



## EXCLUSIVE

### One Congress too many

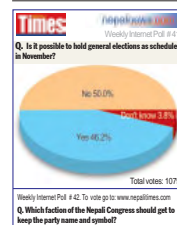
The Election Commission is having a tough time figuring out which is the real Congress. One of the reasons is that the three commissioners have political soft spots for three different political entities: Deuba, Koirala and the RPP. The EC also has a history of taking time to decide: it took three months to rule on the Baburam Bhattarai vs Lila Mani Pokhrel tussle in 1994 over the Jana Morcha split.

All this dilly-dallying is making the two factions of the Congress very nervous. The deadline for registering new parties expires 9 July. The rump Congress will therefore need a ruling by Monday morning at the latest, and at the pace things are moving, many say that is unlikely. Both Deuba and Koirala have been issuing vague threats of a boycott if they don't get the party's all-important tree symbol. But both also have fall-back options of joining two of the four new parties that have been registered with intriguing names like Rastriya Nepal Congress and Nepali Congress Party.

Meanwhile, the EC has asked security agencies to begin assessing the requirements for the polls, based on which it will decide how to hold the elections—phases, polling centres, etc. But there is another "what if" before that: the Supreme Court verdict on litigation demanding that the dissolved House be reinstated.

### More Indians

First, the good news. For the first time since June last year, the number of Indian tourists has gone up—doubled, in fact. Arrivals were 8,480 in June, up from the 4,101 in the same month last year. Now the not-so-good news: there were fewer third country visitors. Their numbers slid about 13 percent to 5,300. Overall, the tourist arrivals are down 40 percent compared with 2001.



**MOHAN MAINALI** in KHANDHARI  
Monsoon mist slides through the forests. In the valley below, the Arun river flows placidly southwards, and the terraces sway with ripening corn. It is hard in the idyllic hills of eastern Nepal to imagine that fear and death stalk the villages. And it is even more difficult to imagine how the November general elections can be held here.

The usual bustle of Khandhari's bazaar is gone. Small groups huddle in the teashops, whispering and warily scanning the streets outside. The town has been under a dusk to dawn curfew since 26 November.

"You might be an informer, or even a Maoist, why should I talk to you?" asks a young man at the local inn, his eyes averted. Four months ago, Maoists beat and threatened to kill him. The boy fled his Barabise home and came to Khandhari. "He still hasn't gotten over it," his lodge owner explained. "His wounds have healed, but his mental scars are deeper."

Lonely party flags flutter over the roofs

of political party offices here in the district headquarters of Sankhuwasabha. But the offices are deserted. Everyone we spoke to last week is just trying to get by: survive from day to day, maybe catch up on the World Cup. An election is the last thing on people's minds.

"I don't think we can hold elections if the Maoists oppose them," DDC chairman Tula Prasad Neupane told us bluntly. "Even if the military guards voting centres, I don't think people will come out and vote."

Sankhuwasabha is the equivalent of Rolpa in the east. This is where the Maoists began organising their eastern command,

and spread towards Taplejung. Even though their presence here is not as strong, one-fourth of the villages are under the sway of Maoists. VDC officials have been forced to resign, and many have moved to Khandhari or Chaupur. VDC buildings have been torched, and all records destroyed.

Most local members of the Nepali Congress and the RPP have already been killed or have fled. "Some of those still around can be seen at the fortnightly all-party meetings, and that is about all the political activity happening around here," says Dambar Khadka of the UML. Khadka says it is getting difficult for the UML, too,

but his cadres are still in the villages. Some UML party workers have dealt with Maoists, and because of that have been picked up for questioning by security forces.

Now, the elections will make the UML a target of the Maoists, many of whom are ex-UML themselves, and will have scores to settle. Senior officials like Banu Shukla, Badri Hang Lingthepu and Netra Regmi in the Maoist's "district people's government" are all ex-UML.

# The east is red

A firsthand account of the insurgency from Sankhuwasabha district.



Editorial  
Animated suspension

## Surrealist history on canvas

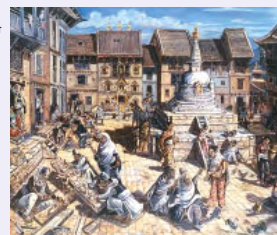
Hari Prasad Sharma lives in the past. He can imagine in minute detail what community life in a Patan baha might have been like 400 years ago (right), or enter into Jaya Prakash Malla's dreams of Taleju Bhawani. And he can put this imagination with extraordinary skill into

breath-taking three-dimensional paintings. Sharma, in his extensive research and meditation on Kathmandu Valley's lives and times, seems to have absorbed something of the quality that has made it what it is—a combination of deep knowledge of history and tradition and technical expertise, and the vision to innovate, based on these two. All the works in Sharma's current show, Kathmandu Valley: Down the Ages, are

oil, and while they are loosely 'realist', there is a slightly off-kilter perspective, colours either muted or exaggerated with an almost crayon-like boldness, corners, hills and clouds sometimes deliberately cartoonish that force the viewer to meditate on the plasticity of the work. It is this lack of pretence to authenticity that gives Sharma's scenes their immediacy and emotional resonance. They are more "real" because they are so highly individual.

This show is an important step for the 65-year-old Lagan Tole native whose career has been marked by a nuanced understanding of tradition and its place in contemporary life.

(Kathmandu Valley: Down the Ages is on at the Nepal Art Council Gallery, Babar Mahal until 10 July, from 11AM-6PM everyday.)



WELCOME TO HONDA CITY

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As things stand, the day of reckoning is 13 November—if the elections are held, and more so if they aren't. Watch this space.

**Andhoj Tamang,**  
by email



voice to protect the Right to Freedom enshrined in Clause 12 of Part 3 of the Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal (1990). Sen is just one name; the right to life of every other Nepali is equally sacrosanct. The Maoists are terrorists, so they are not bound by the laws of the land. But if the state doesn't respect the life and dignity of its citizens, its own legitimacy would be in serious jeopardy. ♦

values of civil rights and free society for which the democrats of Nepali Congress have waged a bitter, long and relentless struggle. Basic common sense is all that required to understand that for us to be able to exercise our civil rights and liberties we must first end the rule, writ and command of the terrorist forces. But the decision to continuing the on-going pressure on the terrorists got caught up in intra-party politics.

Certainly, these swift and dramatic developments came as a surprise to many, including those in the party hierarchy. A couple of ministers in the Deuba cabinet expressed surprise and resigned. (See: "Cheques and balances", by Ram Sharan Mahat, #100).

The prime minister's camp, however, feels that with his own party and the main opposition party arrayed against

recommending the dissolution of the House. The Supreme Court is now deliberating on the appeal for the reinstatement of the House. While the main opposition parties, the UML, the RPP and the Sadhbhabana Party, have agreed to go to the electorate, about 60 members of the House, including almost half the NC members, have

"peacemakers" emerged to bring about reconciliation between the two factions. They persuaded the prime minister to appeal to the central committee, seeking a revocation of the disciplinary committee's decision. Party President Girija Prasad Koirala returned from his visit to China two days later and the peacemakers met him within hours. They could not persuade

(Sagar SJB Rana, a law graduate from Oxford University, is President of the Nepali Congress District Committee, Jaljithur and a Maha Samiti member.)



● It is a shame that only 30 percent of the SLC students passed this year. It shows that the government needs to monitor government schools closely. Teachers should be held accountable for the performance of the students in the subjects they teach. What is the attendance of teachers in schools? On the other hand, recent introduction of registration of the private schools is a most appropriate step taken by the government. We all know the reason why rich private schools of Kathmandu Valley did not have to register is that they topped in SLC for last couple of years. I am happy that bribing by the private schools has been curbed to some extent. In the name of education the private schools are all out to make money. This is one of the reasons for the Maoists rising.

**Mandhoj Tamang,**

Thank you for bringing out the relevant and thought-provoking interview with Master Saheb, Asbjorn Voreland ("It is a crime to provide good education in public schools", #93) His immense contribution to the educational development of Nepal is appreciated. His aim of teaching core values of fellowship, love, compassion, equality and life-skills should be the essence of education. Unfortunately, these same qualities are severely lacking in Nepal's present education system. Ordinary Nepali folk do not value the dignity of community. As you rightly said, the present turmoil in Nepal is the result of rampant disparity and discrimination in society. More importantly, Voreland Sir's observation that 'democracy means sharing the burdens of the county and the communities', 'social dissatisfaction' and 'the lack of

instead of it being \$50, I found the charge had been reduced to only \$30. This will be a great incentive for tourists to stay longer in Nepal. It will be an even greater day when a Western Sangha, such as myself, will be able to get a visa that allows us to stay, study and

**MIRACLES**  
I was recently reading an article about scenario planning in South Africa in the early 1990s shortly after the release of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of the ban on the ANC and the other black and left-wing parties. The joke

**GLOBAL WARNING**  
Your article ("Meltdown", *Nepali Times*, #100) indicates that if the rich countries were to reduce CO2 emissions (to the level of Kyoto Protocol?) there will be no global warming and hence, there will be no danger to the glacial lakes of Nepal. This is not true. Global warming is going to

happen, that is, even when the US and other rich countries reduce their CO2 emissions to the Kyoto protocol level. The whole objective of climate change drive is not to stop the warming of the globe, but to slow down the process, which is happening too fast. Billions of tons of CO2 are being added to the atmosphere every year and the gas accumulate there. Reducing emissions from the rich countries by few percentages can only slow down this accumulation rate. The total amount of greenhouse gases, however, will continue to rise. Hence, global warming is going to continue. The only question is: This means the glacial lakes of Nepal are going to burst some day in future. The only question would be how soon? Can we slow the process? Hence, the strategy for Nepal should be the strategy of adaptation. The country needs to prepare

**\$100**

Twenty years ago, the reason to read *The Rising Nepal* on Fridays was that Kunda Dixit's Funny Side satire column. Two decades later, a good reason for buying the *Nepali Times* on Friday is because of his recent editorials, and of course Under My Hat column. In a tendentious reporting and pursuit of sectarianism by journalists and publishers, Kunda Dixit's efforts to objective journalism starve Under My Hats off, to *Nepali Times* 100th issue.

**Ravi Baral, Doha**

● Thank you Nepali Times providing us good reportage, excellent analysis, and...  
*(The author's name has been changed.)*

for the past 100 weeks you have given us a window on Nepal as we have tried to make sense of the most traumatic events in this country we love. And your paper has done it with honesty, professionalism and understanding.

*Lila Sapkota,  
Kathmandu*

**LIFE AFTER FOOTBALL**

I would like to add a few suggestions to Kunda's Dixit's proposal ("Life after football").

At 100 to stop players from pulling opponents' hair out. Rather than make jerseys of elastic material, they should be totally done away with. Instead, the players should wear their national flag. Their jerseys should be tattooed on their skin so there is no jersey to pull at. Another safety factor would be to have each player have a painful extraction of hair.

*Dr Amrit KC,*



# "I am a Badi."

**TRISHNA GURUNG** IN DANG  
Sundari was angry enough to go to court even though she can't afford it. She carries photocopies of her case like a talisman. After 26 years of marriage her husband left her to marry "someone of his own caste," she says scornfully. She wants justice, and the law to acknowledge a marriage her former husband denies. "Don't I deserve justice? Don't I have any rights?" she asks. "He ruined my life. I would have married someone else, or prostituted myself." Sundari (not her real name) will almost certainly lose the lawsuit, because she has neither the social clout nor witnesses who are willing to testify for her.

For a Badi woman, this isn't an unusual trauma—the marriage to a higher-caste man that is hardly ever formalized, and the only other option that has been a constant for close to half a century, commercial sex work. In recent years, the social stigma has taken on scarier forms—entire Badi communities have been subject to coercive, discriminatory and often violent, "social improvement" measures by village groups in mid-western Nepal.

The Badi people are a minority every way you look at it. They number around 60,000—0.002 percent of the Nepali population—and although the constitution bans untouchability and Nepal has ratified the Human Rights charter, the Badi community is considered the lowest untouchable caste by all of Hindu's Namaste. They wear "charms" and must face all the usual caste restrictions, such as not being able to use the village well.

The Badi came to western Nepal from north India in the late 18th century and relied on porting fishing and providing entertainment

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



## Badi women must now contend with vigilante 'Neighbourhood Improvement Committees' and the spillover effects of the insurgency.

for their livelihood. Under the patronage of the hill kings of Salyan, Jagruk and Musikot, they evolved primarily into entertainers, and a few generations later, Badi women had become high-class courtesans. In the 1950s, Badi people lost their royal patrons, and must entertainment ended the value of skills such as dancing, singing and making madak. The women's sex work became a primary source of income, and they became less selective about their clients.

Social Awareness for Education (SAFE), an organization that works for the legal and social empowerment of the Badi community, puts the number of commercial sex workers at around 400, though independent sources say the actual

figure is close to 15 percent of the total Badi population. But regardless of the numbers, the perception of Badi as synonymous with prostitution means that they continue to be persecuted. They must work against severe apartheid-style discrimination socially, and the simple fact that to get official papers of any sort, their children need a father's name—Badi families we spoke with said that to get a citizenship certificate is often near impossible for them. They are slowly being forced to move out of urban areas and into the countryside, with fewer options for day-wage work, and more chances of encounters with Maoists.

Although prostitution is illegal in Nepal, Badi commercial sex workers sometimes have more to

fear from their neighbours than even the police. In recent years, registered local bodies of "moral police," usually called *Tal Sudhar Samiti* (Neighbourhood Improvement Committee), have gained notoriety among the Badi community. In urban areas they are mostly high-caste men, while village committees have the occasional Badi member. The most visible effort of such bodies was a five-year campaign by the Drug Abuse and Prostitution Prevention Committee (Action Committee) in Ghorahi, a locality in urban Nepalgunj. This group said they were working to expel prostitution—in their view, synonymous with the Badi community—from their neighbourhoods. They succeeded.

Harka Bahadur Gurung,

chairman of ward 8 (Gagangari) in Nepalgunj, and its Action Committee, said to *The Kathmandu Post* in April 2001: "When we found men in Badi women's houses, we used to torture them as policemen would arrested thieves." As for the women, he said, only women activists "tortured" the Badi sex workers. A year later in May 2002, Gurung was not as forthcoming when we asked him about the violence. "What is the truth?" he answered. "The truth is that our thinking that time was different. Everyone has the right to live but not in those circumstances so in the beginning we did play a negative role, but now we're doing our best for them."

Manjia, a Women Mobiliser for SAFE, remembers the terrifying night the Action Committee broke into her house and beat her up because she, a "whore-Badi," had complained about their activities. She took refuge in the local police station with a sympathetic inspector, and neighbours took her children in. When she returned home at dawn the next day, her house had been vandalised, and her television set smashed.

Not one to be cowed down, Manjia gathered a group of women and took a 16-hour bus ride to Kathmandu to petition their case with Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khandi. She recalls, "He said he'd come to Gagangari, solve our problems. Then he hired a bus for us and sent us back. Minister Khanda never came." Shortly afterwards Manjia rented her house out to a Muslim family and moved to another neighbourhood. She does not plan to return to Gagangari.

Gurung tells us proudly that there are no commercial sex workers in Gagangari today. There are also barely any Badi. By the time the concerted segregation campaign had ended, almost all had fled, and the locality was renamed Pragatisheel Marg, Progress Road. Those who didn't flee, discretion is necessary not only because of Maoist disapproval, but because the village has its own Neighbourhood Improvement Committee.

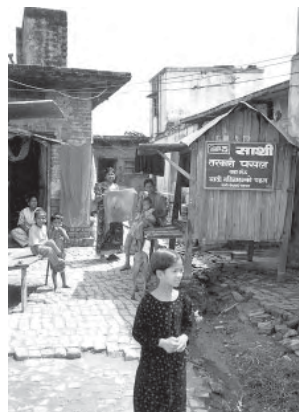
small hamlets along the highway where they continue to ply their trade.

The Badi are the target of reform for the Neighbourhood Improvement Committee in Ghorahi, Dang, as well. Thirty families live on the outskirts of town, many in mud houses built on government land. Most men work as day labourers, and the women earn a livelihood collecting grass. A few are commercial sex workers like 24-year-old Nimrula. This committee too has a simple take on crime and punishment, confiscating money as morality fines from clients and publicly humiliating the women. Its members are responsible for a network of scans on Nimrula's back, reminders of a whipping administered with stinging nettles. Unlike in Gagangari, in Ghorahi the committee was unavailable for comment, and township police professed ignorance about its activities.

Nimrula recalls the time a group of Badi women was summoned to the police station for a discussion. "There was no discussion," she said. "They intended to blacken our



by DANIEL LAK



From far left: Shanti, a peer educator for a Badi group outside Ghorahi; Harka Bahadur Gurung of the Gagangari Action Committee; the entrance to Gagangari; and Marg, Manjia's one-room house, now rented out. Manjia, who moved to another locality.

faces and parade us around town with placards saying 'I am a whore' and the women who are caught to marry the police. The women cannot afford a police case, but marriage isn't a much better option either, because most of these 'husbands' leave sooner rather than later and, for the duration of their stay, either take the woman's earnings, or borrow against them. And many have already had experiences like Sundari's, when the 'husband' runs away, leaving them with children and debts, and often, STDs.

Pardi and other women in this village have learned to take one precaution recently—insisting that their clients use condoms. SAFE initiated a peer educator system whereby the women in the community select one among their own number to be their spokesperson, and provide sex education and counselling. Shanti, the outspoken and articulate peer educator in Pardi's village, supplies free

condoms. She continues to do her job though she has been threatened by Maoists, the committees and the police.

But Shanti is afraid that her efforts will be in vain unless the marriages between Badi women and other men are not subject to the usual social norms. Many Badi women are married to men of higher castes, though these liaisons are rarely formalised, since for people living in the Hindu caste structure marriage to an untouchable is forbidden, and those who violate this 'rule' are in various ways ostracised and disinherited. Nar Bikram Thapa of ActionAid was part of the team who conducted an extensive study on the Badi in 2000. He said that many of these temporary husbands are men whose jobs transfer them to western Nepal. Even here, many Badi women, only to leave them when their tenure ends. "The prevailing logic runs along the lines that as

prostitutes, Badi can't really have a husband or a real marriage. Therefore all 'marriages' are just temporary arrangements," he said. This is one reason that ActionAid encourages Badi to marry within their community, although such compulsions on one level echo the segregation and discrimination they are facing again.

Through an alliance of NGOs and other community-based groups, Badi have found a platform to appeal for employment opportunities, skills-training and credit schemes, as well as quota system reservations, education, and—most importantly—citizenship for children born to women in the sex trade. Manjia is cautiously optimistic. "If there are problems, there are solutions. Surely the government will realise that this is not solely about the Badi community. It's about Nepal. Perhaps in time our dignity will be restored to us and we'll be able to say 'I am a Badi' with pride." ♦



## DOMESTIC BRIEFS

### No more witch hunts

At a recent party convention in Mahottari, UML General Secretary Madhuk Kumar Nepal warned party workers that the UML would expel any party member found involved in abusing or humiliating innocent women on the grounds that they might be 'witches'. In the past year, Mahottari has seen more than a dozen incidents of women accused of being witches and undergoing torture and public humiliation, and informal reports suggest that local UML representatives have been involved in some of these incidents.

### The science of prediction

On average, some 300 people die every year in Nepal as a result of monsoon floods. The Department of Hydrology and Meteorology says that while it has the manpower to predict floods and improve preventive measures, it lacks the necessary equipment to do so. Department Head Adarsh Prasad Pokhrel says that an estimated Rs 1 billion budget has already been prepared to build a advance warning system, but no donors have been found yet, although the Japanese government has promised some assistance. The department estimates that one flood prediction radar station, which costs \$10,000, can help prevent as much as 75 percent of the damage that would be caused without a warning system.

In Nepal, monsoon-related floods and landslides destroy property worth over Rs 70 million and damage over 50 hectares of land every year, and a report released by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Society says that floods affect close to 100,000 people annually here.

### Satellites to the rescue

The search continues for the Asian Airlines M17 helicopter that disappeared over a month ago with 10 people on board, even as speculation rises about whether the chopper might have been hijacked. All efforts by the authorities as well as Asian Airlines to locate the helicopter that was flying from Makalu Base Camp to Lukla have been futile. The airline says that it is trying to work with a US firm to use space satellite imaging to locate the crash site—if the chopper did indeed crash. If a deal can be worked out, this will be the first time in Nepal that a satellite will be used to locate a missing aircraft. The costs for the project are not yet known, and the airline has already spent over Rs 20 million looking for the missing chopper.

### Money for rights

The British Embassy announced this week that it will provide assistance worth more than Rs 6 million for human rights work in Nepal. The money will help the Advocacy Forum, a Kathmandu-based NGO, carry out its legal assistance and human rights monitoring work. The UK funding for the Forum will support documentation of human rights violations and legal assistance to victims of human rights violations "in accordance with Nepal law and Nepal's international commitments," Ben Schowfield, First Secretary (Human Rights) at the British Embassy, said. "It is imperative that their work be carried out without hindrance."

The International Meeting on Nepal in London on 19-20 June has stressed that the conflict represented a threat to the human rights of the citizens of Nepal, and recalled the obligations on both parties to the conflict to ensure respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the safety of civilian non-combatants.

## HERE AND THERE

There are—of course—any number of books about war. Sun Tzu, General Von Clausewitz and all the rest sit in growing rows at the banks of military staff colleges around the world. They advise the aspiring officer on tactics and strategy, how the war of wits was fought and lost, fought and won. Quotes are trundled out at exam time and the military man heads off to fight, his diploma in his hand, the words of wise war wizards of the past fading already as the shells howl overhead, and enlisted men die. This week, a suggested shelf of books on peace, or books that tell the truth about the war, and should urge us toward peace.

No better place to start than the devastating *Johany Gar* by Gun by the American pacifist and leftist, Dalton Trumbo. At first, you think you're reading a mundane account of life in Middle America, the main character Joe Bonham goes on picnics, remembers the fun he had as a child and ponders the taste of hamburgers. But no, Joe isn't living his highly typical life, he's dreaming about it on a hospital bed. Joe is a living corpse thanks to sickeningly severe injuries suffered in a bomb explosion in World War I. He has no arms, no legs and no face to speak of. He cannot hear or talk. This book sears your soul with its spare horrors and Joe's ultimately futile effort to explain the evils of war by having a nurse trace letters on his bare chest, spelling words, forming sentences and ultimately being censured by the military authorities in the hospital. This book was banned in war-time America.

Journalist Michael Herr's *Dispatches* is considered by many to be the definitive book on the Vietnam War. It's fiction and fact and diary and polemic twisted into skins and worn with sadness and violence into a shattering experience that sickens and drugs by turns. It's characters ravage their brain cells with LSD and speed, and blast Vietnamese villagers into gobbers of blood and flesh. And these are not—yep you conclude—evil men who kill the civilians of the Mekong Delta, these are people who shouldn't be there, who should be ploughing, and courting their women and building businesses and living and dying amid domestic bliss. Instead, they're added killing machines whose survival means only a lifetime plagued with guilt and drug flash

## The dove's bookshelf

### It's time we all did more reading and less war-mongering.

backs into their own personal killing fields.

Soviet Communism delivered few positive things but it did give us the remarkable *Zinky Boys* by Svetlana Alexievich. Afghanistan is the setting—Moscow's Vietnam. The title comes from the battered metal coffins shipped down from Kabul in their thousands, supposedly containing Soviet war dead, often empty because officers couldn't be bothered to collect fallen

men from the battlefield. Alcohol was the drug of choice in Afghanistan, and many many Soviet veterans just drank until they died, vomiting, body functions shutting down, eyes leaking blood. Often to get money to buy poisonous home-made vodka, the soldiers sold ammunition to their enemies, bullets that might just kill them the following day as they wandered, drunk, on the front line.

Anyone who hasn't read Majais Ibsen's *Black Rain* doesn't deserve to have a position on nuclear weapons. It's about Hiroshima, Japan, and takes place on the sixth of August, 1945. Ordinary people in a middle-sized city go about their business and watch an American atomic bomb detonate about a kilometre above the centre of town. A firestorm, an ensuing jellyfish of flame and fragments of buildings, rains beneath the blast. Blind survivors, their eyes imploded by pressure and the flash of light, rush about, unaware that their skin is coming off in sheets. People stream from every exit point, not knowing what has happened to them, and die along the roads. Read this and feel sick to your stomach at what we do to each other in the name of politics, strategy and war. Read this and rage against the machine. But read it.

Finally, something dark and scientific. It's a report by Indian physicist MV Ramana called *Bombing Bombay* and it's his attempt to show how even a limited nuclear explosion above India's commercial capital would cause untold, long-lasting, unacceptable harm. Through page and page of cold, technical prose, graphs and statistics, Ramana tells us that at least 800,000 would die within hours if a Hiroshima-sized bomb were detonated in Bombay. Never mind, he says, the days, weeks, months and years of aftermath where food shortages, riots, cancer and radiation sickness will claim many, many more. It's not art. It's reality.

There you have it. The dove's book shelf. It's time we all did a lot more reading, and a lot less war-mongering. ♦



## Rupa is on her way

Rupa is impatient with those who have stereotypes about her community. She herself has struggled all her life to break these stereotypes, overcome society's stigmatisation, and now has her eyes firmly set on her career in journalism. "We have to show ourselves that we can do anything, and I want to help my community overcome its problems by making us more aware and alert," says Rupa Shrestha, a slightly 20-year-old now in college in Nepalgunj.

And what could be a more effective profession than journalism to do this. Rupa excelled in high school, and also took a master's course to be able to communicate better. "I want to bring the message of equal opportunities for all Nepalis to the decisions-makers and politicians

in Kathmandu," she told us. "I want to tell them about the real conditions of underprivileged Nepalis."

Rupa has herself lived with taunts and teasing all her life, and is convinced that this stems from ignorance among the general public about her community. "The only way to counter this is to change the public perception about us Badis," she says firmly. And Rupa also wants to reform the way media functions. "At the moment journalists are only interested in politics," she says. "There are so many social issues that need to be covered and brought to public notice. Life is not just politics." But from the looks of it, Rupa's foray in journalism may be temporary. She shows the conviction of a firebrand politician.

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NICE HOTELS & RESORTS



# Where are you, Tulsi Giri?

The catcalls unleashed by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's political dogeaters obscure his undivided devotion to democracy. Of course, he could have been more methodical in compelling Girija Prasad Koirala from the party presidency before stepping in. But he did stare at the awkwardness of a partyless premier presiding over our hard-won multiparty system.

The word of Baldevraj Chaturvedi that you can't always expect to get by the book. The process that culminated in the restoration of multiparty democracy 12 years ago, after all, was hardly a paragon of constitutionality. You no longer have to be an ex-pancha to say that. Those who wondered why the pancha didn't come out on the streets demanding another referendum on the system in April 1990 got their answer when Deuba began his first term as premier five years later.

Speaking of panchas, I don't think Deuba ever idolised Tulsi Giri, except perhaps in wanting to become the second Nepali head of government to have met the US president at the White House. So our man from Daddhura must be furious at the comparison he constantly draws with the Durbari-trained medical doctor. The consolation, however, is that every Nepali Congress prime minister has been compared to Giri by the rival faction. For Ganesha Man Singh, Koirala's go-it-alone attitude reflected the resurgence of the reactionary right. When Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was under intense pressure to resign in 1999, many kongressis and like-minded commentators were ready to wager that he would do another Giri to

stay in office.

In a hard-hitting speech in Biratnagar just before the December 1960 political change, Giri himself had accused BP Koirala of surrendering to the police. (Our comrades, too, are struggling to avoid unavailing comparisons with another medical doctor despite the fact that Dr Rameshwar Singh was not a party member.)

Although the suspicions and suspense surrounding recent political events seem to make the analogy more attractive, it is not entirely apt. The partyless ideology made a big career switch, whereas Deuba says politics is his calling at an early age. He headed the Nepal Students' Organisation during its formative years and spent

him. That way, he was vulnerable to the appeal of the local version of a political experiment sweeping across much of Asia, Africa and Latin America. When 55 out of 74 kongressi MPs in Nepal's first elected legislature ended up in the Panchayat camp, Giri became a member for a movement. It took the country 30 years to decide that the doctor's prescription was wrong and to do something about it.

By then, Giri had stepped down as chairman of the committee set up to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the system he helped establish. Deuba, by his part, is staking his rightful claim to the kongressi mantle. After a lot of cajoling, he filed an appeal against his expulsion at the Nepali Congress central working committee. But the

## If Deuba becomes another Tulsi Giri, blame it on Girija.

several years in jail polishing his resume. Even after coming to power, Deuba had to wade through much blood, sweat and tears in the defence of democracy. Remember those violent days in 1993, when militant comrades went after telephone cabinets to vent their fury at Madan Bhandari's death? The headline Deuba took as home minister also helped the Ministry of Communications policies.

Moreover, when Giri switched camps, he had little idea of what he was getting into. Crude ambition alone could not guide his behaviour. Since Giri was a player in the BP-Marika peace pacts, the depths of the fraternal fissures must have frustrated

"bushes"—to borrow Deuba's word—had already decided to lop him off the list they planned to submit to the Election Commission.

With time running out, Deuba could have formed a new party. But since he couldn't abandon the one he grew up adoring, evicting Koirala was the only alternative. Admittedly, most of Deuba's colleagues didn't think him out of personal considerations. But the show of solidarity demonstrated how this crisis is qualitatively different from the one that culminated in the departure of people like Giri, Biswasharma Thapa, Sribhadra Sharma and Parasu Narayan Choudhary.

by PUSKAR BHUSAL



from p1

## Caught in the middle

Maosists come at night and threaten to kill villagers if they don't feed and lodge them, says the UML's Karki. The next day, security officials visit those who were forced to give shelter. Karki cuts us short, and refuses to say any more: "Let's leave it at that."

Local like Sunam Shaky are caught between the army and the Maosists. Shaky owns a photo shop, and was recently taken in for questioning by the security forces for filming a Maoist meeting at Barabise. He was beaten up in the barracks and forced to sign a surrender confession. The Maosists had forced him to film the public meeting. He is not a Maoist, nor does he sympathise with them. Now he is afraid of both sides.

Waked CDO Hari Krishna Khatri said if Shaky's story was true, "I heard that he was tortured, but it happened before I knew he had been taken in. Now torturing those who want to surrender has stopped."

The government's writ does not go beyond the confines of the district headquarters. Even Tumlinggar airport is not secure, and every day policemen walk down from the Khandabari border before the flight from the Kathmandu arrives. They trek back up when the flight leaves. "They could come out of anywhere," a policeman walking with us said, pointing to the thick forest along the trail.



Police guard the daily Kathmandu flight at Tumlinggar.

Actually, it may not be so difficult to bring the Maosists under control. Security sources estimate there are only 100 hardcore Maoist militia in the area. But with threats and intimidation that has been enough to prevent disruption of voter IDs. When the government forced villagers to apply for voting cards, the Maosists captured the camera and election field teams.

CDO Hari Krishna Khatri said that only a quarter of eligible voters have IDs. But he has his orders: make sure elections are held. "We will try to have as many polling booths as we had in the 1999 election," he told us optimistically, but admitted it will depend on the security situation.

Nepal Congress worker, Sher Bahadur Ban has serious doubts about the poll taking place. "You're joking, right?" he says. "You can't even hold SI C exams here, how can you hold elections?"

As elsewhere, there is a steady depopulation of the hills. Many villagers are either in Khandabari, the better off are in Kathmandu, others have migrated to India, or are trying find work in Malaysia or Qatar. Says a teacher in Chaudhary: "We have just received a new order from the Maosists. Either pay five percent of the salary as revolutionary tax, or get out."

SPONSORED SECTION



# The Modern King of a New Nepal

From his very first pronouncement King Gyanendra has shown commitment to the letter and spirit of the constitution. Prabhakar SJB Rana pays tribute to the king on his 56th birthday.

His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev ascended to the throne of Nepal under very difficult circumstances, under the gloom and uncertainty after the great tragedy this kingdom had to bear. The trauma greatly damaged the Nepali psyche and needed individual reassurance from the institution of the monarchy, which has held this country in its long history. In these difficult circumstances, as His Majesty assumed the powers of state, he exhibited his leadership capacity by overcoming enormous personal bereavement and moving swiftly to tackle immediate problems facing both the government and the people.

From the king's very first pronouncement, he has shown commitment to the letter and spirit of the constitution and all its relevant clauses, as practised by his late brother, the revered King Birendra. It takes the form of an article of faith that modern Nepal needs a constitution under which every institution and every citizen must enjoy their rights while adhering to their specific responsibilities. Like his ancestors, he has committed himself to the observance of the constitution of the day.

On the economic front, King Gyanendra has in-depth knowledge while being aware of the difficult situation that our nation is facing on this front. His previous experiences and knowledge in this field are deep as

well as practical. This aspect of the king's in-built character should be of immediate help to his government while tackling the country's multifaceted economic problems.

His Majesty understands the physical and social fabric of his kingdom well. He has travelled with His Late Majesty King Birendra, as well as on his own, throughout the length and breadth of his country and has interacted intensively with the varied people who inhabit our land. His special gifts of communicative power and patient concentration to listen to other people's views bodies well for the future of Nepal.

As he has assumed the mantle of being the only Hindu king in the world, his understanding of the true, universal values of this ancient religion with all its connotations should strengthen the national aptitude not only of Nepal, but also far beyond its borders. In this age where fundamentalism is raising its ugly head, the liberal and all-encompassing ethos of his religious belief and practices should stand well for the well-being of his countrymen to move steadily in this new century.

His Majesty's keen interest and knowledge of conservation will be of great value in this age of acute environmental concerns, and will help Nepal preserve its environment in the age of economic globalisation. The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation stands as testimony to put his ideas into action. Today, the

kingdom is in a state of confusion, frustration and cynicism because of a very real life. Nepal's transition to modernity and progress has been difficult. So much so, that we will not accept reality but would like to

be swayed by myths, hearsay and conspiracies. In an age of instant and constant communication, conspiracy as a concept must be translated into committed action. The Nepali monarchy has in the past tried to steer the country towards the future while recognising constraints inherent in its functioning. While city-dwellers downplay their advancement with cynical indifference, the real people of Nepal—the majority—do not find change in their daily life of misery and injustice because of the constant change of systems. In such a prevailing atmosphere, a decisive king, endowed with the understanding of today's world, should be a guiding focus to the nation as a whole.

His Majesty King Gyanendra, though having come to the throne under unusually tragic circumstances, has both the training and propensity to be an effective king in this modern age. However, the king alone cannot deliver unless all segments of Nepali society and citizenry are also equipped to fulfil the rising expectations of today's Nepal. In this joint endeavour lies the future of the kingdom and its king.

**Prabhakar Rana is Chairman Emeritus of the Scavenger Group. This article is from Kingdom on Edge edited by Subarna Chhetri and Suresh Malla and published by The Hidden Treasure, Kathmandu.**



On the Auspicious Occasion of 56th Birthday of

HIS MAJESTY KING GYANENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV



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c/o GTZ Office, P.O. Box 1457 Kathmandu.

The closing date for applications is 15th July 2002. Only short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview. No telephone calls, written or personal enquiries will be entertained in this regard.

**Women are particularly encouraged to apply**



# A mindful monarch

The institution of monarchy has had a special significance in the geopolitical context of Nepal since ancient times. Nepal's kings have contributed to building and preserving national identity and nationhood. Ever since His Late Majesty Prithvi Narayan Shah conceptualised a unified nation and brought scattered principalities together to form a greater Nepal, his successors have continued the traditions of the dynasty and pursued his encompassing vision. In 1950 His Late Majesty King Tribhuvan joined hands with the people in their democratic struggle, and brought about an end to the 104-year Rana regime. The historic moment when democracy was established more than 50 years ago is inscribed on Nepal's mind today. His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev is also associated with that momentous change.

His Late Majesty King Tribhuvan had secretly fled to India to lead the democratic struggle aimed at ending Rana rule. His Majesty took with him the then Crown Prince Mahendra and his eldest grandson, Birendra. The Ranas enthroned His Majesty King Gyanendra when he was three. Seeing the face of this young boy in a picture of the enthronement ceremony one realises that despite the circumstances, His Majesty Gyanendra realised the importance of the institution. Then in June 2001 an unimaginable tragedy in the royal family thrust the responsibility of being the monarch on the shoulders of His Majesty King Gyanendra once again.

There is no doubt that His Majesty King Gyanendra is committed to the precedents established by his forefathers of



world over. The project declared the entire Annapurna Region a conservation area. It has trained hotels and tourism businesses to operate in ecologically sustainable ways and create new standards for the tourism industry. The project has also laid infrastructure for conservation and the use of alternative energy systems. Gandruk, Ghorepani, Jomsom and many other areas have now emerged as success stories of eco-tourism in action. All these changes have helped raise the living standards of the people in these areas.

It is now one year after His Majesty's enthronement. It has been a period of unprecedented crisis for the monarchy and the nation. His Majesty has shown exemplary fortitude and patience despite his deep personal grief. The role His Majesty played after enthronement to guide the nation towards stability has shown that Nepal has a constitutional monarch who takes his responsibilities seriously.

In meetings with His Majesty King Gyanendra after His Majesty most graciously nominated me to the National Assembly, I have found His Majesty to be open-minded, frank and very concerned about the welfare of the country and the people. His Majesty encourages new and innovative ideas and approaches towards a better Nepal.

(Yankila Sherpa, from Kerang VDC of Solu Khumbu district, was born in Changuang Gela, Tapkhang District. She was nominated as a member of the National Assembly in July 2001.)



# Monarchy in a time of change

Nepalis can move forward with hard work and commitment under the guidance and support of the constitutional monarch, says Rajendra K Khetan.

The monarchy in Nepal is considered a unifying and integrating institution. In a country with hundreds of languages and ethnic communities, the monarchy has played a role in bringing this diversity together and using their capabilities towards national development.

Over the last 50 years, the Nepali monarchy has played an all-important role in modernising a country that did not have any contact with the outside world. King Tribhuvan went to India in support of the democratic movement in Nepal. His return to Nepal is marked as the dawn of democracy in the country.

King Mahendra's presence at a business luncheon with Indian investors during last week's India visit sent a clear message that Nepal was open to business and investment. The king's well-known role in modernisation and industrialisation, Nepal cannot move forward to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment, and the insurgency.

Nepal's monarchs have always honoured the people's aspirations and adapted the role of their institution according to the changing context. In these difficult times, Nepalis can move forward with hard work and commitment under the guidance and support of the constitutional monarch. Here His Majesty's role in development and modernisation is critical and needs close coordination with the government and civil society.

of development as per the needs of the times.

King Gyanendra ascended to the throne under difficult circumstances last year. His Majesty has expressed his commitment to play the role of a constitutional monarch for the consolidation of the democratic polity. He has also expressed his commitment to the economic development and prosperity of the nation. By visiting India, and with the scheduled trip to China, King Gyanendra has underlined the importance of Nepal's relations with both of her neighbours.

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(Rajendra Khetan is president of the Nepal-Britain Chamber of Commerce.)



# Travels with the king

Rabi Bhakta Shrestha was impressed with King Gyanendra's poise and personality during the recent royal visit to India.

Visiting India was my first experience of travelling with the monarch and I was quite apprehensive about the whole trip. But from Day One till the end, it was an entirely pleasant surprise. The king's magnanimous personality and communicative skills overwhelmed not just me but all of us on the trip.

The first royal audience granted to members of the business delegation during the flight to New Delhi was full of cordiality, and we almost forgot that we were travelling with the king. It was more like we were in the company of an affectionate guardian figure.

His Majesty's gracious presence at the luncheon jointly hosted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 25 June has given great impetus to our initiative to further economic ties with India through collaborative efforts. We at the FICCI are working closely with the two apex business organisations in India to broaden and facilitate the economic links between the two countries. I had the honour of sharing the table with His Majesty and was impressed with his knack of keeping people at ease with his fair, style and gentle manners.

Despite his busy schedule, His Majesty graced the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the FICCI and CII on the formation of Joint Task Forces on Hydropower and Tourism development at the Royal Nepal Embassy. The Task Forces will work to chart out a road map for setting up mutual cooperation opportunities to harness water resources, and for tourism development.

Besides meeting senior political leaders of India at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, His Majesty granted audiences to various people from the private sector. All of them seemed highly impressed by his grace and friendly gestures. The members of the business delegation got another wonderful royal audience at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, just before His Majesty's departure to Kolkata. Once again, he impressed us with his personal touch and demeanour. "Our country above self" was the important message given by His Majesty during all of our audiences and meetings. The major visible characteristic and achievement of the India visit, in my opinion, is the value and deep respect bestowed by the Indian side on the visiting monarch.


His Majesty's ability to listen and absorb the feelings of others and put people at ease with his polite and compassionate manners is remarkable. The love and affection shown by His Majesty is indicative of how close he feels with Nepal's private sector. His Majesty's wish that we maintain a sense of responsibility and duty will always inspire us in the task of nation building.

His Majesty King Gyanendra's personality and poise during the visit did us proud. I believe that His Majesty's visit to India has made significant contributions in furthering and building excellent Indo-Nepal ties.

(Rabi Bhakta Shrestha is president, FICCI.)



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On the auspicious occasion of His Majesty's

# 56<sup>th</sup> Birthday

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# Royal soundbites

**On his constitutional role:** It can't speak for others... As far as I'm concerned I'm very clear on my constitutional role. At the same time let me assure you I intend to fulfil that role in the interest of Nepal and the Nepalese people. You must not forget also, the present constitution was given, communicated by my late brother King Birendra on the wishes of the Nepalese people.

**On the Maoist insurgency:** For a national problem there has to be a national solution there's no question about it. Now who should come up with this solution, how it is to be implemented has to be the concern of every one in the country. The issue of the terrorists here is not just a single issue. It is multi-dimensional. ... (T)herefore the solution must also be and must have of multi-pronged approach... I am very grateful to India for understanding our problems and for understanding our point of view for the support she has given us which is a very appreciative measure. I think the entire Nepalese population are very grateful to India for these. The issue is, yes, mired in poverty, has splashes of political misconduct, bad governance, all these factors are there. That's why everyone must put their heads together to come to some solution. On the question of bringing them to the mainstream of political life, Number one, I don't see where there is anything stopping them from coming even today. Number two, for a dialogue to take

place there has to be both sincerity and seriousness from all parties. ... If these factors are highlighted, and highlighted in such a way that the nation's interest is uppermost I don't see why there cannot be any dialogue and why we can't come to some solution of the problem.

**On foreign military aid:** Given the situation, circumstance under which the armed forces were deployed I personally feel that they have done a very good job. Given the conditions that they are having to function in, the terrain and the geography, I only have the highest praise for the Royal Nepalese Army. ... I think all the security forces in Nepal are very serious and have come to realise the gravity of this problem. When it comes to the question what can others do for us, I would like to think it very simply. I would wish that our friends help Nepal to help ourselves. That would be the wisest.



Excerpts of the interview of King Gyanendra with India's Doordarshan TV before the 23-28 June royal visit to India.

**On the people's faith in monarchy:**

A year ago, the tragedy was very traumatic for the Nepalese people. Yet the unity they showed for the institution of monarchy was something unique. What they also showed was their deep affection and respect. On the part of the monarchy, it continuously strives to uphold the wishes and aspirations of the people. ... This is something for the people to judge and we must leave it to the people.

Happy Birthday  
to  
His Majesty  
King Gyanendra  
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# Return to roots

The BJP is going back to its fundamentalist agenda.



**RAJNIT DEVRAJ** IN NEW DELHI

Indian Prime Minister Atal

Bihari Vajpayee announced Monday a new Cabinet that reflects the increasingly hardline stance of his pro-Hindu, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which leads the 23-party National Democratic Alliance (NDA) that rules the central government. In the most significant change, India's Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh has been given the finance portfolio in a swap with Yashwant Sinha, who relinquishes the finance ministry to become the new external affairs minister.

Many saw in the mid-term reshuffle the waning personal influence of Vajpayee, who has been under pressure from fundamentalist elements in his party on the one hand, and on the other, 'secular' political parties such as the Congress, that leads the national opposition and rules 14 major states directly.

Vajpayee set the tone for the mid-term reshuffle Saturday when he elevated as deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani, who holds the home portfolio and is widely regarded as India's second most powerful man. Advani is widely credited with converting the BJP, a marginal political entity a decade ago, into India's most powerful political party by leading a nationwide Hindu revivalist campaign centred around the demolition of the 6th century Babri Masjid in Ayodhya town.

Having suffered a series of electoral reverses in provincial elections to major states, including in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP has decided to revise its campaign to build a temple at the disputed site regardless of the court stay and its parties' opinion. Last week, it appointed as its chief in Uttar Pradesh, a sprawling state of 170 million, Vinay Katiyar who, with Advani, led the demolition of the Babri Masjid and who has sworn to continue demolishing mosques built by medieval Muslim invaders. On taking office, Katiyar, who has attributed the BJP's flagging popularity to tardiness in fulfilling the temple-building agenda, announced that he would now pursue that.

Another BJP leader who took part in the Ayodhya campaign and has been close to Advani is Narendra Modi, chief minister of western Gujarat state, where a pogrom against Muslims in March and April left more than a thousand people dead and 150,000 homeless. The BJP resisted demands by opposition parties as well as its own partners to sack Modi for the violence in which there was open state complicity according to several human rights organisations and the independent National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Other recent changes include

the appointment as party president at the national level of Venkiah Naidu, a man close to Advani, and who shares his hawkish views. Political analyst Mahesh Bangarjee says that these changes at the party and government level mark a return of the BJP from a comparatively 'liberal image' to its original 'pro-Hindu nationalistic

agenda"—and are a preparation for the 2004 general elections.

Vajpayee himself declared that the changes that are being made with the 'singular purpose of strengthening the party and make the functioning of the government smoother.' But many saw in the changes a diminution of Vajpayee's grip over the government and the party and that of his aides in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), a powerful cabal led by principal secretary and national security advisor, Brajesh Mishra, against which resentment has been building.

When the BJP first came to power in 1998, Vajpayee was seen as its 'moderate' face, acceptable to partners in the NDA coalition uncomfortable with the BJP's overt communalism as represented by Advani and other hardline leaders. But over time, the protests have grown feeble against the BJP's pursuit of its Hindu (Hindu fundamentalist) agenda, such as changes made to school textbooks glorifying the Hindu religion and refusal to interfere in attacks on minority groups such as Christians and Muslims. According to the *Times of India*, the BJP's allies are now acquiescing in the party's plan to revert to its original Hinduva stance. "The allies have given in knowing where the BJP is headed," the paper commented in an editorial.

"Whether the allies will go all the way and fight the next elections under Mr Advani's stewardship is anybody's guess," it speculated. (IPS)

## Latent nuclear possibilities

TOKYO—Japan's constitution binds it to peace, but the discomfort level of activists and neighbouring countries is rising amid recent remarks by top politicians suggesting the nation should have the right to possess nuclear weapons. These concerns are focused on the country's large stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium, a product of its nuclear energy programme, but which makes Japan capable of building thousands of nuclear weapons in the future.

The concern stems from statements by politicians such as Ichiro Ozawa, who in April said, "I, Japan wishes, I can produce thousands of nuclear warheads overnight to curb China. We'll never be beaten in terms of military strength." Ozawa, now leader of the opposition party, was with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party at the time. This month, cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said that depending on future political situations, Japan could choose to have nuclear weapons, though he claims he was misquoted. An aide, Shinzo Abe, was later quoted as saying it might be acceptable for Japan to have nuclear weapons "as long as they are small." (IPS)

## India's new media

NEW DELHI—A government decision to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's print media may help smaller newspapers, which have been trying to get a toe-hold in an industry monopolised by half-a-century by a handful of big newspapers. The big newspapers and the Communist parties opposed Tuesday's announcement by Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sushma Swara of a Cabinet decision to allow 26 percent FDI in print media, using the argument that even partial foreign control over the print media would compromise India's national security.

Those who welcome the decision say that a 1956 Cabinet resolution which restricts participation in the newspaper business to Indian citizens stifles the growth of smaller newspapers. Nanendra Mohan, BJP MP and owner of *Dainik Jagran*, an influential Hindi newspaper, said the new rules will "strengthen" the newspaper industry and allow smaller newspapers to access technology and funds now available only to big newspapers. (IPS)

## One nation, under who?

Everyday students in US public schools recite the Pledge of Allegiance: I pledge allegiance to the Flag, of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands. One Nation, under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All. But last month the father of an eight-year-old student filed a lawsuit with the US Court of Appeals in San Francisco claiming that the words "under god" were unconstitutional when uttered in public schools. He won.

The panel held that under the US constitution's First Amendment the recitation of the pledge by a publicly paid instructor in a publicly financed classroom was a coercive endorsement of faith in god, and so impermissible under a line of cases dating to 1971. Among them: rulings that ban prayer at school graduations, and even student-led invocations at public-high school football games. A day later the US Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, went in the opposite direction.

A recent poll by *Newsweek* magazine showed overwhelming (87-9 percent) support for including "under god" in the pledge. By a 54-36 percent margin, those polled said there was no reason for government to "avoid promoting religion." By a 60-37 percent margin, they said it was "good for the country" for leaders to publicly express their faith in god. Only 29 percent said they viewed the United States as "a Christian nation"; 16 percent see it as a "Biblical nation, defined by the Judeo-Christian tradition"; 45 percent see it as a "secular nation." Still, 64 percent think references to god are acceptable in schools, government buildings and other public settings—if no "specific religion" is mentioned.

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## VACANCY Officer - Programs

Private Sector Promotion (PSP) Project is a Nepalese-German technical cooperation project implemented by German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The Project aims to assist in Nepal's development by enhancing the competitiveness of Nepal's private sector. The Project seeks to appoint an **Officer - Programs** to provide support to a new initiative being pursued jointly with several other partner organizations.

**Key responsibilities of the position will be:**

- Coordinating the implementation of various programs/activities working closely with the Project's staff, partners and stakeholders.
- Financial management and accounting functions relating to designated programs/ activities.
- Contracting and documentation relating to designated programs/ activities.
- Conceptualizing and developing promotional materials.
- Preparation and submission of periodic reports.

**PSP seeks applicants with the following profile for this position:**

- Motivated, resourceful and energetic with a strong business and service orientation.
- Able to apply structured reasoning to help solve practical problems.
- Able to produce results with minimum supervision.
- Open and quick to learn new concepts and ideas.
- Able to work in small teams within a flexible organizational environment with a flat hierarchy.
- Highly developed verbal and written communications skills.
- A recognized degree in business studies or a closely related discipline.

**Of added advantage would be:**

- A postgraduate degree in business or a closely related discipline.
- At least three years relevant experience.

The above position is based in Kathmandu. A competitive remuneration package commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the applicant will be offered according to GTZ regulations.

Interested applicants should send their CV, a recent passport sized photograph and contact details of two referees to the address below by 23 July 2002. Telephone enquiries will not be entertained. Only short listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

Vacancy: Officer - Programs  
Private Sector Promotion Project - GTZ  
G. P.O. Box 1457  
Kathmandu

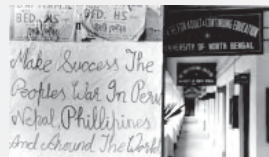
Applicants for the Project's **Business Development Officer** vacancy need not apply again. Their application will also be considered for this position.

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# Maoists in Bengal

Space Time, 27 June  
(Excerpts from a report by Lokendra Adhikari and Mahesh Das)



Pro-Maoist posters at the University of North Bengal, Siliguri.

Soon after the West Bengal government said, during His Majesty's visit to India that it would not allow its territory to be used against Nepal, India has banned the All India Nepal Unity Society. Also on Wednesday, the West Bengal government formed a special security taskforce to arrest Maoist terrorists and destroy their training grounds.

The State Police Directorate decided to deploy a special security taskforce after it was informed by intelligence agencies about Maoist activity in the forests in the northern parts of the state. The task force is well-trained and has modern communication equipment and weapons.

Indian newspapers have reported that Maoists fleeing into India have been hiding in the forests in northern West Bengal, where they are reportedly carrying out training activities.

Even though there has been information that Maoist activity is concentrated around Chodasahan, Daudanadi, Darauli, Odar, Majhi, Sibana, Gopalganj, Nautan and the Hadwara area of north Bihar, for now the special force is deployed to training centres and hide-outs in the Bagaha area. This information was seconded by Amerent Kumar Umberkar, Assistant Superintendent of Police of Bagaha. Prior to this India had set up 73 police outposts along the 750 km stretch of the Nepal-India border. In the past, the Indian police only used to frisk Nepalis headed to India and also arrest suspects along the 750km stretch from Kisanpur to Bagaha. This is the first time that a special campaign is being carried out against the Maoists.

Earlier last week, Assistant Inspector General of Police of Bihar Rishabh Shankar told *SpaceTime* that they had found evidence of links between Nepal's Maoists and India's Naxalites. He said that the Maoists were being trained with the help of the Naxalites, and that some senior Maoist leaders may also be hiding in Bihar, and hinted at some immediate action.

In the meantime, the Indian government has banned the All India Nepal Unity Society, Calcutta, a group affiliated with the Maoists. The central Indian government announced the ban during His Majesty's stay. An Indian Embassy official in Kathmandu told *SpaceTime* that the ban was imposed because for the last 17 years the organisation had been functioning in India, without registering with the government, and had been providing protection and shelter to Maoist leaders as they fled from the Indian government.

The group is also suspected of having served as a bridge between Nepal's Maoists and India's People's War Group (PWG), the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the Bodo separatists. A senior Indian official also told *SpaceTime* on telephone that the government had feared that the group was aiding Nepal's Maoists in obtaining weapons and training from foreign terrorist groups such as the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

There is clear evidence of their links with the PWG and the MCC. The official added that there are reasons to suspect their links with ULFA and other international terrorist organisations. Now if we come across Maoist activity, it will be easy to arrest them and take action against them as we do against other terrorists in India, or hand them over to the Nepal government," the official said.

Hari Acharya of the Nepal Communist Party (Masal) says that because the Society was being used as a shelter for Maoists as well as a source of financial support and training, its ban would have major consequences. Acharya is a former active member of the Society and former MP. He added: "They were spreading confusion by using the name of the group, legally registered, and affiliated with our party, the All India Unity Society. Now we are assured that the name won't be misused."

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## Case closed

Deshantar, 27 June  
४७४-४७५-४७६

The Lalpur Appellate Court has upheld the rights of Martina Joshi over the insurance of her husband, Captain Jay Krishna Joshi, who was killed in the Nicon Air plane crash. Captain Joshi's mother Indu Joshi had filed a case at the Patan court claiming that she was entitled to half the insurance money. Earlier, Indu Joshi had also filed a case with the Kathmandu District Court, which had decided against her plea.

The legal confusion over the rights to Captain Joshi's insurance money seems to have arisen basically because of an administrative mistake on the part of Nicon Air. The employment documents issued to Captain Joshi identify both his wife and mother as the beneficiaries of the total insurance money to be awarded in case of his death. Martina only learnt this after the death of her husband. In order to avoid the legal hassles, Nicon Air suggested splitting the insurance sum in two. Martina refused, on the grounds that she had a child to raise, and that her husband had already legally broken ties with his immediate parental family before his death. To establish her claim over half the insurance money, Indu Joshi went to the Kathmandu District Court.

The Kathmandu District Court in August 2001 decided in favour of Martina, stating that since the legal documents at Nicon Air identify Martina as the first beneficiary, she had legal right to all of it, and so any claim made by Indu Joshi was not valid. The Patan Appellate Court upheld the district court's verdict, and awarded her all of Captain Krishna Joshi's \$300,000 insurance.

## Who's responsible?

Editorial in *Deshantar*, 30 June  
४७६-४७७-४७८

The news of the death of Krishna Sen 'Chikku' resulting from intense and inhuman torture in police custody has shocked not only in Nepal, but journalists all over the world. The first responsibility of any government is to protect the lives of its citizens and also that of foreigners within its territory. The government's appalling that it begins murdering citizens it has taken into custody for investigation. Such government can be used at the international court. If there are more murders like that of Krishna Sen, the governments (responsible for them) are rejected by the people when it comes time to ask for their support.

Of course, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that anyone—a journalist or a literate—would have to face punishment if they have been engaged in terrorist activities. And that everyone has to be ready to face punishment that is meted out in accordance with the law. But the constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal abolishes the death penalty and says that no laws will be made toward that end. In other words, even if government sticks the terrorist label on its detainees, it cannot enforce the death penalty...

The activities of the Maoists were terrorist acts from the very beginning. They attacked the police who were deployed to protect the people and their property; they attacked and killed Nepal Congress workers and even teachers. They attacked development projects.



That is why those who thought, when they were together, that they were a friendly force, and those who came into power with their support, must also bear the responsibility for their acts. Our constitution does not allow anyone to move around with illegal weapons, but between July and November last year this same government allowed them to organise public meetings where they showcased their weapons. The Maoists built up their organisation on the basis of strength derived from carrying weapons and also authority to recommend a house dissolution, while in the present case the petitioners have pointed out that elections are impossible during state of emergency. Formerly, the court had said that "resigning from a prime minister's post and recommending a house dissolution were separate matters and it was a prerogative of the prime minister to recommend to dissolve the house under the article 53(4) of the Constitution."

Justices Mohan Prasad Sharma, Krishna Jung Rayamajhi and Gobinda Bahadur Shrestha concurred in their respective arguments in the Koiraal case that the right to dissolve parliament rested only with a prime minister and even the Monarch was denied that right without a recommendation from a prime minister. It cannot be claimed that a prime minister will recommend the dissolution of the House only to influence the people's opinion about a government's policy and programmes. But he might recommend a dissolution if he feels it is essential for the political situation of the country, it can also be an attempt to garner a fresh people's mandate. These are political issues where a court decision is not needed.

Similarly, Keshav Prasad Upadhyaya and Laxman Prasad Aryal had argued against the majority opinion that resigning from the post of prime minister and recommending the dissolution of the House could not go simultaneously, but both of them, along with Justice Kedar Prasad Upadhyaya, concurred that it was a prime minister's prerogative to recommend a dissolution. The present case is different from Koiraal's case—here the prime minister has recommended that the House be dissolved without resigning from his post.

The Supreme Court's decision on the court's will remains a matter for speculation. However, there is no doubt that the prime minister's recommendation is constitutional. It is not the court's responsibility to decide whether or not decisions are possible, and there is no law that prevents the dissolution of the House during a state of emergency. There is a constitutional provision that the term of parliament can be extended by a year in case of emergency, and it is not mandatory that the term of parliament be extended, and neither does the Constitution require that a general election be held.

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Singh, Dilip Kumar Paudel and Narayan Prasad Khatri. The Chief Justice, Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, Krishna Jung Rayamajhi and Gobinda Kumar Shrestha were also the members of the special bench that heard the writ filed against Koiraal's decision to dissolve the House in 1994.

Koiraal was a majority prime minister and the petitioners had alleged that his decision to dissolve the house was "ill intentioned." He was also accused of political misconduct, due to his controversial involvement in the infamous RNAC scandal and the Tanpur treaty. The court decided in favour of Koiraal, saying that the charge of "ill intention" needed to be substantiated by concrete evidence.

In the former case, the petitioners had claimed that the prime minister who had resigned from his post did not have an authority to recommend a house dissolution, while in the present case the petitioners have pointed out that elections are impossible during state of emergency. Formerly, the court had said that "resigning from a prime minister's post and recommending a house dissolution were separate matters and it was a prerogative of the prime minister to recommend to dissolve the house under the article 53(4) of the Constitution."

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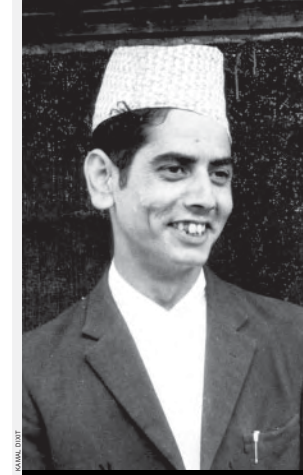
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## NEPALITERATURE

by MANJUSHREE THAPA

# Bhairav Aryal II



Part two of one of a classic essay of Nepali literature. Bhairav Aryal is one of the best-loved essayists of modern age, writing from the 1950's till his untimely death in the 1970's. He was a satirist who commented on the absurdities of modern Nepal, as well as a journalist and editor. The essay below, written during the years after the royal takeover of 1960, speaks well of the bungling of the Panchayat years.

## THE INTERNATIONAL FROG CONFERENCE

A two o'clock at night, I lay down on my bed with torn sheets. Like the guerrillas that descended from Fomosa during the Chinese revolution, bedbugs descended on me from the walls and corners. Like the fighter jets that roared above Japan in the second world war, mosquitoes whined by the light of the lamp. My thoughts were speeding ahead to tomorrow's routine—at six o'clock the Health Minister was going to inaugurate the cleanliness campaign, at ten o'clock the cornerstone of the fish pond was to be laid, and in the evening there was a screening of Nepali poems at India House, a screening of Himalayan films at the American Embassy, an official dinner of the Foreign Minister at a British function, and the celebration of Rabindranath Tagore's birthday at the statue of Bhanubhakta Acharya.

I'm just a journalist, but if I may speak honestly, I see that today's people spend all their energy on forming committees, and all their intellectual work on passing proposals. I alone have joined five committees: I'm the chairman of the construction committee for the neighbourhood toilet, the chief minister of the council for national dress, the propaganda minister for the jobseekers' club, the joint secretary of the underemployed restoration group, and the finance officer of the international elements stay-up group. There is probably why my son has also gathered together all his friends and formed a committee for playing marbles which has unanimously passed a proposal to not play marbles on the road, even though his own hand, broken when a motorcycle hit him as he played marbles on the main street, isn't yet fully healed. One of these days, the mother of my son will also gather the energetic women of the nearby houses and form a hair combers' committee.

But I am not a coarse man so narrow as to dislike committees, meetings, speeches and proposals. I'm a vigorous man of the twentieth century, a journalist who reports upon man, the heirloom of an atomic age that shrinks with rockets and expands with pockets! And so my mind began to race, once again, over worldwide gatherings, meetings, committees and conferences of the past, future and present. And as I listened to the juicy speeches of mosquito politicians, I drifted off far away, to an international frog conference, where on the main door I saw a sign written, in words that were bigger than frogs: 'International Frog Conference'.

The International Frog Conference had been organised by the Fewa lake in Pokhara. Frog representatives had gathered from most of the main rivers of the world, carrying their national flags. There was a crowd of journalists and photographers on the lake's shore. At the Baraha temple at the middle of the lake was a pedestal decked with flags from all over the world. A local frog stepped forward to make the introductions and to give the welcoming address, and photographers pressed forward, allowing each other aside. Journalists got their pens and notebooks ready. I too was standing at the bottom of a tree.

The local frog began by pointing at a tall, fat, red-and-white frog: "This is the leader of the Mississippi delegation, Mr Old S Dollar." Everyone started to clap and shake hands. The local frog pointed to an attractive, slimly frog—this is the leader of the Volga delegation, Marshall Lartov." After that, he introduced the Thames and Seine delegations' leaders, then introduced the leaders of the Huanghuo delegation and the Ganges delegations. I had to go out as the introduction of the Bagmati delegation's leader, Tantor Singh, was going on, and when I returned, the welcome speech had finished.

I found out, from a pile of papers distributed at the meeting, that the objectives of the conference were—the conference was being held to discuss—the major problems of the world. The main topics of discussion were—

1. An immediate ban on the practice of throwing nets and explosives into rivers.
2. Peace and goodwill between all rivers, based on the five precepts of Buddhism.
3. Consideration must be given to the problems of small rivers.
4. Arrangements must be made for the housing of frogs during the dry season, etc.

These are the main issues of the day, and surely a few decisions would emerge from the ensuing debates. After all, when there are any problems in our village, all the elders get together in a panchayat meeting and make decisions. All the world's brains have gathered here, I reminded myself.

But even as I thought this, there was already a commotion going on about who to elect as the conference's chairman. One group was proposing Marshall Lartov, another group was proposing Mr. Dollar. Their arguments grew so sharp that they began to hurl accusations at each other, pouring out all the anger stored up from their ancestors' times. After a four-hour argument, those who had the loudest voices all formed a joint chair-group.

After that, there were excellent, intellectual speeches, clapping, and a variety of proposals from a variety of delegations. I was raising my stubby pencil through my notebook with all my might when another commotion broke out. Even as he spoke on the problems of small rivers, a leader from a big river struck out against small river delegations.

His saying was—no matter whether the river was big or small, frogs must rule over them. If not, tadpoles would take over. How could there possibly be equality between large and small rivers?

As he said, a scuffle broke out elsewhere. I got scared, and tried to flee, but an old journalist said, "Didn't you know, in frog's language, the five precepts of Buddhism mean five punches." And indeed, everyone was punching out each other, and nothing could be heard but the sound of punching. Marshall Lartov and Mr. Dollar too started to exchange blows. What of the problem of explosives, what of world peace?

The fish that had come to the conference started to shout—Save us, save us! Don't stamp on us simple fish! Don't pollute the clean water by letting a few fat-bellied frogs scuffle in it! But what effect could the cries of fish have on the head frogs? Who reads the Vedas when they are angry? One of the frogs jumped up and let out a loud belch, and—suddenly, there was a huge blast in the lake. I too awoke at that sound. And I looked at my watch and saw that I was already late for the inauguration of the cleanliness campaign. My eyes were still seeing visions of the frog conference, but what could I do? I told myself—The fox will carry off the hens if the old women turn towards festivities—and ran off to my next program.

## ENCOUNTERS

by MEGH RANJANI RAI

# Lalupate

Where does her wisdom, common sense and compassion come from?

Dejected women looking at life with compromised eyes. Some still retain a semblance of a faded glory. Checks sunken and lined, but the complexion and skin still glow with life. They are the women I see these discarded frowns, willing blooms in my encounters. Some were a part of a Ranaji's harem, others were unrequited souls who went as part of the bridal baggage—the *kumaris* born to spend their youth, their innocence in the corridors of stucco palaces. Handmade fans, pleasure objects, used, mistreated and discarded, and then married off to some older man—second wife, third wife or bonded slave.

And that was the story of my massage lady. At 75, she comes into my life. Like a Rana retainer from her childhood, she wants me to keep her. It is what she is familiar with: a benevolent *malik* who takes care of her. 'Maabhi, where will I go?' She comes every Saturday to work her magic fingers on my city fab skin, kneading and prodding and rejuvenating my tired muscles.

She is Badi Ama to the public, but she tells me coquettishly that she used to be known as Lalupate, the poinsettia. Her hair is silver, and braided neatly to the back. She talks of her time, while rubbing pure mustard oil on me. It smells, but she will not be swayed. The best kind is mustard oil soaked, and she says the oil has to be rubbed in until it is completely soaked by the little pores on my skin. It's true, by the end of it I feel like a sponge.



This is a lot of work for someone of her age, but she says don't worry I need the company. 'I am alone, no husband, no son and so I come to you because I have no one. If I sit at home I get depressed.' And she comes to me like a grandmother I have lost. She listens and counsels me. She gives me advice, financial: I should save money for my old age. And, personal: don't even think about marrying again. (God forbid.) And health tips: the best thing for women is to be healthy, work and not be dependent upon any man. Who says there is no gender perspective in Nepal? Where does her wisdom, common sense and compassion come from?

As a lady in waiting for a maharaja, she has travelled a lot. To far off Banaras, Boudha, Delhi but has not yet seen Manakamana. My children are curious about her chores in the palace. She carried scented water for the ladies bath, looked after the kitchen. Today, she goes to the shops to buy beer for her kitty parties.

She was named Lalupate for her lovely skin and rosy cheeks, which reminded her benefactor of poinsettias. There were many others like her, with floral names equally exotic: Champa, Channell. Now she is alone, surviving on her savings and the wages of her magical hands. Her magic steps and hunched shoulders took her from place to place, sometimes earning more than Cathy Minnab and the Japanese lady (they pay more because they are foreigners) than from locals like me. My *dhabya*, my *phupus* and my flab happy friends (it's Rs300 and Rs 20-30 for a massage).

Lalupate has a marketing strategy, too. The moment you mention a friend, out comes that two-by-two tattered notebook and another phone number is jotted down.

She will come again, I know, another Saturday morning when she is running low on cash. It will again be too tempting to resist, and I will be down for the mustard magic of Lalupate's fingers.

Placeards - Nepal Congress  
"Beware of phoetics"

४७८-४७९-४८०  
Himalaya Times, 30 June

**HIMAL**  
THE POLITICS OF PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY  
WATER WAS ALONG THE INDEX  
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WORKING WITH HINDUISM  
STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY  
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## Picking apart Pakistan's political economy in the July Himal

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WRITING WITHOUT BORDERS



## ABOUT TOWN

## EXHIBITION

❖ **Kathmandu Valley: Down the Ages** Paintings by Hari Prasad Sharma depicting life in ancient and medieval Kathmandu. Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal. 5-TKTK July. Himal Association and Kathmandu Metropolitan City. (see page 1)

## EVENTS

- ❖ **Training program** organised by UK charity on Professional Writing and Report Writing from 8-12 July. Details at [www.eld.org.uk](http://www.eld.org.uk). 524202
- ❖ **Friends of the Bagmati** General meeting 6 July, 10.30 AM at the Bamboo Club, Thamel. Students particularly welcome. [friends@thebagmatinepal@yahoo.com](mailto:friends@thebagmatinepal@yahoo.com)
- ❖ **Namaste Banepa** educational project seeks input and ideas. [nvstax@vlink.com.np](mailto:nvstax@vlink.com.np)
- ❖ **World Book Day Exhibition for Children** 9 - 12 July, 8.30 AM-5.45 PM, at the British Council, Lainchaur. 410798

## MUSIC

- ❖ **Dinesh & Pemba** Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526
- ❖ **Teesta** Rox the house Friday and Saturday nights, music from the 1950s-1990s. Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
- ❖ **Live music** by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 1/2 Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant, Thamel. 414336

## DRINK

- ❖ **Bottomless Draught** Unlimited draught beer between 5-10 PM everyday, Rs 400, at the Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel. 411818
- ❖ **Uncork the good times** at Dwanika's Hotel. 30 percent discount on snacks and beverages in the new Fusion Bar. 43' screen for football viewing. Swimming pool for non-football fans. 479488
- ❖ **Metre of Mals** Single malt exhibition and tasting. Twelve single malts for Rs 999. Evenings, Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 246999

## FOOD

- ❖ **Pasta Mania** Choose from a variety of pastas for Rs 111 plus tax at lunch and dinner, and 20 percent off bottled wines. La Dolce Vita, Thamel.
- ❖ **Wines from around the world** Pair wines from Chile, Argentina and Australia with Italian specialties at the Olive Garden, Radisson Hotel. 411818
- ❖ **Sandwiches of any kind** Steak, pesto chicken, lamb and more on olive focaccia, croissant, pita, baguette and other home-baked breads. 12-27 July, The Cafe, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
- ❖ **Weekend lunches** at Dwanika's Hotel. Rs 700 per head with a bottle of beer and swimming. 479488
- ❖ **Plat du jour** Buy one, get one free. Complimentary use of Sundhara Pool. Hotel Shangri La. 412999
- ❖ **Thai Food Festival** 1-8 July at the Clubhouse Restaurant, Le Meridien Kathmandu, Gokarna Golf Resort. 451212, 224399
- ❖ **Fine dining and table top cooking** Dinner at The Chimney, Hotel Yak & Yeti, starting 6.30 PM everyday. 248999
- ❖ **Wood fired pizzas** at the new Roadhouse Cafe. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel.
- ❖ **Authentic Thai Food** Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510
- ❖ **Paddy Foley's Irish Pub** A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights. 416066
- ❖ **BBQ and momo evenings** SPW onwards at Nango Cafe and Pub, Darbar Marg. 222636
- ❖ **Special Thai cuisine** at San Thai Restaurant, Darbar Marg. 243271

## GETAWAYS

- ❖ **For pilgrims and holidaymakers** Dakchinkali Village Inn overlooking Dakchinkali Temple and Pharping's Buddhist monasteries. Weekend package Rs 1,300 per person on twin-sharing basis with half board. Children from 6-15, Rs 800. [dak\\_vinn@hotmail.com](mailto:dak_vinn@hotmail.com). 710587
- ❖ **Monsoon at its best** Walk in the rain through the pristine countryside. \$35 per person per night on full board basis at the Horse Shoe Mountain Resort, Mude. [resort@hshoe.vinn.com.np](mailto:resort@hshoe.vinn.com.np)
- ❖ **Monsoon in Shivapuri** for birdwatching, short hikes, writing. 20 minute drive and 10 minute walk from Kathmandu. Two acres 6,000 feet on the edge of the Shivapuri National Park. Rs 1,850 per person with dinner and breakfast. Rs 925 per child 5-14 years. Shivapuri Heights Cottage. [info@escape2nepal.com](mailto:info@escape2nepal.com)
- ❖ **The Great Godavari Getaway** Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner. 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort. 506075
- ❖ **Writing Retreat** Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanikantha. 375280
- ❖ **Special offer** Buy one \$99 overnight package, get the second night at 50 percent. Valid for one or two people. Dwanika's Hotel. 479488

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepaltimes.com

## NEPALI WEATHER

005/05/07 00:00:00 GMT

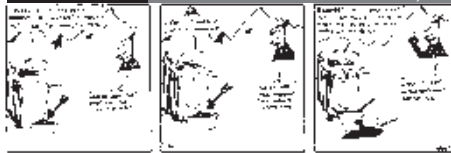
This very sharp satellite picture taken on Wednesday at 9AM Nepal time shows the progress of the monsoon front across the subcontinent. Western Nepal is affected by a front stretching up from the Arabian Sea, and the centre and the east are reeling from a circulation pushing up from the Bay of Bengal. Although late, the monsoon showers finally allowed farmers to transplant paddy this week. However, the monsoon trough from the Bay of Bengal is still not its robust self and this may indicate lower than average rainfall over central and eastern Nepal. There may, however, be localised cloudbursts in the midhills and the tarai during this period.

## KATHMANDU VALLEY

Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
30-20	30-19	30-20	31-21	31-21

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

## YAK YETI YAK



by MIKU

## BOOKWORM



**Kailash Mandala: A Pilgrim's Trekking Guide** Tsewang Lama  
Himal Conservation and Development Association, Simlok, Humla, 2002  
Rs 800

Tsewang Lama, a Humla MP, has written articles on the society and economy of western Nepal and has worked with international media companies on several documentaries. Lama, who comes from a long line of Nyingmapa lamas, discusses the history and practices of trekking in Humla and the Nigiri region of Tibet, which make up the Kailash Mandala, the periphery of Mt Kailash.

**Dalits of Nepal: Issues and Challenges** Prabodh M Devkota, ed  
Feminist Dalit Organization, Lalitpur, 2002  
Rs 500

A collection of essays on the legacy of power and the politics of image in the formation of dalit identity, the social and economic conditions of Nepali dalits, the education and health status of dalit women, and their legal and political position. Also included are essays on dalits and their music and other performing arts, and their search for a voice and representation in the mainstream.



**Population Polarization at Kathmandu Metropolitan City: An Investigation** based on Ward 13 and Ward 34  
Professor Singh of the Central Department of Statistics at Tribhuvan University recently led a research and survey team that sought to identify the characteristics of the population of two Kathmandu wards to see how the demographics have changed over the years, and what the migration patterns are. A limited number of copies of this volume are available free of cost from the author. Contact: Mandala Book Point for more information.

Courtesy: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 227711, [mandala@ccsl.com.np](mailto:mandala@ccsl.com.np)

## CLASSIFIED

**Wanted: Flat in Lalitpur** at Rs 3,500 per month approximately. Contact [shrubdevi@hotmail.com](mailto:shrubdevi@hotmail.com)

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**Flowerlovers don't miss our special FUCHSIA exhibition!!!** More than 60 new and very beautiful varieties of FUCHSIA, recently imported from Europe, are on sale now, for the first time ever in Nepal. Only at THE BISHALNAGAR NURSERY, tel. 431787, five min from Bhatbhatni Supermarket, two min from Bishalnagar Chowk (turn right and downhill).

**Landrover Defender 110** 1990, 146,000 kms. Duty not paid. Price negotiable. Contact 521105 between 10AM-12 noon.

**House to let** Sitapalla Heights, 5 min. from Ring Road, 15 min. from Lincoln School. Big compound. Western style five bedrooms, two bathrooms. Servants' quarters. Motorable road. Ring 356 074, 981030322 for Hari, Shanta, Sanju or John.

**Nagarkot special at Naked Chef** Bed and breakfast, three-course gourmet dinner. Rs 800 per

- person. For reservations ring 441494, 680006
- **House for rent** Ground floor: living room, kitchen, dining room, one bathroom. First floor: master bedroom with attached bath, one bedroom, bathroom, pantry. Second floor: one bedroom with attached bath, store, lobby. Third floor: terrace and laundry room. Location: Gallitaur. Tel. 412094.

- **Stupa View and Restaurant & Terrace** at Baudhanath Stupa. Well-appointed restaurant and terraces with views of stupa and Himalayas. International vegetarian specialties, pizza from clay oven, ice cream, soft guitar tunes on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays from 5PM on. Special events on full moon. Open daily 11AM-8.30PM. 480262.

- **K-Tool Beer and Steakhouse** not the "longest", "highest", "first" or any other superlative. Just a relaxed, easy-going bar and restaurant with the coolest beer and juiciest steaks this side of the moon. By the Kathmandu Guest House. 433043

- **The way to Mexico** is too far. Botega Restaurant and Tequila Bar is near Thamel Chowk. 266433. 15 percent off season discount

For insertions ring NT Marketing-34.

## BBC on FM 102.4

Mon-Fri	0615-0645	BBC World Today
Sat	0615-0645	BBC Science in Action
Sun	0615-0645	BBC Agenda
Daily	2045-2115	BBC नेपाली सेवा
Daily	2245-2300	BBC नेपाली सेवा



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## ART

## Art for art's sake

It is a wonderful way of using art to support art. The newly founded Jasurata Art Foundation for children put on an art exhibition at the NAPA art gallery at Bal Mandir showcasing 57 works from 23 artists, all of whom generously agreed to donate 50 percent of the proceeds of every sale to the foundation so that orphaned and underprivileged children may be able to pursue a career in art and ultimately, support themselves as artists.

The works themselves ranged from the stunningly captivating to the mediocre. Erina Tamrakar's luminous works of a woman holding a child were sensuous and romantic. She is a genius with colour and her works evoke an immediate sympathetic response from the viewer. She works



without planning her compositions or her colour scheme—one can tell that one is looking at a work that comes impulsively as a result of a deep and immediate response to her subject. Another artist whose work was entrancing is Asha Dongol, whose works consist of figures fleshed out with bold slashing lines and dashing colours (see left).

But more than the painters themselves it is the idea behind such an exhibition that is so compelling. We live in a world where art is constantly relegated to the background, and even people who love art only pursue it as a hobby or an interest. For once, a group of people have realised that art can help keep body and soul together and that there are people in this world who may yearn to pursue their love of art but can never find the means to do so. Members of the Jasurata Foundation say that for them, art is as important as medicine and mathematics, and they have taken the first crucial steps towards providing needy children with the opportunity to become artists. Perhaps our education system can learn something from this. ♦

## The lives and times of Kathmandu



Kathmandu Countryside, with towns on elevated grounds and fields in the lowlands.



Water Spouts, which also served as meeting places.



Threshing Chiura in Okhla, often a communal activity.



Nawaratri Baja, Kathmandu pilgrims touring the Valley, playing the old nauratri baja.

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## Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

# Crooks R Us

Being a country that is now filing for bankruptcy protection, Nepal is always ready to continue providing the Americans with technical assistance and knowhow in corporate fraud and malfeasance at the upper echelons of government.

We have to hand it to the Americans, though; they are quick learners. How else could they have got the hang of our underhand modus operandi so quickly? It has only recently come to light that Enron's foray into Nepal five years ago was not about hydro-energy at all, but part of an undercover operation to infiltrate Nepali law and pick up a few useful tips on cooking the books.

The Texas energy giant then went on to put what it learnt in Kathmandu's corporate corridors to such good use, that it took them a very short period of time to become successfully bankrupt. But not before the CEO of Enron had dumped all his personal stock in the company at a premium and made millions. He was only following what his big boss, Dubya, had done earlier with two-thirds of his stock in Harken Energy Corp. You can be sure both CEOs learnt all the tricks here in our favourite landlocked Himalayan kingdom, where the primary national axiom is: "Take ye money and run."

The Americans may think that they are the world's greediest superpower, but there is still a trick or two they can learn about greed from us pros. Where else but here would you find such a concentration of world-acclaimed experts in corporate accounting fraud, fictitious asset sales, insider lending and stock price manipulation?

These are practices which we have over the centuries honed into fine art and architecture. We can today share this knowledge on the modus operandi about laissez-faire with savoir-faire while devouring the

hors d'oeuvre tray when no one is looking. Large parts of the world are still squeamish about stealing cash and kind, but here we have all this expertise at our fingertips. Our secondary national axiom: "Just don't get caught."

Seeing that Enron had a leg up on them, hordes of American corporate giants began trooping to Kathmandu, among them great names like Adelpia, Xenon, Tyco, Arthur Andersen and Martha Stewart.

The last to arrive a few months ago was WorldCom and all it took was a brief stint at the KSE for them to get the hang of selling low-making subsidiaries at inflated prices by profit manipulation, buying off the competition with worthless stock options, claiming capital gains as profit and then rigging a bonanza sale of stock at astronomical prices. No wonder that our tertiary national axiom is: "Crooks R Us."

There are other tricks that we haven't yet taught corporate America, but let's not be too greedy, shall we? Nevertheless, since it is the fourth of July weekend, we will give our American friends a few nifty profit-making tips, gratis.

1. Legalise fuel adulteration. Mixing 50 percent kerosene in diesel is now more or less legal in Nepal, and we have discovered that it can bring down gas prices, increase mileage, and double the share prices of the national oil companies.

2. Get the Japanese to install traffic lights every 20 metres on the steepest sections of your uphill. This will ensure more fuel consumption, which will also contribute to global warming, which will lead to more air-conditioner sales, which will double the GNP.

3. Declare a federal holiday every time George W Bush travels abroad on a state visit. No need for citizens to work so hard, when making money is so easy.

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