Weekly Internet Poll  # 87

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Patan Museum Cafe

We have extended the opening hours of the Patan Museum Cafe. From 1100 – 1900 hrs
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ANALYSIS by KUNDA DIXIT

June 2001 seems like a bad dream, but Nepal has now woken up and have decided to move on.

The tragedy left scars on the national psyche that will never completely heal. All we can do is try to deal with the legacy, learn its lessons. The single most significant consequence of June First was that King Gyanendra became king. Thrus onto the throne after the death of his brother and nephew, he has to come to terms with a deep personal tragedy while simultaneously having to learn the essence of statecraft at the most turbulent time in the kingdom’s history.

Last year, in a candid television interview, the king told Durga Nath Sharma: “I am not like my brother, I can’t sit idly by while the country sinks deeper into crisis.” What he meant by that was soon clear: Prime Minister Deuba was sacked a few months later. The king then appointed a cabinet of trusted political figures and technocrats, and got Col Narayan Singh Pun to forge a ceasefire with the Maoists. But he was less successful with trying to convince the political parties to join his government.

The five parliamentary parties first went into a deep sulk, but regrouped to launch a united street agitation. In reality, they felt left out of the peace process, and had dark misgivings about the country being dragged back to pre-1990 days.

It is a measure of how low the stock of the political parties has fallen that there hasn’t been a groundswell of public support for the anti-royal agitation. The public generally seems to regard this as a power play, and don’t want to jeopardise the peace process. But public opinion may shift if this stalemate drags on. A recent survey (Nepal Times: 06/04) showed people overwhelmingly reject a return to absolute monarchy.

Grijha Prasad Koirala was prime minister during the royal massacre. He is now leading the charge against the king, still threatening to disclose some mysterious “grand design.” The UML’s supreme Machab Kumar Nepal refused to join the royal commission to probe the massacre, and he is now hand-in-hand with his rival Koirala on the streets.

Speaker Tarana Ramnath headed the commission and released the report that became the only official inquiry into the palace killings. He earned the nickname ‘Bhatata’ after re-enacting the murder scene by holding up one of the weapons used for the benefit of the press (pic. right). This week Ramnath refused to join-kongres colleagues at the convening of the virtual parliament at the Academy Hall.

The Maoists tried to capitalise on the uncertainty and anarchy in the weeks after 1 May. But despite government banning Baburam Bhattarai’s conspiracy theories did not carry much weight with the public. The Nepali people, it seems, make a mental distinction between the institution of monarchy and the persona of the king.

This week the Maoists are all gathered in the cradle of their revolution for an extended politburo meeting in Biratnagar. The comrades are evaluating the last four months of ceasefire and plotting the next course of action. It doesn’t look like the peace process is in mortal danger, but it isn’t in the pink of health either.

So, two years on, the palace and parties are stuck: the main obstacle is that no compromise candidate for prime minister is acceptable to anyone else. Things seem to be veering in the direction of an RPP-led all-party coalition—that if the powers that be can decide between Surya Bahadur Thapa and Pushpa Subash Rana.

This week, the parties are bent on keeping up the pressure on the king with street protests during the Everest anniversary when the world media is in town. Meanwhile, their student wings are competing with the Maoists to disrupt education. “We have to show our fangs in public, but there is a lot behind the scenes efforts to find a compromise,” admitted one party leader, who asked not to be named. The UML plans a “protest of unprecedented proportions” on 19th May.

Only when an all-party interim set up is agreed on and in place can the task of planning for the next local and general elections begin. Before we get to that, the peace talks must be concluded and the Maoists agree to disarm.

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NAVIN SINGH KHADKA
in TENGBOCHE

White gala celebrations continued in Kathmandu. Tengboche marked the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Sagarmatha with a prayer ceremony on Thursday in memory of those who died on the mountain.

Edmund Hillary’s son, Peter, was chief guest at the ceremony, and in a moving speech said development work was just as climbing Mt Everest. “Both need dedication and teamwork, and both are things that are impossible,” Peter Hillary told gathered 1,000 local Sherpas and visitors.

It was a brilliantly clear day in Tengboche, with an elegantly tilted Ama Dablam looking down across the monastery. To the north, the summit of Mt Everest peeped over the Lhotse-Nuptse ridge with plumes of spinifex blowing off the summit ridge. On the south side, climbers have been seeing through high winds and may make a push on Thursday night itself when the winds are expected to ease.

A Russian ascent from the north was the first climb of the 50th Anniversary day.

At the ceremony in Tengboche, the monastery’s Rimpoche, who has been at the forefront of efforts to preserve the environment in the Sagarmatha National Park and to clean up the trails, thanked Edmund Hillary, his family and friends for their energy and sacrifices over the past 50 years to draw in Khris and Kala.

“For the Sherpa community Edmund Hillary is like a caring parent,” the Rimpoche said. “We feel so good for health and long life. The monastery was built after it was razed in a fire 15 years ago, and Michael Schmidt, coordinator of the Tengboche Monastery Development Project, said a visitor’s centre and expanded sacred area are being added. The meadows outside the monastery was the venue for a traditional Sherpa dance, and the New Zealanders surprised by performing a Maoist dance. The field is filled with tents, and a large one in the middle was the scene of a golden jubilee party to raise money for Hillary’s Himalayan Trust which funds development work in the Solukhumbu Region. After starting out with the school in Khumjung, the hospital in Khunde and the airport at Lukla, the Trust has built dozens of schools, hospitals and renovated monasteries in the region.

There has been a steady stream of summiteers coming off Mt Everest for the last 50 years.

A Chinese party was among those who suffered head injuries in scuffles with riot police (right). Pandey of the UML (left) during Wednesday’s march down Singha Darbar. Pandey was later arrested.

Pandey of the UML (left) during Wednesday’s march down Singha Darbar. Pandey was later arrested.

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The royal massacre left deep scars on the national psyche.

2001 was an uncertain year for Nepal, filled with trials and tribulations. Among the most heart-wrenching was the killing of Bhatatata—Tenzin, age 18, a keen mountain climber who had his left lung removed after being hit by a rock during an ascent of Mt Everest. "The important thing is set a goal for yourself and fulfil it," Appa, said, as he buried off.

Some Sherpas voiced private misgivings about whether the competition to set records on Everest was getting out of hand. Among them is Appa Sherpa, who was tearing down the mountain towards Lukla for a flight to Kathmandu after climbing Mt Everest in the 13th time. “The kind of competition is not healthy, it breeds antagonism and it will,” said one elderly Sherpa here. One fourth of the 1,702 summits have been made by Sherpas, and 175 often died on the mountain.

Two years later

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The royal massacre left deep scars on the national psyche.
Yet, there seems to be an attempt to put democracy into reverse gear, will this work? No it won’t, and for the reason I just explained. But having said that, let me add that the king has a point. You could say that his October fourth speech was not even a half-hearted attempt, but the fact is that the Maoists were at the gates. His brother, niece and former protégés were holding things up. Actually, I do. It is the political egos everyone else about berths in that cabinet, but that’s a risk that administration. Of course, my brother will then be fighting with that famous tea party for all the parties. That would set the ball rolling. A who took control, and it is his responsibility to set things right. He can’t say he that be? You’ve got a similar situation down there now. In the row between the have been in the wilderness for 30 years. But then, what kind of democracy would fighting each other like cats and dogs? They can just wait for the right moment and pounce. continue with a war if the cabinet cannot speak with one voice and the constitutional forces are and destroy it from within because they find that an easier option. Why should our Maoists armed struggle from time to time (even when they are winning) to infiltrate a weak government peace?

Mahendra Vidyashram, and Adarsha Vidya valley—Tribhuban Adarsha Vidya Mandir, Mahendra Vidyashram, and Adarsha Vidy Mandir or AVM. The Panchauret regime put a stop to private initiative in school education, and now S3B was born in the country for the next quarter of a century. Private schools made a fresh start only in the wake of the reforms induced changes in the governance in the early eighties. But when the lid of control was lifted after the success of the People’s Movement in 1990, there was a sudden rush to open schools all over the country. Many of them began as commercial enterprises and continue to run as such. The comfortable class was attracted by the idea of schools for rich kids, and the bourgeoisie began to desert public schools en masse. Shorn of their best and brightest, government schools were soon caught in the vicious circle of decreasing intake, falling standard, worsening image and dwindling reputation. But, if public schools are in a mess, the lot of the English Boarding Schools in the country aren’t any better. They too are dealing with the same issues yet they have a choice: to fight for their survival or to give in to the private schools which are here to stay. They can’t be wished away howsoever the government can do except monitoring to govern access to private schools. The government can do is to ask the parents to pay for private education fees. But that was precisely the point: before that they weren’t even allowed to complain.

So, a government of national reconciliation? Precisely. It wouldn’t be the ultimate solution, but at least it would be a start. The king’s initiative is a fantastic opportunity to reform our laws, our society, our more inclusive democracy, and deprive the power to the people through the education system. If we are to make any real progress, we need to fight with everyone else but in that cabinet, but that’s a risk that he will have to face. It is understandable that writers to consider. The first is many people are grossly by putting all private schools in the ambit of some kind of a regulatory mechanism.

The reform must begin by accepting that private schools are here to stay. They can’t be wished away howevero the egotists may want them to. In the medium term at least, it is pointless to berate the class distinction that the private schools are creating. Since even the Maoist leadership has publicly endorsed the role of private capital in the New Model of democracy, the right to exercise free choice can’t be denied to any democracy.

Second, segregating students had grievously by putting all private schools in one category. All public schools may be more or less the same, but private schools can be categorised into at least four groups: Delux, Exclusive, Superior and Economy. In order to make them more socially relevant, each one of them needs a different approach of monitoring and evaluation.

It would be counter-productive to insist that Deluxe schools decrease their fees. This cetera to the status needs of well-off parents. High fees are their USP. If they were to reduce their charges, they would immediately lose their customers to private schools in the countryside. Shillong, Darjeeling or Kodakara. Deluxe schools need to be encouraged to hike their fees and add more glamour to their bouquets—riding club, pools, sauna and heated swimming pools are not luxuries for kids likely to be chaffed on their school in Japanese SUV’s. If status defines deluxe schools, its aspirations that draw ambitious parents to Exclusives or Superiors. The rush to get into the Exclusives is fuelled by the desire of upper class parents in their Marutis and Santros to be kept up and be on top on the Janardan next door. A ceiling on fee is not more or less the same, but private schools can be categorised into at least four groups: Deluxe, Exclusive, Superior and Economy. 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Analysing the Bhutanese repatriation process, this article explores the challenges faced by refugees and the complexities of repatriation. It highlights the importance of a just and voluntary process, while also raising questions about the role of international bodies and the ongoing Maoist threat in Bhutan.

The article begins by discussing the repatriation of refugees to Bhutan, noting the high level of optimism surrounding this process. However, it cautions that the process has been marred by uncertainty and tension, with many refugees expressing wishes to remain in the camps in Nepal.

The article also examines the role of international bodies in this process, noting their efforts to facilitate repatriation and their concerns about the long-term implications for the refugees.

Finally, the article concludes with a call for a just and voluntary repatriation process, emphasizing the need for meaningful participation and accountability. It argues that the Bhutanese government must be held accountable for the conditions of repatriation and the rights of the refugees.
The Fortunate Son

HEMILATA RAI

Tenting your immortality is assured.
Your name is written in gold.
You will always be honoured.

I
You reached the top,
When the highest peak in the world
bowed to your feet…
You reached the top,
looked at the world, and
helped others climb…
Tenting, the world smiles
with pride at you.

Fifty years ago, Nepal’s folk-singer, in-dress, Dharma Raj Thapa wrote these lines after Tenzing Norgay reached the summit of Everest with New Zealand counterpart, Sir Edmund Hillary. Today, the actor-singer and writer feels that Tenzing never received enough respect or credit for his contribution in making the Sherpa community and Nepal famous around the world.

Legend has it that Tenzing’s real name was Nangyal Wangdi but a nimbic change did to Tenzing Norgay, meaning ‘goldenHillary’. A prophecy that came to happy Norgay, meaning ‘fortunate’, a Rimpoche changed it to Tenzing, the world smiles.

Today, the octogenarian singer and counterpart, Sir Edmund Hillary. Everest with his New Zealand writer Deepak Thapa who has been researching the life of Tenzing. When Tenzing travelled across the Himalaya in search of a better life, he died so with no regard to political boundaries.

American mountaineer Ed Webster’s biography of Tenzing Norgay, Snow in The Kingdom created quite a stir when it was born in Tibet instead of Thame as believed earlier. Webster says both Sir Hillary and Lord Hunt, the leader of the 1953 expedition, believed he was born in a remote mountain village in Nepal but the truth was concealed to avoid embarrassing India.

The fact that Tenzing eventually chose to settle down permanently in Darjeeling where he was born in 1914 May 1986 must have felt like a rejection to many nationalistic Nepalis.

“Tenzing had a simplicity and humility about him which made him an easy target for the media. He must have felt epitomised by the adulation the world showered on Edmund Hillary and I had to escape that” Sir Hillary and Norgay.

He points out while Sir Edmund Hillary was granted an honorary Nepali citizenship earlier this week, Tenzing—whose equal the honor—has been largely ignored. “If the Nepali government wants to honour him then it is with an honorary citizenship we will welcome it,” said Jamling Norgay, Tenzing’s son, “but he was a personality beyond any political boundary.”

For Bengal Prime Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya the occasion to pay tribute to the man who has been a long road…from a mountain man to a man of five stars. But overall, Germany remains a wealthy and humane society. Ask the people who have come to Germany from other countries.

For Brian Penniston of The New York Times, “The Zimmer Frame for les citoyennes Francaise. Waiting times for major surgery in France are shorter than in any other country in the world, and Americans stay at home, quivering in a post-9-11, post-Iraq funk.

What about France then? Old Europe all the way, right? Well, if old Europe means the best health care system in the world, but none, being on the Zimmer Frame for les citoyennes Francaise. Waiting times for major surgery in France are shorter than in any other country in the world, and Americans stay at home, quivering in a post-9-11, post-Iraq funk.

Both are doing very well despite neo-liberal predictions of imminent collapse.

Old Yerp, New Europe

HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK

I inadvertently, the Bush administration may have done something rather useful as it blunders among the diplomatic and human debris of its

I

affirmed, staggering under low growth rates, budget deficits and lack of market confidence. Germany is generally trusted as the leading offender here but many a Neo-Left looks longingly at France, willing it will fail with all its

By Brian Price

Neo-liberal economic commentators, the kind that dominate the business media in Britain and America, are fond of telling us that Old Europe is about to collapse. Its post-war consensus that marries socially

Old Europe is about to collapse. Its post-war consensus that marries socially

tension among a radicalised North African Muslim population but what big, open society doesn’t struggle with issues of identity and culture among growing immigration?

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1953 Joined the British Everest Expedition

Devi and reached the east summit (7,621m).

1951 Went with a French expedition to Nanda peaks.

1950 Accompanied Doon School group in the Hindu-Kush range and reached 7,012m.

1939 Went with a party to Tirchimir in the Himalayas.

1938 Accompanied HW Tilman’s expedition to Everest and reached the North Col.

EASY TIMES

THOMPSON NEPAL, a leading multinatal advertising and communications company based in Kathmandu, a part of A.J. Walter Thompson Group, is looking for high-calibre men and women for the following positions to strengthen the existing creative department.

COPY SUPERVISOR/SR. COPYWRITER:

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Knowledge in the areas of TV and radio production will be a definite advantage.

Trained interest in creative writing and copywriters with lesser experience may also apply for junior positions.

ART DIRECTOR:

As a key member of the creative team, the candidate will be responsible for developing campaigns, directing/organizing photo shoots, and supervising printing from concept to production. Proven proficiency in graphic arts and Photoshop are essential.

Candidates must have at least 5 – 7 years’ experience in designing print campaigns including graphic arts in leading advertising agencies. An authentic portfolio of great creative work would be required for this position.

Experience in TV and radio production will be an added advantage.

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DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Rewarded

The initiative taken by a group of women from Khumbu in the past week, an all-Nepal expedition scaled the top of the unclimbed Pharalacha (6017m) in Khumbu. Recently opened by the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) to commemorate the Everest Golden Jubilee Celebrations over 25 years ago, Desakota was the first man on the summit on 19 May. Teammate Pramod ‘Goofy’ Shrestha’s maiden attempt was aborted due to technical problems but he made it to the top the following day. Both mountain climbers, Desakota and Shrestha’s maiden great skill on what turned out to be a technically demanding climb up a final 80m vertical rock face. From high camp Desakota battled extreme conditions for several hours before reaching the peak. It took the team four days to lay fixed ropes and determine a route, and the two dedicated the climb to their spouses and planted a Tibetan prayer flag at the summit for peace in Nepal. They were supported by Gyalzen Sherpa, Namgyal Sherpa and Lhakpa Sherpa.

Let’s make a difference

Ten Village Development Committees (VDC) in Baglung have now electrically handed over 177 more hydro-electrical projects with a combined output of 314.5 kW. Ghanendra Bhadari, technical officer at the Rural Energy Development branch said there are plans to increase the supply of electricity to every ward in the VDCs. A donation of Rs 31,000 was made by the company to the VDCs for the construction of a second project in Rangkhami-6. Banesh will be the ‘Energy Valley’, supplying electricity from the hydro-electrical projects already completed in the southern part of Baglung district. The project is expected to produce an additional 9 kW of power that will benefit another 120 families in the area.

CLEAN H2O

A recent survey showed that 41 percent of people living along the banks of Bhaktapur River in Kathmandu do not treat their water for contamination because of the costs involved. The solution could be a new campaign from the Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO) and Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) that makes clean water accessible to the poor through a simple technology called solar water disinfection (SODIS). Experiments show that exposing water in small bottles (about 400 ml) to sunlight (solar light) for at least six hours can remove bacterial contamination. ENPHO and CEN say the technology not only saves lives but also lowers monetary and energy costs. They hope to spread the practice to at least 5000 households in the Valley, Nawalparasi and Rupandehi. “More than 200 households in Nawalparasi and Rupandehi are already practising the technology,” says Mingma Sherpa of ENPHO.

Any person interested in donating their bottles can deliver them to the ENPHO or CEN offices, or call for a pick up if there are more than 50 bottles. CEN: 449102; ENPHO: 449102.

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Gyalzen and Kanchha

Gyalzen Sherpa, 84 (pic, left bottom) and Kanchha Sherpa, 71 (pic, left top), were contemporaries of Tenzing Norgay. They trained and housed them in Darjeeling, and was instrumental in finding them jobs and promoting them from cooks to high altitude porters, opening the door for them to becoming leaders themselves. Gyalzen and Kanchha were also part of the British 1953 expedition with Tenzing.

The two accompanied Hillary on a horse-drawn carriage this week, just as Tenzing himself did in 1953. Both were ecstatic. They are dazzled by the change in fortune of Sherpas like him. “What does remain the same is the style of mountaineering despite the increase in facilities,” says Gyalzen, recalling when Sherpa porters were paid less than Rs 8 a day. “Rs 10 if you were going up to South Col.”

Khumbo has changed beyond the imagination of Gyalzen and Kanchha: “You can’t compare the Khumbu in 1953 with today. The staple diet has moved from millet to corn and now rice. Many are still without electricity but the young generation has a latest technology from Europe by an expert Bloosum Kochher (Pivot Point) New Delhi.

While the attention has been focused on Everest in the past week, an all-Nepal expedition scaled the top of the unclimbed Pharalacha (6017m) in Khumbu. Recently opened by the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) to commemorate the Everest Golden Jubilee Celebrations over 25 years ago, Desakota was the first man on the summit on 19 May. Teammate Pramod ‘Goofy’ Shrestha’s maiden attempt was aborted due to technical problems but he made it to the top the following day. Both mountain climbers, Desakota and Shrestha’s maiden great skill on what turned out to be a technically demanding climb up a final 80m vertical rock face. From high camp Desakota battled extreme conditions for several hours before reaching the peak. It took the team four days to lay fixed ropes and determine a route, and the two dedicated the climb to their spouses and planted a Tibetan prayer flag at the summit for peace in Nepal. They were supported by Gyalzen Sherpa, Namgyal Sherpa and Lhakpa Sherpa.

Let’s make a difference

Ten Village Development Committees (VDC) in Baglung have now electrically handed over 177 more hydro-electrical projects with a combined output of 314.5 kW. Ghanendra Bhadari, technical officer at the Rural Energy Development branch said there are plans to increase the supply of electricity to every ward in the VDCs. A donation of Rs 31,000 was made by the company to the VDCs for the construction of a second project in Rangkhami-6. Banesh will be the ‘Energy Valley’, supplying electricity from the hydro-electrical projects already completed in the southern part of Baglung district. The project is expected to produce an additional 9 kW of power that will benefit another 120 families in the area.

CLEAN H2O

A recent survey showed that 41 percent of people living along the banks of Bhaktapur River in Kathmandu do not treat their water for contamination because of the costs involved. The solution could be a new campaign from the Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO) and Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) that makes clean water accessible to the poor through a simple technology called solar water disinfection (SODIS). Experiments show that exposing water in small bottles (about 400 ml) to sunlight (solar light) for at least six hours can remove bacterial contamination. ENPHO and CEN say the technology not only saves lives but also lowers monetary and energy costs. They hope to spread the practice to at least 5000 households in the Valley, Nawalparasi and Rupandehi. “More than 200 households in Nawalparasi and Rupandehi are already practising the technology,” says Mingma Sherpa of ENPHO.

Any person interested in donating their bottles can deliver them to the ENPHO or CEN offices, or call for a pick up if there are more than 50 bottles. CEN: 449102; ENPHO: 449102.

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Gyanzen and Kanchha

Gyalzen Sherpa, 84 (pic, left bottom) and Kanchha Sherpa, 71 (pic, left top), were contemporaries of Tenzing Norgay. They trained and housed them in Darjeeling, and was instrumental in finding them jobs and promoting them from cooks to high altitude porters, opening the door for them to becoming leaders themselves. Gyalzen and Kanchha were also part of the British 1953 expedition with Tenzing.

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Some of the mature democracies seem to be a far more exuberant lot on partyless and multiparty polls alike, we third paragraph. With turnout Nepalis, after all, aren’t the only people for an answer, savour the splendour of elections is serious, it can’t be that inspires multiple voting and you keep electing. The court of public opinion gives them all the strength they need to carry on. From the inviolate German Democratic Republic to democratic Democrat People’s Republic of Korea, the d-word proved to be an adjectival misnomer. In nations with emblems of equality while the Slave-owners could explicate without understanding of educational philosophy and its implementation worldwide. $30 per child annually as the standard school fee. Even the government today being decided by consultants who are paid top dollar to spout easy progressive sounding slogans. They do slipshod with a Maoist pistol held at the head? Does the education hub. In the decade of democracy they flourished. The system that was the legacy of the Panchayat years. Recently, students affiliated to a ‘revolutionary’ union of it. Why? Parents who send children to cheap private schools get no on the price of private education. Fees should be charged according to the ad-hoc decisions it takes. Given the lack of present government understand the implications of with a Maoist pistol held at the head? Does the education system that was the legacy of the Panchayat years. The international community is deeply involved in education: the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, U.K., USAID, NORAD, DIID, Save the Children coalition as well acting on the property-probe panel it. Wouldn’t it amplify our current woes. Take the average popular vote of the three biggest parties polled in the last three elections. Under proportional representation, we might see a perpetually hanging parliament where the Rastriya Prajatantra Party—divided on unity—would hold one of the keys to power. Throw in the provision for direct elections for prime minister as a safeguard. We might end up with a leader ready to dissolve the house at the first provocation. If we institute a first-term legislature, we can expect to be stuck with men and women with a precise idea of the date and time they feel they are entitled to squabble up. What about the newfound confidence of the Maoists and comrades? Once they feel they have nothing to justify fighting for, they would return to usurping each other. Under every electoral system, some people would be voting, some not. So the system would continue to remain in a state of permanent flux. It would finally win Girija Prasad Koirala’s way. In the meantime, those who have kept silent for private schools to bear the brunt of the Maoist wrath for several years. Recently, students affiliated to a ‘revolutionary’ union of students locked up the accounts sections and principal’s offices of private schools in the Valley. They were finally opened on condition that the government determine identical fees for all private schools by the evening of 14 June. For those who care to look into the future of quality schooling in Nepal, this decision is not so much a momentary band-aid as it is a death knell. Those who possess no serious work ethic are the ones using schools as political pawns and hiding education hostage. People who have neither created nor contributed anything to the nation’s education needs are destroying what others have. As if that were not enough, we have to deal with consultants who advocate quick-fix monetary solutions. People don’t know that education is not about literacy, but raising concerned, responsible citizens. It is only when we create a generation of positive minded individuals by nurturing their sense of self-worth that we can hope for a better Nepal. Private schools emerged as the public’s response to the failing government education system that was the legacy of the Panchayat years. In the decade of democracy they flourished. The time was coming for a further evolution—improving government schooling using private education as a template and developing Nepal as a regional education hub. Can a decision that needs homework, public hearings and interacting party compliance be made with a Maoist pistol held at the head? Does the present government understand the implications of the ad-hoc decisions it takes. Given the lack of education system that was the legacy of the Panchayat years. Much of the Ministry of Education’s policies are being overtaken by consultants who are paid top dollar to spout easy progressive sounding slogans. They do aloof work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. So by-rights who have no experience in running institutions, and share no work and get away with it because education is considered a ‘soft sector’. 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Collectors item

Mount Everest Brewery launched a limited edition of Everest premium lager beer in cooperation with the Nepal Mountaineering Association. The label shows Tenzing planting the flags of Nepal, India, UK and the United Nations sitting on an ice-axe on the summit on 29 May 1953. The popular local brew received permission to use the historic photograph from the National Geographic Society of UK. There couldn’t be better time to launch a beer named after the highest peak than during the jubilee celebrations. Jamling Tenzing, Tenzing Norgay’s son who is a famous mountaineer in his own right, was also present.

Trade routes

Nepal’s economic diplomacy in Jagbani and Sunauli will now enjoy the same trade benefits as Raxaul, till recently the only land Custom Station with India, thanks to a new Duty Exemption Pass Book Scheme (DEPB) issued by the Government of India on 27 May. Economic links between the two SAARC countries were strengthened when Nepal received permission to use the historic photograph from the National Geographic Society of UK. There couldn’t be better time to launch a beer named after the highest peak than during the jubilee celebrations. Jamling Tenzing, Tenzing Norgay’s son who is a famous mountaineer in his own right, was also present.

Best chilled

It’s summer and now it’s time to主管部门 the market in a bid to be the top choice in quenching the thirst of consumers. The newest beer in the bar is Tiger Beer from Singapore, imported and distributed in the kingdom by the SOI Group. The beer is available in over 50 countries around the world and makes no bones about being “positively the best beer in the world”. It has a crisp, clean taste with an alcohol content of 5 percent. The beer is available in 330ml cans and bottles.

Raising the bar

Nepal’s first glimpse for the discerning was recently introduced by Sumy Distillery. With a focus on quality products, this company that has been in operation for four years, created a skillful blend of Extra Neutral Alcohol and Scottish Malt for a uniquely smooth taste to match the exacting standards set by their customers. Currently available only in the Valley, the company aims at distributing it to all major cities within two months. Wainscot Whisky is available in three sizes—750ml, 375ml and 180ml and is priced at Rs 455, Rs 231 and Rs 121 respectively.

ECONOMIC SENSE

Politics is edging into the spotlight that belongs to Everest and squeezing economics out of the picture.

Nepal’s image in the international media over the last week closely resembles Subhas Rai’s brilliant illustration for Nepal Times (#146) of all the going on at Everest Base Camp—the media spotlight rivals that which followed the tragic events of 1 June 2001. Nepal is to stay away from publicity, our beloved political parties have decided to milk the situation for all it’s worth; protest programs are being organised, there are rumblings from the Maoist camp about withdrawing from the peace talks and students are threatening to close missionary schools. Countrywide protest against the Commission for the Investigation for Abuse of Authority (CIAA) in support of politicians and officials suspected of corruption is final proof that the junta are no longer thinking.

In effect we are broadcasting a clear message to the world. We support corruption but still expect funding for good governance from foreign donors. We are well aware of how reliant we are on tourism, but are quite willing to sabotage any attempt to jampack the ailing sector by disrupting jubilee celebrations. The Beed sees far too many cases of cutting the nose to spite the face. The past shows that any attempt to jumpstart the ailing sector by disrupting jubilee celebrations. The Beed sees far too many cases of cutting the nose to spite the face. The past shows that any attempt to jumpstart the ailing sector by disrupting jubilee celebrations.

Epilogue

It is not the Beed’s way to be so doggedly pessimistic, as perhaps we can latch onto some hope for the future. A start would be to stop being so near sighted about our goals. We need to bridge the yawning chasm between the rich and poor, create more jobs and provide better health and education to the people. The changes brought about by a stronger economy can, to some extent, salvage this country. And the Beed is happy to suggest a course of action—at least to begin with. All the media hungry politicians and their sidekicks who are vying for the limelight should put down their placards, pipe down and let Everest have its day.

Readers can post their comments or suggestions to arthabeed@yahoo.com

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ECONOMIC SENSE

by ARTHA BEED

Centrestage

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When we proposed climbing Everest without oxygen in 1978 people told us it wasn’t possible, that we were risking our lives. They said we would lose our brains up there. When the first climbers on the Austrian expedition we paired came down, they said we shouldn’t even try. It was hard. I didn’t know if I’d have a chance to go back to Everest, and Everest is Everest. I was determined then to try and get as high as possible. Climbing Everest solo without bottled oxygen in 1980 was the hardest thing I’ve ever done. I was alone up there, completely alone. I fell down a crevasse at night and almost gave up. Only because I had been pregnant with this fantasy—because for two years I had been pregnant with this fantasy—was I able to continue.

When you’re high on a mountain you cannot be anything but what you are. Mallory said he climbed Everest because it was there. I think we go up so we can come back down again. This coming down is a very strong experience. You come back from an inhospitable place. We are not made for it, this loneliness and cold. When you come back you feel reborn, you have a new chance. The experience is so strong you want to have it again and again, but you have to suffer for it. It’s addictive.

This is what I had got as a child, without even thinking. I could find a good route, understand the weather quickly, know that this rock is good, if this gully will go to the left. I had learnt the structure of the mountain. Until I was 20 my parents helped me with my climbing. When my father realised it was going to be my life, he tried to stop me, but it was too late. And when I went to Everest in 1978 to climb it without oxygen, he would sit in his local bar and say it was crazy. When I succeeded he said: “I knew he would do it.”

My father blamed me for my brother Günther’s death, for not helping me with my climbing. When I lost seven of my toes on Nanga Parbat and small parts of my fingertips I knew I’d never be a great rock climber. So I specialised in high-altitude climbing. It’s a totally different game. I developed a 15-year passion for it and became the best in the world’s 14 tallest peaks without fixed ropes and camps. If you make one mistake, you die.

High-altitude climbing is about suffering, it’s about being afraid. I don’t believe anyone who says there’s a lot of pleasure in climbing the biggest peaks. It’s dangerous, especially if there are no Sherpas or fixed ropes and camps. If you make one mistake, you die. I was the first man to climb the world’s 14 tallest peaks without supplementary oxygen. I never asked how high I would go, just how I would do it. Climbing is more of an art than a sport. It’s the aesthetics of a mountain that compels me. The line of a route, the style of ascent. It is creative. Children have to find their own way. My way is wrong for my kids. They climb, but I’m not forcing them into it.

I was a member of the Green Party. Politics and climbing are exact opposites. But they are both games. If the world’s leaders could spend a few days climbing a mountain together, then things would go better. I always take the same perspective with each new adventure. I put myself in the position of being at the end of my life looking back. Then I ask myself if what I am doing is important to me.

The Shackleton Endurance expedition was the best adventure of the last century. Though Shackleton failed, he saved all his people. Now that I’m nearing 59, I understand that failing is more important than having success. If you look at my life, then one thing is clear. I did one activity at a time, with all my willpower, all my money and all my time. Complete commitment (Interview by Ed Douglas in The Observer).
Messner: “Don’t mess around with Everest.”

Now that the festivities to mark the Everest anniversary are finally over, the work to lift the mountain without oxygen in 1978, and in 1980 the first person to climb the mountain solo (see p8). Messner, with Peter Habeler, became the first to climb the world's highest mountain solo without oxygen in 1978, and in 1980 he was the first to climb the mountain solo.

Responding, economist Pitamber Sharma said tourism accelerates the process of change, and while this could probably not be stopped there should be attempts to minimise the negative impact on cultures and the environment. "Cultures are not timeless, while they change, our basic values should be maintained," Sharma said.

The concerns voiced at the seminar were not new: the need for equitable and sustainable tourism have been discussed for the past three decades. But the very fact that they had to be reiterated so forcefully during the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Sagarmatha showed how little has been done.

Even so, participants drew attention to the fact that while international media has focused on trash on Everest, Nepal had several success stories and accomplishments that perhaps had not got as much publicity: the spread of community forestry which has increased forest cover, eco-tourism models like ACAP and Nepal's national park system. While the Maoists never directly attacked trekkers, tourism was indirectly affected by news of the violence. On the other hand, because the benefits of tourism had not been trickling down to the grassroots it had fuelled frustrations that fed the insurgency.

The seminar was organised by the German newspaper, Die Zeit and the Nepali Times at the Dwarikas Hotel. It did not shrink from tackling sensitive issues like the pile-up of expedition excreta on Mt Everest and other mountains. In response to a query about guidelines for defecation at high-altitude, Messner replied: "When you have thousands of people on the mountain like this year, shit piles up. The stuff is deep-frozen, and as it moves down the icefall and the glacier, the melted water could be contaminated." The solution could be carrying down plastic sacks from toilets for disposal down the valley, or zapping fresh faeces with sunlight in special "solar toilets".

Austrian Everest summiter, Wolfgang Nairz, appealed for the rapid fusion of the Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal and the Qomolungma Nature Reserve on the Chinese side into a transboundary World Heritage Site. At the moment, only the Nepali side has been declared a heritage site.

The over-commercialisation of Everest came up again, and participants felt the need to balance regulation with the freedom of the mountain. "Everest itself is record in itself, so everyone wants to be the first to do something new," Messner admitted. Pretty soon, there will be the first ascent of Mt Everest by a man with his dog, and there may be helicopter ascents from base camp to a helipad on the summit with an oxygen pipeline to the south summit.

Joking aside, there was a proposal to take on Edmund Hillary's idea to declare a moratorium on climbing Mt Everest for ten years so the mountain could "clean itself" and get back its aura. But a problem was immediately pointed out: what if Nepal declares a moratorium and China doesn't. At present, the world's third highest mountain, Kangchendzonga can be climbed from the Nepali north side, but is banned from the south side in Sikkim.

Messner’s own idea was to regulate so that only one expedition be allowed on one route per season. This would ensure income from royalty, while preventing over-crowding. Said Messner: "Even so, participants drew attention to the fact that while international media has focused on trash on Everest, ACAP and Nepal's national park system. While the Maoists never directly attacked trekkers, tourism was indirectly affected by news of the violence. On the other hand, because the benefits of tourism had not been trickling down to the grassroots it had fuelled frustrations that fed the insurgency.

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Messner’s own idea was to regulate so that only one expedition be allowed on one route per season. This would ensure income from royalty, while preventing over-crowding. Said Messner: "Everest is a strong mountain. But you have to climb it in a clean way, taking risks and surviving, climbing from base camp to the top along a fixed rope is not climbing. We must let the mountain regain its power."
Cheap RX
BRUSSELS — The European Union adopted a new regulation Monday, enabling exporters to provide essential medicines at starkly reduced prices to poor countries as part of its "Program for Action: Accelerated action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB in the context of poverty reduction," adopted by the G8 summit in February 2001.

The decision enables pharmaceutical companies to significantly increase the delivery of medicines to fight the three diseases in developing countries at lower or "tiered" prices, while keeping higher prices for the same products in the EU. They will be made available with a price cut of 75 percent of the average "factor price" or, at the cost of food timber from boreal trees into the EU are illegally sourced.

Although FERN welcomes measures to prevent money laundering through illegal logging, it says that the EU must ensure that the necessary legal framework, in order to meet that the road map promises peace between Israel and the Palestinians on normalization of relations between Israeli and Arab countries. Can this really be achieved in the foreseeable future? Does the US—or, for that matter the Quartet—really believe they know how to move the Palestinians still view attacks by the Palestinian Authority to be tests. Does he really control the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, despite the appointment of Abu Mazen as prime minister? For this reason, the road map envisaged by the road map must be continually retested. Does he really have the authority, day in and day out for two years, to ensure that the parties really mark what might be a key acceptance of vague language into painful, and even politically dangerous, decisions?

The attention span of a US President is limited to one issue. Yet without his constant attention, the road map will run into the Middle East sand dunes. Can any current US President perpetuate the Quartet’s partially-funded and mostly ill-intentioned peace plans, without the keen support of President George W Bush—or any US President—capable of effectively managing his enormous position? Much depends on the US President. Is President Bush—or any US President— capable of really translating what might be just a token gesture of good will into reality? Does the US—or, for that matter the Quartet— really believe they know how to move the parties on normalisation of relations between Israel and the Palestinians? The attention span of a US President is limited to one issue. Yet without his constant attention, the road map will run into the Middle East sand dunes. Can any current US President perpetuate the Quartet’s partially-funded and mostly ill-intentioned peace plans, without the keen support of President George W Bush—or any US President—capable of effectively managing his enormous position? Much depends on the US President. Is President Bush—or any US President— capable of really translating what might be just a token gesture of good will into reality?
Remittances from international migrant labour are the economic safety net for developing countries.

The ‘anti-terrorism’ tango

India and Israel, for decades on opposing sides of the fight for Palestinian statehood, are set to become close strategic allies.

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The refugee deal

25 May

The 14th round of ministerial level talks between Nepal and Bhutan regarding the repatriation of refugees failed to make any progress to stop the possibility of Bhutanese nationals going home, but also raises questions about Nepal's interest.

The Nepalese government granted the Bhutanese discretion in choosing who it would accept and simultaneously accepted diplomatic defeat by agreeing to grant Nepali citizenship to those unwilling to return to Bhutan. “The negotiations were compromised by the lack of an elected democratic Nepali government,” says former foreign minister Ram Bhan Mahat.

International lobbying and persistent demands from the refugees pressured Bhutan into conceding even their partial gains. Refugee leaders say the Dhaka government will try to prove a majority of the refugees are non-Bhutanese, in compliance with the parameters set by the joint verification. “If Nepal doesn't protest against this blunder, it will soon have to welcome Indians of Nepal origin with open arms,” says Dharma Adhikari. He advised Nepal to seek the involvement of the United Nations and international human rights groups, to expedite the repatriation process.

Refugee leader Ram Gometsan accused Nepal of violating international laws by agreeing to give citizenship status to Bhutanese refugees unwilling to return home. He said this would render them no more equals on Nepali soil. “It is a gross injustice to the Bhutanese refugees,” he said.

The refugees are also discontented about Nepal’s agreement to imprison and try those who are categorised as criminals. Gometsan said his group will take the court to court because the Bhutanese government has categorically labelled political and human rights activists as criminals. He also expressed concern over where the refugees would be resettled when they are finally allowed back into Bhutan. Most of the houses were demolished and their lands were resettled with people from northern Bhutan.

People power

Chitradpur, 25 May

One point for the little guys! Public pressure and protests led the Madhupur Thani Municipality to reverse its decision on granting forest land to the Armed Police Force. When the local community forestry group learnt the forest they warmed was being granted to the police force they decided to not accept it.

In the absence of elected representatives, the municipality made its decision on the basis of direct instruction from Bhaluka District Administration Office without consulting the locals, the political parties and civil society. Even the ward office and forestry users group were left in the dark. While this clearly demonstrates bureaucratic abuse of authority, it also demonstrates that real people power is far from defunct.

Not that victory came easily. For two consecutive days the people sat in protest and gathered outside municipality office. The chief of the municipal office, Pushkar Pokhrel, had to publicly apologise to calm the crowd down. A decision, led by community and political activists, visited the chief district officer Golab Nath Bhandari and handed over a memorandum that warned they would be keeping an eye on the future misuse of public property.

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3 April, 1977 Sundarijal

Perhaps there is a great mental strain of which I am not aware, but which is insidiously affecting my mental and physical capabilities. Today at about 2PM the vision in my left eye became suddenly dimmed at its upper left corner. It lasted for about 10 minutes and I became very, very anxious. My anxiety is all the greater because I can’t get the help of a doctor at short notice— moreover the officer in charge of the camp enters the jail only 3 times a day—8AM, 12 noon and 7PM. If anything happens during the intervening hours or at night there is no help. When GM was here I had some confidence and we have mutually agreed that our rooms at night wouldn’t be bolted from inside in case of need. Perhaps I need to change my spectacles because the ones that I am using aren’t giving me efficient service. But this sudden clouding of my vision in the periphery of the left eye which lasted for some minutes only couldn’t be due to deterioration of my sight. The symptoms also may have been induced by losipterin, the medicine to correct my heart beat—extra systole or whatever it is.

I did some reading in the morning and did some writing also— ie did some useful work. But I am mentally unsettled, fidgety, alternating between buoyancy and depression. I read the papers minutely—4 issues, 2 each of Kathmandu & Rising Nepal—nothing of importance. My mind is not very active—perhaps this is how nature helps, a kind of survival strategy to put your energy to the minimum use, to keep you alive by slowing down your temp. I have become very forgetful also. But I feel there are temporary disabilities produced by the unnatural/conditions of detention. No serious damage is occurring either to my physical or mental health—the damage temporarily sustained could be corrected in normal conditions.

Since four days we get rain almost every day, hence the weather has become cooler. The sky is cloudy. I have put my warm clothes away in the wardrobe. I need a light quilt at night, having discarded the second one. In the day I use a khasto given to me by Santosh. It is a beautiful khasto and it is giving me a very necessary service. I am usually in the kitchen for a few hours, or lift her into a makeshift harness. Her pain was lessened by the help of kind neighbours, had to push her up every three hours, or lift her into a makeshift harness. Her pain became more and more obvious. SPCAN volunteers pleaded for euthanasia, but the management felt that with the laws of the land (the penalty for killing a cow is Rs 20,000 or two years imprisonment) this would not be desirable. Laxmi, after a painfully slow and cruel death, finally passed away in April.

Despite her precarious situation, Laxmi gave birth to a calf. It took volunteers from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Nepal (SPCAN) a few hours rigorously to drag the limp cow to the shelter. Here it was found that not only did she suffer from a spinal injury, probably after being hit by a bus or truck, but also that she was four months pregnant. Despite her precarious situation, Laxmi gave birth to a calf. It took volunteers from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Nepal (SPCAN) a few hours rigorously to drag the limp cow to the shelter. Here it was found that not only did she suffer from a spinal injury, probably after being hit by a bus or truck, but also that she was four months pregnant. Despairing, Laxmi gave birth to a calf which probably was a spinal injury. After the delivery, Laxmi’s health deteriorated rapidly. Although she was still eating, she could not ambulate. This meant that the staff, with the help of kind neighbours, had to push her up every three hours, or lift her into a makeshift harness. Her pain became more and more obvious. SPCAN volunteers pleaded for euthanasia, but the management felt that with the laws of the land (the penalty for killing a cow is Rs 20,000 or two years imprisonment) this would not be desirable. Laxmi, after a painfully slow and cruel death, finally passed away in April.

Although traffic accidents are the main reason for injuries, there are many cases of cruelty inflicted by children or disobedience. SPCAN has last year recorded some cases of spinal injuries, both cattle and dogs. A remarkably bright dog named Baby Bear survived, but will be recalled from the ward down here. There is much fear of these animals where huge demands on many of SPCAN’s limited resources. There are temporary solutions could include proper registration and monitoring of the cattle population, mobile veterinary services and feeding stations in a number of locations (set up with the involvement of communities, hotels and restaurateurs willing to donate their vegetarian leftovers). The actions must be backed by the central government, by introducing supportive animal welfare legislation and monitoring. The actions must be backed by the central government, by introducing supportive animal welfare legislation and monitoring.

To date, the success of Kathmandu’s street cattle is due to the efforts of SPCAN. The views presented here do not necessarily represent those of the organisation.

(Petra Thagunna & Lucia de Vries are affiliated with SPCA Nepal. The views presented here do not necessarily represent those of the organisation. Tel: 4467953, www.fospcan.org.np)
CELEBRATING EVEREST
- 30 May: Bhaktapur Darbar Square Festival.
- 31 May: Music Festival at the Darbar Stadium.

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS
- Quomolangma: the other side of Everest photographs and text by Lucia de Vries 6-7 June at Gallery Nine, Lazimpat. 4486844
- Kathmandu Vendors paintings by Mark Jones at the Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- Contemporary Tibetan Art from Lhasa 13 June at Lotus Gallery, Thamel. 4253646
- Exhibition and Sale of carpets, handknom, handpashmina at Gallery Room, Kathmandu Guest House, Kathmandu.
- Orchids and Jewels of Nature Botanical art exhibition by Neeru J Pradhan from 1-15 June at Park Gallery, Lazimpat. 981050263
- West of the Silk Route pictures of life and landscapes from Egypt through Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal by Ben Schowen till 2 June at Siddhartha Art Gallery. 4216584

EVENTS
- Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman Directed by Deborah Menara at The Lincoln School 7PM on 6, 7 June, 5PM on 8 June. Tickets: Rs 300 for adults, Rs 150 for students. Available at Himalayan Java. Pilgrim’s Bookshop, Hyatt Regency. Reservations: 4466468
- East meets West: the twain shall meet 30 May at Dwarika’s. Fusion music, oriental and continental cuisine. 4479488

MUSIC
- Live Music Friday at 5:30 PM, Saturday movie at 4:30 PM, ‘Jinn’ Joe’s Restaurant, Kupondole.
- Live Acoustic Jam 7PM on Saturdays at Himalaite Cafe, Thamel. 4256738
- Full Circle acoustic jam every Friday at New Orleans Café, Thamel. 4473311
- Thunderbolt with Ram Shrestha and Sabu Lama. 8PM onwards Wednesday and Saturday at the Red Onion Bar, Lazimpat. 4416701

DRINKS
- Fusion offers over 100 cocktails. Happy hour from 6-7PM. Dwarika’s Hotel.
- The Jazz Bar reopens at 7PM on 30 May with Abhaya and The Steam Injus. 50 percent discount on beverages. DJ live entertainment through June. Shankar’s Hotel, Lazimpat. 4473399
- The Piano Lounge & Bar features the Trio Giro for the best gypsy music, cocktails and snacks. Yak & Yeti Hotel.
- K-Point Special Thai fusion drinks Rs 125 or Rs 750 for every 1.5 litre. Free Irish Coffee with every main course. K-Point Bar & Steakhouse. Thamel. 4343034.

FOOD
- Summer specials smoked salmon soufflé, shrimp newburg and crispy duck breast. Kint’s of Kathmandu. Thursday.
- Naachgaur Revisited with Myrna, an international exotic dancer, and North Indian delicacies. Every evening from 7.30 PM onwards. Rs 749 per person. Hotel Yak & Yeti. Darbar Marg.
- Wood fired pizzas, Baskin Robbins icecream, cocktails and coffee at the Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel.
- Cafe Bahal Dieter’s for the health conscious at Kathmandu Guest House Food Court, Thamel. 4416302.
- Kids Combo Meal at all Bakery Cafés. Kids’ meals with exciting gifts.
- Weekend breakfast: Smoked salmon scrambled eggs and filtered coffee Rs 100. 9AM-12PM. Thomas Cafe, 1905, Kantipath. 425380.
- Traditional Nepali Thali Lunch at Patan Museum Cafe 11AM-4PM. 5226871
- Saturday Asian Brunch at The Cafe, Sunday European Lunch at Rose Restaurant. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4481234
- Saturday BBQ Lunch at Club Himalaya Nagarkot. Rs 500 per person. 4680883
- The greenest patch Weekend lunches in the oldest and largest garden in Nagarkot at The Fort Resort, tel. 4557883.

GETAWAYS
- Dakshinkali Package: Overnight package $99. Dwarika’s Hotel. 4479488
- Wood fired pizzas, Baskin Robbins icecream, cocktails and coffee at the Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel.
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NEPALI WEATHER

Typhoon season II: A weather warning...The typhoons are a matter of concern. This year’s typhoons are more frequent and stronger than usual. The typhoons have caused significant damage to crops and infrastructure. The government has issued warnings and advised people to stay indoors and take necessary precautions.

Notice that high pressure system sitting over north India. This has sent temperature soaring to the mid-30s in the valley. The day will be hot and sunny. Expect high temperature in the valley and low temperature in highlands.

NEPALI WEATHER

ABOUT TOWN

BOOKWORM

Women, Disability and Identity by Asha Hans, Annie Petti (eds)
Sage Publications, 2003
Rs 528
Despite the widening ambit of feminist research there is little space for disabled women in the prevailing discourse. The contributions in this volume highlight not only the discriminations faced by physically challenged women but also the transitions faced in their search for new worlds.

Narratives from the Women’s Studies Family: Recreating Knowledge by Devaki Jain, Pam Rajaip (eds)
Sage Publications, 2003
Rs 560
Seventeen scholars and activists who have initiated and nurtured centres for women’s studies in India have contributed to this book. They discuss a wide spectrum of activities from teaching and networking to publishing and agitating. They also chart our possible paths for women’s studies in India.

French Feminisms: An Indian Anthology by Danielle Haase-Duboce, Mary E John, Marcel Mattin, Ramia Milleto, Susie Tharu (eds)
Sage Publications, 2003
Rs 560
This remarkable anthology of 36 texts, freshly translated for this volume, vividly maps the terrain of French feminism in its contemporary context from the 1970s onwards. Bringing together the seminal writings of both scholars and activists, this book will stress many questions, challenges and the progress of reflection.

Guided by the editor of Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu, 4227711, mandaladcc@ccdl.com.np

CLASSIFIED

Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles, cards, gifts, stationary, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l’Annapurna. Phone 4425682.

Visit Femilines, the Exclusive Lingerie Store for ladies undergarments, nightwear, bathrobes and more. Ladies staff. Opposite Sayaji Yatayat, Harish Bhawan, Pulchowk. Tel. 547428.

Flowerlovers: Flowerlovers, it’s PUCHISIA same again!! See 60 beautiful varieties in bloom!

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

Ramppal Verma has learned how to use his lost girl Ulma and Mathor for what promises to be a hit film that is out of the ordinary. Quite literally. Bhaviji is a supernatural being who exists in Mumbai that inhabits dead spirits (as the name of the movie suggests, spectators and believers). This one trailer that also stars Ayushmann Khurrana, Naina Pathik, Rekha and Fortune Kohin is a refreshing change from the normal Bollywood fare.

JAI NEPAL CINEMA

X-Men 2 continues the cinematic saga of those strange mutant super heroes again. India, that make the smooth transition from comic book to celluloid. This sequel directed by Bryan Singer brings back Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen, Holly Berry, Hugh Jackman, Anna Paquin. Bean Cox and Alan Cumming. It’s packed with almost non-stop action and some reviewers think X2 trumps the first part. Can’t wait for the X-Man 3 film to find this bigger and better.

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Behind bars

Hot days. Humid nights. Long, cold drinks. Kathmandu’s watering holes are stocking up for the monsoon.

LAZIMPAT Just a stone’s throw from Thamel but a world away in ambience is the original Lasting Part. If you’re looking to jazz up your evening, make your way to this street where a bouquet of bars could be just the thing.

The new avatar of the Jazz Bar in Sharada Hotel, scheduled to reopen in the first week of June, will be known as Not Just the Jazz Bar and they’re flying in international artists who will perform jazz combos, modern pop and blues. On alternate Friday nights come sauli with Kathmandu’s resident sauli, Diego Saenz. Oh, yes, all drinks half price in June.

Upstairs Jazz Bar is home to Nepal’s home contribution to the world of jazz. On Wednesday and Saturday nights Cadenza’s music flows into the sidewalks below. Kumar, the barman, mixes a mean cocktail but he’s been known to redo it if it doesn’t meet his personal standards. The menu is limited, but that’s nature because everyone homes in on the melt-in-the-mouth momos.

Nepali Times #147 30 May - 5 June 2003

LIFESTYLE

SRADDA BASNYAT

Monsoon in Kathmandu: it’s summertime and the livin’ is easy. Monsoon in Kathmandu it’s hailing 30 degrees and the air is so thick you can diet with a cocktail stirrer. The most effort one can muster is to signal a passing waiter that you need a refill. Nepali Times takes the layoff out of bar-hopping by offering you a comprehensive guide to the best monsoon watering holes in the Valley: Chin chin.

All roads lead to thamel

The brightly lit heartland of tourist spots offers a bonanza of bars for a casual night out or that’s exactly what you can find yourself on when you stumble in late enough.

Just around the corner warm candlelight bathes wreaths of corn and chili on adobe walls and rough icky cardboard ‘casks’—liqueurs, draft beer, cocktails and the rest of the usual suspects. Excellent nibbles too. The bartender rustles up the best daquiris of Lonely Planet toters, Sam’s Bar and Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via.

Rum Doodle is an unofficial museum to adventure tourism doodads that have been bequeathed by visitors who have safely dropped into the living stone travellers café. It’s casual, laid back and has enough atmosphere to fill a room. Friday nights come salsa with Tom and Jerry. Some return to reminisce over extra stout souvenir at Tom and Jerry. Some return to reminisce over extra stout.

Via Via Special, Rakshi fused with lemon, sugar syrup and soda over ice. If you stumble in late enough to make your way to this street where a bouquet of bars could be just the thing.

Phase one of Lonely Planet bars then there is the legendary Rum Doodle, a little Nepali house situated at 40,000½ft. It recently relocated to much larger premises as Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via.

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Promoted by SOI

Great Value Lunches

at Rs. 249 per person*

3459 people have enjoyed the GV Lunch at Soaotee Crowne Plaza.

What about you?

China Garden

The Olive Garden is your venue of choice for authentic Chinese Lunch. Traditionally Chinese cuisine with a twist.

Lunch Timing: 12:30 am - 2:30 pm

Tel: 433178, 433316, 423683. Fax: 977-1-4539883

Behind Bars

Hot days. Humid nights. Long, cold drinks. Kathmandu’s watering holes are stocking up for the monsoon.

Lazimpat

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Hot days. Humid nights. Long, cold drinks. Kathmandu’s watering holes are stocking up for the monsoon.

Lazimpat

Just a stone’s throw from Thamel but a world away in ambience is the original Lasting Part. If you’re looking to jazz up your evening, make your way to this street where a bouquet of bars could be just the thing.

The new avatar of the Jazz Bar in Sharada Hotel, scheduled to reopen in the first week of June, will be known as Not Just the Jazz Bar and they’re flying in international artists who will perform jazz combos, modern pop and blues. On alternate Friday nights come sauli with Kathmandu’s resident sauli, Diego Saenz. Oh, yes, all drinks half price in June.

Upstairs Jazz Bar is home to Nepal’s home contribution to the world of jazz. On Wednesday and Saturday nights Cadenza’s music flows into the sidewalks below. Kumar, the barman, mixes a mean cocktail but he’s been known to redo it if it doesn’t meet his personal standards. The menu is limited, but that’s nature because everyone homes in on the melt-in-the-mouth momos.

Phase one of Lonely Planet bars then there is the legendary Rum Doodle, a little Nepali house situated at 40,000½ft. It recently relocated to much larger premises as Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via Via.

Promoted by SOI

Great Value Lunches

at Rs. 249 per person*
At the end of the road is The Red Onion Bar. In its four years of operation it has earned a reputation as one of Kathmandu’s best bars. The wine list has an array that span whole continents and features more than 150 cocktails. The bar gets its name from the traditional red onion trade between Nepal, Tibet and India, and displays a scooter that was used to ferry onions 80 years ago. The regular clientele is a sober crowd from business houses, banks, development agencies, embassies and the like. They let their hair down on Wednesday and Saturday nights when live bands introduce a little shake, rattle and roll.

Just next door at the Radisson is the six-storey-high Splash Bar & Grill with great sunset views and the Lazimpat forest. It is gaining a Friday following with a live band, innovative drinks and their Cajun Chicken Salad.

HIGH END
No bar crawl would be complete without dropping into the Rox Bar at Hyatt Regency. The trendiest bar in town, on weekends the blond wood and marble floor is teeming with life from wall to granite studded wall. Drinks and food are on the pricey side but that’s only to be expected because this is where Kathmandu comes to see and be seen—and don’t mind paying for it either. The Friday nights cover charge alone is Rs 300 for ladies and Rs 500 for gentlemen. The Rox has a dress code too, so make sure you don’t rock up in your chappals.

If an evening among sophisticates is what you desire then look no further than the Piano Lounge Bar at the Tik & Yeti Hotel. The resident in-house Irish band An Fainne is the perfect accompaniment to comparing the merits of perhaps the largest collection of single malts in the kingdom.

ACROSS THE BRIDGE
Patan used to be a backwater. No more. Now Patan residents don’t need to cross the river to go to Thamel. Tucked into a quiet corner of Pulchowk, is a place where art, music, food and drink come together beautifully at a price that won’t break the bank. Enter the peaceful premises of Moksh run by Dolly Yakthumba, former fashion model and present restaurateur. Mukut Bar offers special summer drinks like non-alcoholic celery punch. If you like vitamins with a bite try the carrot punch spiked with vodka. Music is always on the agenda with Dolly’s husband Nirakar holding impromptu jam sessions with his hugely popular band 1974 A.D. Regular gigs feature hit folks on Tuesday nights and Abhaya and the Steam Injuns on Fridays.

MIN BAJPARCHARYA

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**More watering holes**

From p15
Out of danger

A rescue group in Khumbu is saving the lives of trekking porters.

WANDA VIVEQUIN from GOKYO

Gokyo Valley is achingly beautiful with astounding views of Sagarmatha from Gokyo Ri. Lok Bahadur Karki, a porter with a Kathmandu-based trekking company, was with a group heading that way to an area locals refer to as “death valley”.

Before dawn one morning, Lok was found unconscious in his tent at the Renjo La base camp, at 5,000m. Hardly, the other porters put him into a stretcher and carried him down to Gokyo. Although it was still dark when they got there, the porters decided to push for Machermo where they knew the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG) had recently established a rescue post for porters.

Day dawned, lighting a path that was treacherous with ice and snow. Somewhere between Gokyo and Machermo the porter carrying Lok lost his foothold and fell. Lok sustained a head injury, worsening his already unstable medical condition. Knowing medical help was not far away, a few porters ran ahead of Machermo to alert the medical staff. Within the hour, the medical team raced back up to Machermo, they received in the Khumbu at Machermo and Kunde, Lok would have died. Despite a fractured neck and head injuries, the joint efforts of the staff at these Khumbu clinics and the neurosurgical team at the Teaching Hospital (pic, below) saved the life of this young man. On his way by helicopter to Kathmandu he remained unconscious and the prognosis didn’t look good. But now he has been discharged from hospital and although he faces a long rehabilitation, the neurosurgeons are cautiously optimistic that he will make a full recovery with time.

The Machermo Porter Rescue post, which will close at the end of the spring trekking season, is the latest initiative of the IPPG which helps trekking porters. The Machermo post is staffed by a series of western doctors during the season and a trained paid Nepali worker. CFHEC clinic doctor Trish Bartholomew, and volunteer doctor, Hillery Lois, who were instrumental in getting the aid post set up, said during the first three weeks of operation, staff saw 63 patients. Thirty-six were porters, 10 were locals and the rest were trekkers and a guide. “All the porters were shocked, surprised and then delighted that the treatment was free,” recalls Bartholomew. She said cases ranged from dehydration altitude illness to pneumonia, measles and more common ailments such as viral illnesses, diarrhoea, dehydration, blisters and muscular injuries.

“Like all projects of this nature there are some things we desperately need for the future,” she added. This includes an oxygen concentrator that can run on solar power and a satellite phone to organise evacuations and relieve the pressure of getting to Kunde Hospital where there are more extensive medical facilities.

Every year an average of two porters die needlessly as the “death valley” from altitude related illnesses. Twelve months ago Lok Bahadur would have been just another statistic. But his survival is a symbol of the determination of his fellow porters and the rescue post at Machermo. No porter should have to face death to give Western trekkers the holiday of a lifetime.

(Wanda Vivequin is a Canada-based IPPG volunteer.)

Altitude Sickness

The misconception that physical fitness and youth are shields against this indomitable illness is a popular and dangerous one. Young and feisty, old and frail, all are susceptible to altitude related illnesses. A previous healthy experience at high altitude can mean little, while preexisting conditions and individual susceptibility play a major role. Risk factors involved: rapid ascent, the actual altitude gained, altitude at which you sleep and individual susceptibility. There are risk factors involved: rapid ascent, the actual altitude gained, altitude at which you sleep and individual susceptibility. Aquilization is the natural and gradual regulation by the body to cope with altitude but is a random process varying from person to person. To get the required amount of oxygen at higher altitude our heart and lungs must work harder. At 5000m they are working twice as hard as they would at sea level. Allowing the body to acclimatize over the first 1-3 days at a particular altitude requires a flexible itinerary and is worth the while. Diamox is also used to prevent symptoms of AMS.

Working to stabilise his neck, the doctors fashioned a makeshift stretcher (pic, right). It took four hours to ready Lok for evacuation back down to Machermo. More than 24 hours had passed since Lok had lost consciousness. All through the night the clinic’s volunteer doctors worked hard to keep him alive, administering intravenous fluids and antibiotics, and treating him in the portable altitude chamber (PAC). Meanwhile one of the clinic’s volunteers sprinted down to Kunde Hospital, making the six hour trip in half of that time. At 3AM Simon Palfrey from the hospital and Bill Bowater started for Machermo with stretcher and extra medical equipment.

A team of eight porters, many of whom had already worked a full day, volunteered to carry their seriously ill colleague back down to Kunde. Without the excellent medical care he received in the Khumbu at Machermo and Kunde, Lok would have died. Despite a fractured neck and head injuries, the joint efforts of the staff at these Khumbu clinics and the neurosurgical team at the Teaching Hospital (pic, below) saved the life of this young man. On his way by helicopter to Kathmandu he remained unconscious and the prognosis didn’t look good. But now he has been discharged from hospital and although he faces a long rehabilitation, the neurosurgeons are cautiously optimistic that he will make a full recovery with time.

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Global Summit of Rogues

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ing reached up to a few more points in the Transparency International Corruption Index (even overtaking pros such as Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau). Nepal has won the bid to host the next Global Conference on Graffiti, it has been reliably learnt. This is indeed great recognition, since some of the world’s most renowned rogals will be here to deliberate for three days on how to swindle more efficiently, as well as to part finishing touches on the Universal Declaration on Plunder and State Capture. Not only will the conference put Nepal firmly on the world corruption map, it will also boost our tourism industry at a time when tourism is going through a bit of a slump. At press time, according to the conference secretariat, more than 1,000 internationally-acclaimed thieves and knaves have confirmed participation, and they include legendary biggies such as Idi Amin and Emperor Bokassa as keynote speakers. Some other up-and-coming Big Names from a certain neighbouring country have said they’ll attend, but are known to be still trying to bribe the organizers so they don’t have to pay the $1,000 registration fee. “Under the table negotiations are on-going,” whispered one staffer.

Meanwhile, the ex-Chief Minister of Injustice and Malfeasance in the 1997 coalition government, as chairman of the Main Organising Committee of the Kathmandu Summit of Rogues, is trying in best to use the occasion to showcase the great strides Nepal has taken since democracy was restored in 1990 to make corruption a way of life.

“Earlier only a few people used to be corrupt, but in the past 12 years we have democratised corruption. Now, everyone is corrupt,” the ex-minister boasted after poaching a bahadur we had to slip him in exchange for that on-the-record quote. However, he added, there is room for competency. With the dissolution of parliament there is real danger that corruption will once more be centralised, and that is why we have to fight that.

When Robin recorded his first song in 1977 he instantly became the blue-eyed boy of music lovers. Despite winning various awards, he had to struggle for more than five years before he hit the mainstream. Till 1980 Robin was constantly in the public eye till he took a seven-year hiatus. He made his comeback with Sungava in 1997, which in its own words, “was not a commercial success, but it brought me back to my native element of music. It helped me rebuild ties with the music circle.”

Robin enjoys an equally successful parallel career as a broadcaster with Radio Nepal where he is the deputy executive director. He joined the station service more than two decades ago as a newscaster fresh out of university with an MA in English literature. A pioneer of the country’s first FM channel, Radio Nepal FM, in 1995, Robin is disappointed by the increase of irresponsible broadcasting. “They forget their primary responsibility towards educating listeners,” he says. At 43 Robin’s music reflects a new maturity. He is particular about what he sings and records, preferring to “play with lyrics” before he makes an artistic commitment to it. “A lyric has to strike some chord with my life for me to feel comfortable singing it,” he says. While working on Silsila, he strove to make sure they also represented the current trends in music. As a result, the album features collaborations with eight lyricists and seven music directors. So, what does the future hold? “Music is something I’ll be doing for a long time to come, so perhaps another album to mark my next 25 years in the field!” Says the veteran singer.

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