. And it is still relatively unaffected by politics.”

Serious questions still remain. When things go well, politicians are blamed and in the rare occasion when things go well, politicians take the credit.

When things go wrong, planners exist in a heads I lose tails you win situation with politicians. When things go wrong, planners are blamed and in the rare occasion when things go well, politicians take the credit. If the Ten Point Plan’s budgetary backup will be the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) which is now being drawn up, and its finalisation may help secure funding. Every new five-year plan is greeted with a chorus of criticism about the effectiveness of the NPC. This time will be no different, and there is already talk of a major reshuffle of its membership.

The fundamenal questions about whether we need an NPC keeps coming up, especially since 1990 when short-term political expediency has become more important than a long-term strategy, but the debate usually fizzles out.

Today’s NPC is a misfit. It is outside the political loop because even though the Prime Minister chairs it, it does not have effective cabinet representation. The NPC was created by a cabinet decision and does not have statutory anchor.

Its policies therefore do not reflect the political priorities of parties or a nationally accepted framework that is vetted by parliament. And for Nepal’s donors, the NPC remains a convenient window through which to tap into politicians and the bureaucracy and push projects of choice.

It wasn’t always like this. During the Panchayat, the NPC was at the centre of things. Those were the days when it had a role in controlling other ministries—possibly reflecting the authority of the absolute monarch. De Mohan Man Sainju who was vice-chairman during the 1980s remembers: “We did not have to worry who the prime minister was and how political gimmicks would influence us.” Sainju, like technocrats before him, were appointed by the king and were able to focus continuously on planning and ex-ordination. “Our chain of command was very clear,” adds the economist who now heads the Institute of Integrated Development Studies (IIDS).

Many former members dismiss today’s NPC as a “dead institution.” Even technocrats working in it say it has become an employment agency for political appointees and rejects from other ministries. They wonder whether the NPC is still needed or if some political benefactor comes and bails them out. “This has to change, otherwise we may as well close it down,” says one insider.

Even after democracy the NPC could have worked to push the strategies of the party in power. But, of course, things didn’t work out that way. NPC appointments ended up reflecting the power struggle within the ruling party eroding the even credibility of the top planning jobs. After ten years of democracy, NPC jobs are not as coveted as they used to be.

Engineer-economist Dipak Gyawali

Ramlal Nepal

Engineer-economist Dipak Gyawali added that the NPC’s overall incompatibility with the changed polity after 1990, which reflects on planning implementation. Agriculture, for example, was the priority of the 9th plan but according to Sharma, investment in the sector in real terms was actually down by almost 36 percent during the plan period. And every plan is detailed because of funding gaps caused by disorientation of trends to new politically tipped projects. Despite all this, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat, who was once vice-chairman in the early 1990s, remains a strong advocate of retaining the NPC. “That is one place where we get professional analysis done. There is still a role for planning. And it is still relatively unaffected by politics.”

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“What is the point of decisions on such important projects with
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sculpture of a Lo Manthang palace, or the Potala. In the middle of this panorama, and for the rest of the flight, you can often see the mountains and into the Tibetan Plateau, brown and arid, but for the occasional deep blue of its lakes.

For those who have spent time in the Valley, this segment of the flight is like meeting local heroes and finding that they are just as nice in real life. It is at this point that, as you get even closer, the 25,000 ft cruising altitude of even the Beech seems inadequate. You will encounter four eight-thousanders—there are only ten in the world— including The Big One, and their summits will be even higher than the plane. Chogimago (6,297 m), Pigferago (6,620 m), Numbur (6,957 m) and Karyolung (6,511 m) are nice enough, snow-topped and with a whimsical sense of shape, but Cho Oyu (8,188 m), is different. Dark and brooding, it seems to say, like Hamlet, that the rest is silence. And indeed it is, for then部副手 in view Everest, and the sudden silence is only broken by the clicks of cameras. An enormous mass of dark, solid granite flanked by its handmaiden, squat, table-like Nuptse (7,855 m) and perky Lhotse (8,516 m), it isn’t the most attractive mountain in the world. Anu Dhaulagiri (6,812 m), very below to the east, is far more charming, with its reassuring symmetry and snowy face. But Everest brings home to you, far more than any other sight, just how extreme the terrain is. This close up, it looks so inhospitable you wonder why anyone would want to go up that desolate, rocky face. And yet, if you think one step further, you start to understand a little why mountains can drive people to distraction. There is something almost holy in the magnificence and expanse of Himalaya. When you think about the violence of the tectonic forces that caused the Indian landmass to collide with the Eurasian plate, sending rocks soaring into the stratosphere, the true scale of the planet comes home to you.

The final treat is Makalu, at 8,463 m the fifth-highest mountain in the world, its pink rock face exuding a calm detachment. If you’re really lucky and manage to look out of the right-hand side of the cockpit at just the right moment, you may catch a glimpse of Kangchenjunga (8,586 m), the third-highest mountain in the world, and the second-highest in Nepal. The turn-around is a good time to catch a glimpse of the chaos of the Khumbu Icefall, and the second-longest glacier in Nepal, the Khumbu Glacier. There is Namche Bazar, the starting point for the Everest Trek and headquarters of the Sagarmatha National Park.
Debates over genetically modified (GM) foods engulf every corner of the globe. While many concerns about GM foods are legitimate, these debates mostly reflect the interests of developed countries. But countries facing constant threats to their food supply consider access to new biotechnological techniques as essential to their development. Their hopes of using these technologies safely and responsibly are threatened by environmental and consumer activism in industrialized countries.

Because most finished products are produced and consumed in a few countries—the United States, Canada, Argentina and China—a “genetic divide” has opened up between rich and poor countries. This gap will likely pose serious problems due to the growing importance of biotechnology in agricultural production, health care and environmental management. Prospects for closing the gap will be determined by at least three interconnected factors:

- Debates over the safety of GM foods are resolved;
- Developing countries taking responsibility for constructing the basis for engaging in international cooperation in biotechnology research;
- Industrialized countries sharing technology and expertise with a wider circle of developing countries.

At present, these prospects do not look good. Some industrialized countries are reducing support for international biotechnology research programs to meet the needs of developing countries. Other industrial countries face approving international biotechnology cooperation programs in fear of a domestic political backlash from environmental and consumer groups.

Complicating matters further, international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)—created expressly to promote global food security—cannot provide leadership on this issue because of conflicting signals from governments.

But blame is not all on one side. Although most developing countries are interested in using biotechnology to meet their food, health and environmental needs, their policies and resources, are not matched to these desires. Only a handful of developing countries (including China, India, Brazil and Argentina) base clear policies on biotechnology. More needs to be done to bring government policies into line with the best global practices.

In addition, most developing countries lack adequate regulatory arrangements to guarantee safety, protect foreign investment, and promote international cooperation through strengthened local research. The absence of domestic safety regulations leaves countries vulnerable to external influence, particularly to firms that want to limit the use of biotechnology. Even more significant is the weak institutional and scientific base within developing countries.

Developing countries must redesign their universities to serve economic goals. Many universities in developing countries are still geared to primarily producing civil service functionaries even though government employment is in decline. Because there is a worldwide shortage of scientific and technical expertise in a range of fields, developing countries must redirect their universities towards scientific and technical fields.

Developing countries have the migration of scientists to the industrialized countries but it is too little to ensure that these scientists can contribute from wherever they are located. Old ideas about a “brain drain” must give way to more creative approaches to tapping skills in a globalized world. Advances in communication technology, indeed, make it possible to utilize human resources efficiently irrespective of their geographical location.

Back home, developing country inventors will soon start to demand that the fruits of intellectual labour be accorded the same level of respect and protection their counterparts in other parts of the world receive. But developing countries must also ensure that international standards, such as intellectual property protection reflect wider social values as already acknowledged by the WTO’s Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property (TRIPS). That may be tricky but attempts must be made.

Attempts can be fulfilled if science is allowed to find its proper, central place in society. Countries that facilitate the flow of knowledge between various sectors in society will be in a better position to make use of advances in biotechnology. Those that fail to reinvent their social institutions will be marginalized from new and important fields.

Even if undertaken hesitantly, all the efforts of developing countries will fail nowhere unless industrialized countries broaden their cooperation with developing countries through building scientific capacity in universities and research institutions in the developing world. Recent decisions by Monsanto to place the rice sequence data in the public domain must be only the beginning of a wider partnership program involving more developing countries.

Bridging the “genetic divide” will take a lot of effort among countries. The key starting point is for developing countries to make their policy goals clear and seek to engage in international partnerships with the industrialized countries from a more informed policy position. Any measure that fails to fulfill this basic requirement will only widen the divide.

(Calestous Juma is Director of the Science, Technology and Innovation Program at Harvard University’s Center for International Development and former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity)

Can genetically-modified foods help feed the world’s underprivileged?
The price of oil was supposed to skyrocket after 11 September due to political instability in the Middle East. Instead, it has dropped by 19 percent to under $29 a barrel, the lowest level in two years.

This drop is due to three causes. First, there remain big oil consumption sectors such as air transport and trucking, and in the demand, for ahead of time. Second, even political policy has avoided an open confrontation with the countries of the Persian Gulf, and, third, American banks have not an oil producer. Third, Russia, coming out of its post-Communist crisis, soon decided to continue expanding its own oil production, despite its recent stop at OPEC.

But this shows how oil prices should not obscure the long-term political problem—the fact that the major part of the present oil production is concentrated in states where oil resources are required to maintain repressive patronage regimes, finance extravagant consumption by the elites, and acquire a terrifying amount of arms. Enormous oil revenues and their unequal distribution have been a source of internal instability and external aggressiveness, as demonstrated by Iraq’s recent history.

So should the scarcity of oil, and its concentration in the Middle East, be a permanent source of global uncertainty? No. In reality, there is now a global abundance of oil and a great part of it is in one of the most stable countries on the planet: Canada. Today’s anti-democrats view the state as an obstacle. They want to gut its power so jackals like Joe McCarthy, nor is he a nationalist like France’s Le Pen. He is neither Rightist nor Leftist, he loathes the political system and wants to replace it by a movement is part of a new nihilism that seeks to make countries ungovernable. Their enemies are not the traditional targets of lumpen anti-democrats, are the remnants of lower Communist nomenclatura—apparatchiks too. he price has, on average, oscillated around today’s prevailing price. Oscillations in oil prices do not reflect “structural” scarcity in the long run, but are due to movements of demand and supply in the short and middle run. In the short run, the demand for oil is “inelastic”—it responds little to changes in price, and even small reductions in supply result in great price increases. In the middle run, high price lead to expansion of supply and reduced demand, and the production cuts and output reductions of non- or semi-producers (such as Russia) which dominate the market. Oil revenues to maintain consumption, political power and patronage—to raise prices by cutting production, and the cycle repeats. This process increases political instability in producing countries and render them into a vicious circle. When the price of oil is high, their governments spend the money on arms and palaces for their patrons. When the price of oil falls, they risk discontent, coups d’etats, wars, and revolutions.

The problem of the oil market is not scarcity, but volatility. As argued by former Saudi oil minister Shaker Yamani, sooner or later the age of oil will end, but because of a lack of oil, much as the Stone Age did not end because of a lack of stone, but because of a lack of uses.

 dislike this article. He seems unable to substantiate these accusations, but has kept his profile high—by asking to meet the US Ambassador, claiming knowledge of a Polish role in 11 September.

I wish I could say that by discrediting himself, Lepper self-destructed. This should happen in a democracy. But Lepper is no empty windbag like Hitler, his followers (and their rage) will remain. Like Hitler, he will likely emerge from the ashes. In 1997 a US government study estimated that it is possible to produce more than 500 billion barrels of oil from non-conventional sources (“shale oil” and “coal” beds) at less than $30 per barrel. Such reserves of oil are about 250 times more than conventional reserves and could theoretically satisfy world energy needs (at today’s levels) for the next 5,000 years.

Non-conventional reserves are the most perfect unexhausted, because they are unexploited, price-wise, with conventional oil and other sources of energy, such as natural gas. It will perhaps never become necessary to use the non-conventional reserves of fossil fuel, if the development of alternative technologies (for example, liquid hydrogen) should render oil obsolete. But these reserves exist, and unexploited reserves themselves can under world needs for the next few decades. Certainly, oil reserves are not infinite. But there is no reason to think that they are becoming scarcer.

Technological innovation and new discoveries are undermining the importance of oil in the production process. The price of oil, corrected for inflation, has not increased in the last decades, and despite all “oil shocks,” its price has, on average, oscillated around today’s prevailing price. Oscillations in oil prices do not reflect “structural” scarcity in the long run, but are due to movements of demand and supply in the short and middle run. In the short run, the demand for oil is “inelastic”—it responds little to changes in price, and even small reductions in supply result in great price increases. In the middle run, high prices lead to expansion of supply and reduced demand, and the production cuts and output reductions of non- or semi-producers (such as Russia) which dominate the market. Oil revenues to maintain consumption, political power and patronage—to raise prices by cutting production, and the cycle repeats. This process increases political instability in producing countries and render them into a vicious circle. When the price of oil is high, their governments spend the money on arms and palaces for their patrons. When the price of oil falls, they risk discontent, coups d’etats, wars, and revolutions. The problem of the oil market is not scarcity, but volatility. As argued by former Saudi oil minister Shaker Yamani, sooner or later the age of oil will end, but because of a lack of oil, much as the Stone Age did not end because of a lack of stone, but because of a lack of uses.

One nation, White Australia

Sydney despite what some hyperbolically types might allege, the White Australian policy is dead and gone, Dr Gerald Henderson, executive director of the Sydney Institute, wrote in The Australian newspaper on 11 September. However, if immigration restrictions are to be relaxed, it may be that relatively few newcomers would be welcomed. The White Australia policy was a device for keeping out non-Europeans, for maintaining the predominance of English-speaking European stock, and of course, for maintaining the predominance of English-speaking European stock, and of course, for maintaining the predominance of English-speaking European stock. The problem of the oil market is not scarcity, but volatility. As argued by former Saudi oil minister Shaker Yamani, sooner or later the age of oil will end, but because of a lack of oil, much as the Stone Age did not end because of a lack of stone, but because of a lack of uses.

One nation, White Australia
As always with crude generalization, there is some truth to this. Indeed, we are told that the events since 9/11 have been a turning point in world history. As the days of the Cold War fade into the past, the world is left with a new reality. While the events of 9/11 have left many countries in a state of shock, the world is still trying to come to terms with the implications of this new reality. The events of 9/11 have had a profound impact on the world, and the world is still trying to come to terms with the implications of this new reality. The events of 9/11 have left many countries in a state of shock, the world is still trying to come to terms with the implications of this new reality. The events of 9/11 have had a profound impact on the world, and the world is still trying to come to terms with the implications of this new reality.
**Newspaper sales**

Jana Aastha, 26 December

Of the negative impacts of the emergency that was declared a month ago there has been no newspaper sales. Newspapers have not been able to carry out factual reporting as they used to, and as a result they hardly have the credibility and the trust of their readers. Newspapers have to act responsibly in a time of crisis. Journalists should respect the ethics of their profession. Media professionals have to rise to the occasion and play their part in presenting the truth to the public.

Door: knock knock

Press here goes overboard. When threatened with action, it starts signing hymns. The freedom of the press cannot be controlled by an emergency. The press has to be daring. When left free, the press is an important tool for democracy.

**Quote of the Week**


**Bank employees unite**

Buddha Pedi, 26 December

Employees of the Nepal Rastra Bank and the Nepal Bank have formed a joint committee to protest against the decision to hand over management of two troubled banks, the Backpack Nepal Bank and Nepal Bank Ltd., on management contracts to foreign managers. They told the deputy governor of the central bank it was not right to hand over management of the bank to foreigners without making efforts to improve the management from the inside. A letter to the governor, the Joint Action Committee (Sanyukta Sangharsha Samiti) has stated that political interference in management would be controlled. A good management system has to be set up, irregularities checked, and those guilty of fraud, need to be punished instead. The employer says the decision of the government to privatise the bank to foreigners would increase foreign control over the national economy. If the management was handed over to a foreign group, the heads of the bank would be paid a very high salary and so would other members of the management team as rewards of which aid from the World Bank would go outside the country. Another union concern is possible disinvestment in the bank once the new management steps in.

**Women in the army**

Ghanta ne Bicher, 26 December

The Royal Nepal Army has set up check points at various points around the city. This is a positive step, keeping in view the current situation, but some shortcomings just cannot be ignored. Giving a lack of security to people, who have had enough of the present state of affairs, women passengers in public transport feel exceptionally uncomfortable when they have to undergo checks. Also, due to lack of women in the security force, at some check points women get away with bribes. As women are searched by male security forces, bank approaches are wrong. As many points, people have to wait in long queues while security forces just check their bags and don’t conduct body searches, as a person could get past with a concealed weapon. According to the Nepali Constitution 1990, all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law. But women are still not afforded the same rights as the Royal Nepal Army. The Army Act 2016 does not allow women to enlist. At one time, the Nepal Police Act didn’t provide for women to enter the police force. But in 1981, a direct order from the Prime Minister allowed women to join the force. They compete to enter the force, and women police, from cadets to Deputy Superintendent of Police, are doing well there. They are less involved in criminal cases and cases of corruption. The recent Nepal Police Act allows women to join the force. Women arrived the world have proved their skills in the armed forces.

**Even the PM pays**

Jana Aastha, 2 January, 2002

People will be surprised to know that the salary between the government and the Maoists failed, the same prime minister who called the Maoists “terrorists” and “traitors” donated money to them. But this is politics and everything is possible in politics. Various government ministers will be friends today and enemies today friends tomorrow. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba apparently gave Rs 9,000 last Tikhe to the All Nepal National Front Students’ Union (Revolutionary), an organisation with links to the Maoists. The ANNFSU-R students, who had went dead beforehand to the prime minister’s residence in Baluwatar saying they would be coming to play dead babies, arrived with two bedsheets and musical instruments. Devendra Prasad, president of the union, vice president Krishna KC, general secretary Pramod Pant, Lambeshh Sinapse and a few others were called inside the residence, offered tea by the prime minister; and went off with the tidy sum of Rs 9,000. And in a town of the usual;break down and scream, the group blessed the prime minister that he might have the courage to call for a constituent assembly.

The group also reached the Sankatahakann government residence of the main opposition CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal. Nepal also played the gracious host and gave them Rs 1,000. The Union also visited the homes of CPN-UML leaders Bheru Dev Gautam and CP Majhi to thank them for taking them into their meetings, but the group got Rs 500 from General Secretary Gunaratna, he was reportedly nervous, as with every meeting, he was assured that this, several student leaders of the CPN-UML student union had broken links with the Maoists and the Maoist-affiliated ANNFSU-R. Maisala, for his part, was said to be much more comfortable with the group and even danced along with them holding hands with his wife. He gave them Rs 1,000.

This is the game of the times. Prime Minister Deuba has now forbidden anyone from taking the ANNFSU-R (U) who be played down with and considered a useful tool. He hoped the Maoists in the past avoided. With the declaration of the state of emergency and talk of the control of corruption, all those who have contributed large amounts to the Maoists, and arrogant Congress leaders are said to be living in fear.

**Call for Applications**

**Immersion Course on Contemporary Social Issues (February 11 - June 11, 2002)**

The general objective of the course is to enable Nepali graduates to intellectually comprehend contemporary social issues through a broad exposure to liberal arts and the social sciences. Specifically the course aims at enabling students to:

- Analyse issues of social concern
- Develop capacity to synthesize ideas
- Create new literature
- Prepare research articles
- Prepare proposals and make presentations
- Conduct research seminars
- Make effective presentations
- Enhance use of English in research and presentation

The Immersion Course on Contemporary Social Issues is especially useful for candidates preparing for non-thesis-oriented courses such as in education, journalism, development, law, activism or civil service.

**Basic Qualification:** Bachelor’s degree (Any stream)

**Course Time:** 26 weeks

**Course Duration:** 16 weeks

**Fees:** Rs 900 (For the Royal Nepal Bank)

**Application Information:**

- Application form is available at Himal Academy Office in Patan Dheka.
- Application will be accepted until 24 January 2002.
- Candidate selection will be based on essay and interview.

**Contact:** Seema at 542544 or Gita at 528111
Waiting for the world cup

In the run up to the cricket Youth World Cup, Nepal has qualified for a place in the International Cricket Council’s Youth World Cup to be held starting 14 January in New Zealand. Who will the team have to play, when, and where?

The following sixteen teams will contest the World Cup, in order of seeding:

- India
- Sri Lanka
- Pakistan
- Australia
- England
- West Indies
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- Bangladesh
- Zimbabwe
- Namibia
- Scotland
- Nepal
- Papua New Guinea

The last under-19 World Cup in January 2000 was won by India, who defeated the host nation Sri Lanka by six wickets in the final. In the previous January 1998 World Cup in South Africa, England defeated New Zealand by seven wickets.

The Under 19 World Cup is a One-Day Cricket tournament. The ICC Playing Conditions for One-Day Internationals will apply. The opening ceremony will be held in Christchurch on 14 January and each side will play two warm-up practice against teams in other pools before the competition starts in earnest with the opening match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka on Saturday, 19 January. World Cup Tournament Director, Tim Mundich, said planning was well in place for the event, which is expected to bring around 300 players and officials, as well as hundreds of spectators and media representatives to New Zealand.

The sixteen competing teams have been split into four pools as follows:

- India (holders), South Africa, Bangladesh, Canada, playing in Auckland
- Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia, playing in Christchurch
- Pakistan, England, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, playing in Christchurch
- Australia, West Indies, Scotland, Kenya, playing in Dunedin

Each team then plays the other three teams in the pool. The top two teams from each pool go through to the finals. The bottom two teams from pool play move into the Plate Championship. The two Plate pools then play to determine the top two teams in each pool. Those four teams go through to the Plate Finals series. The minimum number of games a team will play is six. To win the World Cup four teams will play eight matches.

League play, the top two teams in each pool go through to the finals. The bottom two teams from pool play move into the Plate Championship. The top Plate teams then play to determine the top two teams in each pool. Those four teams go through to the Plate Finals series. The minimum number of games a team will play is six. To win the World Cup four teams will play eight matches.

The pool matches will be played in Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin. The Plate Championship pool play will be in Auckland, and the Super League pool play and the Finals series for both the World Cup and the Plate Championship will be played in Christchurch.
Doubt and the Drive to Write: Viplob Pratik

ReCOLLECTION

by TRISHNA GURUNG

The last journey

Not forgetting this intensity of mind-numbing sorrow would be a way of remaining faithful to my mother.
**NEPALI WEATHER**

Still waiting for westerlies, and it looks like this time there is a substantial one hovering just over the horizon. The wide forefront over South Arabia is moving in an easterly direction and is expected to hit north India by Friday. Which means high probability for a cloudy SAARC Summit direction and is expected to hit north India by Friday.

**Buddhist Peacework:** Creating Cultures of Peace

**Imagining Tibet:** Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies

**Buddhist Peacework:** Creating Cultures of Peace

**Imagining Tibet:** Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies

**CLASSIFIED**

**For Inserctions ring NT Marketing at 542333-36.**

**### NEPALI WEATHER**

**by NGAMODRA DHAL**

Still waiting for westerlies, and it looks like this time there is a substantial one hovering just over the horizon. The wide forefront over South Arabia is moving in an easterly direction and is expected to hit northern India by Friday. Which means high probability for a cloudy SAARC Summit direction and is expected to hit north India by Friday. Western and Central areas will continue to be under the spell of thick ground fog that will eventually stretch north across the Indus-Ganga plains to the Himalayas.
The high-end golf tourism market could be an easy sell for the Gokarna Golf Course.

Gokarna - It's 3PM. Do you know where your golfers are? If you're in the Valley, chances are they are just trampling off the green in the dense, lush forests of the 470-acre Gokarna Game Sanctuary, discussing double and triple bogeys. It is hard to imagine that a mere 10 km, walking the only 18-hole, par-72 course in the country. On the 8.5 km course, a round of golf could take the entire morning. The start and end points of the game can be viewed from the Club House, situated on a neat plateau that overlooks the course. The restaurant serves Thai, continental, and Nepali cuisine, and has a well-equipped pro shop and magazine kiosk.

Offer, Chand's balls disappear into the thick undergrowth that circles the course but it doesn't mar her pleasure in the game. Sprawled over 140 acres of fields within the royal hunting grounds, the course boasts the only Best Grass Greens in South Asia (imported from the US and grown in a nursery on the grounds), making it one of the highlights of the professional tour circuits in the region. Among the competitions in the Gokarna Golf Course have been the Famous Grouse Trophy and the Surjeet Masters, and now the course is preparing to host the annual New Year's Cup on 12 January.

It isn't only Kathmandus's golfers to raptures, but even worldly Japanese and European golf tourists. The David Kidd-designed course has placed Nepal on the golfing map of the world. "We get Japanese businessmen, Europeans, and many repeat," explains retired Air Admiral U.C. Chand who manages the course. The greens is perfectly kept and the course water that is a destination for many waterfowl and the artificial lakes that add to the serene atmosphere and challenge the golfer's stroke. It's cool here even in the summer, and sometimes you can spot deer and monkeys," says Chand who plays golf more for exercise than for competition enjoys walking the only 18-hole, par-72 course in the country. On the 8.5 km course.

"It's a really relaxing course," says golfer Pushpa Chand. "There are hardly any distractions, you just concentrate on hitting your next ball." Chand who play golf for exercise than for competition enjoys walking the only 18-hole, par-72 course in the country. On the 8.5 km course.

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Welcome to Nagarkot Retreat

5th Jan 2002

Welcome to Nagarkot Retreat

11th SAARC

Rt. Honorable President
Prime Minister
Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India

Rt. Honorable Prime Minister
Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepal

Rt. Honorable Prime Minister
Sachdev, a Singapore businessman, former captain of the Singapore Gold Club House and single-digit handicap player, the Gokarna Golf Course is preparing for the launch in a couple of weeks of 16 luxurious vacation club rooms, serviced through the adjacent Hunter’s Lodge and Golf Club House. Nearby, on a large plateau at the end of a winding, climbing road through the forest, the 62-room Mallia style Le Meridian Hotel Complex is being constructed. The first phase of the forest resort and spa, that is slated for completion next winter, hopes to attract golfers and their families with a health club, pool, business center, and specialty restaurant, and break into the high-end golf tourism market.

Membership to the Gokarna Golf Club is pretty steep, at Rs 420,000 for a couple and three children under 21 for 25 years, though there is a special rate for senior citizens above 65—Rs 250,000 for 25 years. Annual membership is $1500. But, says Chand, this is not too high a price. "The course brazen facilities and an atmosphere the likes of which you won't get anywhere else in Kathmandu," he says. Chand is eager to promote golf tourism and aware undeterred by the current slump in arrivals. After all last December 35 millionaires gathered to play golf in Gokarna for a day. Chand and his team are betting that sort of thing can be done on a more regular basis.

Greene Fee:
Weekdays $40, weekends $50
For Hire:
Club $10, shoes $5
Caddy Fee $35

www.gokarna.com

HOLE IN ONE

The high-end golf tourism market could be an easy sell for the Gokarna Golf Course...

It is our honor and privilege to have you and your distinguished delegation.

May the serene and tranquil environment of Nagarkot lead to a conclusion that will bring everlasting Peace, Prosperity and Brotherhood among the seven nations!!

Yogendra Sakya and the entire staff members
Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort
Windy Hills, Nagarkot
Tel: 680080, 680083
E-mail: club@msn.com.np www.nepalshotel.com
Make love not war

by Kunda Dixit

So it’s final: they are not going to shake hands in Kathmandu this weekend. They’re going to kiss.

After getting through the formalities of reviewing decisions, endorsing agendas and forwarding the modalities of the draft declaration, the two are going to smooch in broad daylight at Nagarkot in full view of spy satellites.

Where and when this intimate moment is going to take place is a closely guarded secret, mainly because kissing is still taboo on the Indian screen, and we don’t want the subcontinent to be scandalised by this public display of affection on live television, especially since minorities may be watching.

Leaders lead by example, and executing a wet hug-cum-kiss will need by example, and executing a wet hug-cum-kiss will need to make love not war.

And I don’t mean that light peck on the eyebrow, or a head-on collision that is averted at the very last moment by squeamish directors who refuse to cut to the chase.

The time has come to stop just passing lip-service to the vital subject of on-screen hugging, and to make love not war.

If done often enough, life imitates art, and that is what the process of being chosen to be Nepal’s most high-profile model is a bit like getting a government scholarship. You are among a shortlist of 690 of the best and brightest, you have to learn how to handle interviews.

Yash, Nepal Lever’s new Fair & Lovely model went through all that and was the chosen one. What she didn’t bargain for was tough questions from inquisitive journalists.

We tried to corner her and ask what she thought about the whole concept of beauty and fairness. Quick as a flash comes the reply: “Beauty is only skin deep. Women need not just be fair and lovely, they must be beautiful from the heart.”

With an answer like that, Yash could easily bag beauty contests here and abroad.

Yash will now replace Monica Chander as Lever’s main model for its beauty products. She is, ummm, fairly confident she can juggle her studies and modelling.

Thomson Nepal finished the first commercial shot at Changu Narayan last week and was directed by Latha Menon who has also done commercials for Fair & Lovely in India. Towards the end of the chat, we asked Yash if she had ever used Fair & Lovely, the product she is going to be modelling for. “Never before, only sometimes but I might now,” she says.

Thomson Nepal will be Nepal’s only model for the 17-year-old science student, who is already done modelling for. “Never before, only sometimes but I might now,” she says.

Yash’s picture taken for the application, “It’s been very exciting so far, and I think more people will notice me once the campaign begins,” she says. “I had not imagined all this when I had my picture taken for the application.”

A warm welcome to our SAARC delegates

We think the region and beyond.

Use our advantage to yours