SAARC to summit

Foreign secretaries of SAARC member nations finally agreed in Kathmandu on the 12th Summit of their leaders in Islamabad 4-6 January, 2004. The summit was to have taken place earlier this year, but was postponed because of bilateral tensions between India and Pakistan. But recent thaw allowed officials from the two countries to agree on the summit. All eyes were on Pakistani foreign secretary Razzaq Khokhar and his Indian counterpart, Karanveer Singh. A meeting with each other is expected at the end of the summit. All eyes were on Pakistani foreign secretary Razzaq Khokhar and his Indian counterpart, Karanveer Singh. A meeting with each other is expected at the end of the summit.

Pakistani foreign secretary Riaz Khokhar and his Indian counterpart, Karanveer Singh.

No freedom to roam

When state-run Nepal Telecommunications Corporation introduced mobile phones in Nepal four years ago, it promised roaming facilities within three months. Customers are still waiting.

Pagarded by mismanagement and corruption, NTC officials are unable to provide a convincing answer why Nepal's cell phone network is one of the most primitive in the world, and it is hard to see why NTC is not interested in providing a service that would be such a lucrative source of revenue. NTC makes Rs 35 million a month from its mobile operations, and is adding 300 new cell connections every day. It provides only voice mail and domestic texting. There is no call forwarding, no roaming and no facility to sell SIM cards to visitors. NTC's director for new services, Madan Kaji Shaktiya told us:

"We are arranging to set up the service. But there are technical and human resource constraints. Nepal customers have heard it all before, and those who can afford it are going for satellite phones like Thruaya which are designed for use in the earth's remotest areas. In rural areas, NTC is having Indian mobile phones and use them to call Kathmandu because it is cheaper than NTC's monopoly rates.

The crux of the problem seems to be that NTC was forced in 1996 by politicians to give up the Israeli Teledar system that supplied Canadian-made Hostel equipment for the initial 10,000 mobile lines. Teledar had a fatal flaw: it didn't allow roaming.

One NTC engineer admitted to us: "They bought it in a hurry and didn't bother to check if it allowed roaming. Big mistake." In the NTC politicalized and unaccountable system, no one even paid for the gaffe. Only the customers did.

Now, NTC has imported new equipment from the Chinese Hua Wei company which allows limited inbound roaming, which means a customer with a foreign phone can make and take calls if it is through the 24 operators in 14 countries with which NTC has agreements, including India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, Britain and Singapore.

NTC customers can't use this system even if the equipment is in place because officials admit it doesn't have the management capacity to operate the billing systems with other operators. Why can't NTC hire more people? One engineer told us the management is non-technical and just doesn't understand the need to upgrade.

At the regulator Nepal Telecommunication Authority, Shankar Prasad Sen passes the buck back to NTC, saying: "It's the NTC's decision to provide roaming services or not. We haven't asked them for details." Listening to this, it seems the problem is neither technical nor managerial, but indifference.

If NTC can't do it, the private mobile operator Spice Cell Nepal could step in, but it is stuck because of a lingering financial dispute with the government.
EDITORIAL

When King Gyanendra sacked Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 4 October last year, he said Deuba had been incompetent in not being able to hold elections as promised. But everyone knows that wasn’t Sher Bahadur’s fault.

His real incompetence was not using legal provisions to extend the terms of VDCs and DCs by a year. Local elections couldn’t be held because of the raging insurgency, but Deuba thought he could kill two birds with one stone: appease the king as well as demolish the domination of the UML over grassroots bodies. By this one act of wilful inaction, Deuba let the terms of more than 50,000 elected officials lapse. In one fell swoop, the administration of 75 districts, 58 municipalities and 3,913 village committees fell into the hands of this country’s notoriously inefficient bureaucracy.

As it turned out, Lokendra Bahadur Chand didn’t prove to be any more competent in reviving the first tier of democracy. As a result, for more than a year now, Nepalis are without local representation. Development has ground to a halt, no one is accountable anymore to citizens, and the vacuum has been filled by the Meatos who now hold sway beyond the perimeter of district headquarters.

So, despite the ceasefire, political activity outside urban areas is now limited solely to Maoist extortion drives. From field reports in this paper over the past weeks, we catch a glimpse of a country with two systems. Nearly half the budget allocated to local government units for development remained unspent this fiscal year. That means no money for schools, health posts, trails, bridges and emergency relief.

It’s encouraging that the present government is concerned about this abysmal state of affairs and is moving to empower itself to “make alternative arrangements” in running local government units. The malaise has been correctly diagnosed, but the prescription is wrong.

To replace government officials, the Thapa government wants to take a leaf out of Deuba’s book of political tricks and hand over the administration of VDCs, municipalities, and DCs to all-party committees. Even if local units of the political parties agree to go along, the government is going to further alienate the mainstream parties and rankle the Meatos at one go. The treatment is more dangerous than the disease.

The right road is still the one that Deuba didn’t take: revival of the elected local government units. Many of the elected local UML leaders have either voluntarily crossed over to the Meatos or have been coerced into doing so. The moderate left will get a much needed boost from such a move, and it may even prevent an undesirable party split. This time, the Nepali Congress will not complain since it is an ally in the uneasy alliance with the UML. The revival of local bodies will be a win-win situation for everyone—most of all for the Nepali people.

Thapa needs to kick-start the political process at grassroots: first, by reviving VDCs, municipalities, and DCs, and then by creating an environment for local elections. This can be a beginning of the rapprochement between the government and the parliamentary parties. For all we know, crafty Thapa may have been cooking dhido all this while to feed politicos on relay hunger strikes. If that is true, then let’s hope our harsh comments last week about the lack of direction of his government are way off mark. We would be happy to eat our words.

BOTTOM UP

cooking

Kingdom of the bahuns

Secularism is one of the 18 forward-looking agendas collectively agreed upon at the first South Asian Regional Cooperation Agreement campaign against ‘repression’. Details haven’t been clearly spelled out, but presumably genuine religious freedom is all that the mainstreamers are aiming for.

The secularism of the Nepali Congress and UML is so vague as to be much less unsettling than the idol-smashing, cow-butchering, temple-desecrating, and Sanskrit-chanting antiatheistic politics of the Maoists.

Yet, this harmless agenda of parliamentary parties has ignited vociferous protests. All kinds of Hindu outfits that mutually watched Maoists’ excesses for eight years are suddenly up in arms against the very idea of secularism. The ‘World Brahmin Conference’ may herald a Hindu backlash against moderate parties conducting relay hunger strikes in urban areas.

Hindu militancy is largely an urban phenomenon even in neighbouring India. The Brahmin warriors of Banaras and V Aladara, pretending to be modern avatars of mythological Parashuram (the Hindu sage who attained Brahmin status on the strength of his penance, and thus went on to eliminate sinning Kshatriyas) seldom venture out to places like Kathmandu and Nagarkot where Hinduism is on the verge of extinction.

It’s not surprising that the faculty of the Mahendra Sanskrit University of Dang spend most of their time in Kathmandu. Brahmins consider themselves the heaven-born entitled by birth to all the privileges available in this world. As ordained by Hindu scriptures, “The Universe is under the power of the gods. The gods are under the power of the mantras. The mantras are under the power of the Brahmins. Therefore the Brahmins are our gods.” And how!

Nepal is still a Hindu Kingdom, and in the Hindu scheme of things, Chitizens may rule but there are always powerful Bahuns off-stage. Surya Bahadur Thapa owes his premiership to the grace of King Gyanendra, in addition to the rumoured backing of ‘foreign forces’. But his cabinet secretary, Bimal Koirala, has risen from the ranks and is not beholden to anyone save the rules of civil service and his own conscience. It will not be surprising if the bureaucracy paid more attention to Bimal Koirala’s instructions than to the commands of a stopgap prime minister.

Kathmandu is currently hostng the foreign secretaries’ meet of SAARC, and Madan Bhandari, in charge of the Nepali delegation. Yet another Bahun, Madan Bhandari is the articulate spokesperson of foreign ministry. The traditional dominance of Bahuns over foreign relations in the Shah court has been so complete that the external affairs department during the Rana regime was known merely as the Jainshi Kotha. General Pyarisingh Thapa may be at the helm of the Royal Nepali Army, but in pay-war expert is none other than Bye Kumarr Sharma. This time, the Maoists—outsiders both in age and experience—will be the only caste left with such an archaic faith. The reform must begin by accepting that secularism in the affairs of the state is an inevitable and indispensable part of democratic policy. No other form of statecraft can meet the challenges of governing a multi-ethnic nation state.
NOT EQUAL
"Your writers should stop making accusations against the army without any basis (Jajarkot’s tense frontline), #152." The army cannot be treated equally with the rebels. As one of the nation’s leading newspapers, your exaltation of the armed rebels left only serve their propaganda machine. Your comment on two armies gives the impression that the Royal Nepal Army is up against an equal opponent. It is not and such comparisons are misleading. You write as if you are a mere mere representation in a row between the Maoists and the RNA. Are you with the state, or with the rebels? You can’t be neutral. Apathy is our biggest hurdle, not only in the bureaucracy but also among every single citizen.

NEW PATHS
Puskar Gautam’s articles usually make a lot of sense. But if the last 12 years were a “rose garden” (Prachanda’s new path), #152 and if democracy is resilient enough to correct itself, why was it necessary for the Maoist movement to start its insurgency after 1990? This movement, which Puskar was initially a part of, had wrecked the economy and introduced unprecedented levels of cruelty and murder whose scars will take a long time to heal. Puskar knows very well that the actual number of “innocents” killed by the RNA is in the tens of thousands in different ways. To my knowledge, no moderate Nepali hopes that the king will stay in power and his policies have not exactly, ahem, blown away anyone. But if peace is to return, Puskar is correct to note that laying down weapons and leaving behind the habits of extortion are absolute prerequisites to fair elections that will put us back on the democratic path and lead to economic growth, and social development. It would also help if the political parties stopped using children as pawns and closed ranks to really making elections possible. If we cannot solve our problems ourselves, it is folly to complain when others interfere.

Maru
Recently, on going through pictures of your newspaper, I saw our so-called leaders taking a rally hunger strike. I was inspired to pen this haiku in tribute.
Fall follows in the shade, lazily talking, pretending to read. They won’t eat for two hours. Are they on a diet?
Basanta Kumar Gautam, Chubu University, Japan

Times
Politicians are always soft targets. No doubt, they deserve some of the vitriol in your editorials, but aren’t you glossing over the autocratic streak shown by the other players in this great game to heap cheap scorn at the parties? Is it because they don’t have armies, they don’t extort money or murder people?
Harish Panday, email

Correction
The distance from Khalgara to Chaupati airfield in Jajarkot is only two hours and not 16 hours as erroneously stated in ‘Jajarkot’s tense frontline’, #152.

Letters
Baburam Bhattarai
I was quite amused to read in your esteemed paper (Nepal Times) #189 about your #190 last week that the largest number of email voters have chosen me as the prospective prime minister #1 of elections were held today. While expressing gratitude to the voters for their kind affection, I would reject the offer for its misleading political connotations and consequence. It is impossible for our party and me personally to think of occupying any post, however high and prestigious it may be, within the present state dispensation. The ongoing Peoples War and recent peace talks are aimed at a progressive, democratic change to the state system as a whole and not any cosmetic change in the government within the old state. Let there be no doubt, at least amongst the enlightened English-speaking urbanites, on this fundamental political question. There is no chance of our sharing the spoils of power within the present authoritarian multi-party system, whether through showcase elections or no elections. I would once again reiterate that the bottom line for any political compromise at the moment is a responsible conference; interim government and elections to a constituent assembly. And now repeat nothing or less. I hope not have not felt the feelings of the enlightened email voters.

And more to the point, I would like to add something else to this theme, which may be somewhat out of context. This concerns an earlier report in Nepali Times (Class of 1970, #142) about my school days in Amar Jyoti High School, Lalitpur, Nepal. While my recollection of reporting was quite objective, there were some, not so deliberate, omission on my part of talking of people who made a great impact on my childhood and continuing to contribute Amar Jyoti High School to national glory, one can never forget a great lady called Miss Eleanor Elkins. A devout Christian missionary from English-speaking urbanites, on this fundamental political question. There is no chance of our sharing the spoils of power within the present authoritarian multi-party system, whether through showcase elections or no elections. I would once again reiterate that the bottom line for any political compromise at the moment is a responsible conference; interim government and elections to a constituent assembly. And now repeat nothing or less. I hope not have not felt the feelings of the enlightened email voters.

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Technical help from India and there was ready financial and political support to stop the influence of Maoists in China, and there was an eagerness to have representation from the region that resulted in Kathmandu’s chronic neglect of the Karnali. ‘Stronger political lobbying and more focused development efforts only can make the region more visible in the country’s development agenda,’ says Shankar Sharma, the current vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission.

Mohan Bajrangi, the IODC chairman of Mugu agrees that the government in faraway Kathmandu has ignored the feeble voice of this remote district for too long. ‘People’s desire for change is a huge resource,’ Bajrangi told us. ‘It is not only physically that Kathmandu is removed from Kathmandu. There is a psychological distance as well. It is easier to fly to Jumla from Kathmandu than to fly to New Delhi.’

Kathmandu’s attention also seems to be more focused on what happens to Bhutanese rather than Nepalis of the Karnali. For decades, people here have been resigned to this apathy, and get used to not expecting any-thing from the centre. This void has been exacerbated by the Maoist insurgency which has further isolated the five Karnali districts from the rest of the country. Telephone and postal services destroyed during the insurgency have still not been rebuilt. Airports, the only way in and out, have been destroyed and airlines are refusing to fly until security is guaranteed. Jumla who want to fly down to Nepalgunj have to call relatives in Kathmandu than to fly by road. Kathmandu has not even thought of providing any sort for the survivors, welfare or a sharing out of accumulated centuries of booty by the landed rich, it’s a laughable thought for provision of any sort for the survivors, welfare or a sharing out of the loot.

In the family

Death in the Karnali valley is the historical lack of representation from the region that resulted in Kathmandu’s chronic neglect of the region. ‘Stronger political lobbying and more focused development efforts only can make the region more visible in the country’s development agenda,’ says Shankar Sharma, the current vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission.

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In the family
Kathmandu doesn’t seem to know, or commission be created for the region. Development priorities and how they come from the people of the Karnali region. It has been easier to build a road to connect Simikot in the Tibet border than to get a road to Jumla from the south. Karnali has always taken it as a given that the hill districts should be linked to markets in the tarai, ignoring the proximity and the markets in China. The incalculability affects every facet of health, health care, education, social welfare, tourism and development plans. Jumla’s health post didn’t get its quota of medicine last year. Despite the complete disinterest, 150,000 refugees in the country but if someone arrives here illegally, we will have to deport them.”

Nepal garment manufacturers say the government is not lobbying enough. “A high-level government team should already have been in the US for the past two years, and private companies are taking trekkers and constituencies, Karnali gets too little to carry out development activities, and the money of the state that ignored our victimised, by the state that ignored our needs and everyone is demanding to attend the zonal assembly. Kathmandu has never been easier to subscribe to Nepali exports would enable them to compete with other exporters after Nepal joins the WTO. Nepal’s garment industry had registered exports worth $17.5 million in 2001, with more than 90 percent going to the US. Endangered heritage

Chandra Regmi, 74

Eminent historian, researcher and scholar Mahesh Chandra Regmi Regmi died Wednesday at age 74. He leaves behind a copious body of work which includes 14 books and scholarly works. Regmi’s Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal was published in four volumes by UC Berkeley between 1963-68. A Study in Nepalese Economic History 1768-1946: detailing the agrarian basis of Nepal society during unification, appeared in 1971. In 1976, Regmi published his seminal work, Landownership in Nepal. He also launched and successfully ran the weekly newspaper Diadip, which became a journal of contemporary reporting. For his contribution to historical research and journalism, Regmi was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1977, becoming the first Nepali to win the prestigious award. The Magsaysay citation said he was recognized for “chronicling of Nepal’s past and present, enabling his people to discover their roots and delineating national options”. Regmi graduated from Kathmandu’s Tribhuvan University in 1948 and served in the government from 1951-62 and left to devote full time to research. His last public appearance was at the Conference on Inclusion in Nepal Democracy in May during which Harka Gurung delivered the annual Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture (see pic, left).

The Bill

Industrialists are pressuring the government to request US Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif) to reintroduce the customs and quota free bill for garments that the US-TIBET 18 Tibet refugees were deported back to China. “They want a guarantee from us that there will be no deportation in the future,” says a senior Foreign Minister official. “But how can we issue such a guarantee? We have accepted more than 150,000 refugees in the country but if someone arrives here illegally, we will have to deport them.”

Nepal garment manufacturers say the government is not lobbying enough. “A high-level government team should already have been in the US for damage control, but they are not doing it,” says Kiran Saha of the Garment Association of Nepal.

The Nepal mission in Washington has been pressurized with the payment row between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and the Panda Energy International over the Bhote Kosi joint venture. Even before Feinstein withdrew the bill, the Texas-based Panda Energy had threatened to stall the customs and quota free bill if NEA did not clear its bill for electricity. NEA says all payments have been made, and instead faults Panda with not paying required royalty to the state on power. Meanwhile, a Foreign Ministry official confirmed that even if the Tibetan and the Bhote Kosi issues are sorted out, something else will come up that will stall the garment quota bill since the US wants to protect its market. Garment exporters, insist that quotas and customs-free Nepali exports would enable them to compete with...
VACANCIES

WaterAid is an international NGO that works with poor people to improve their access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and improved hygiene. It has worked in Nepal since 1987, during which time its partners have implemented over 500 community projects in rural and urban areas that have served 600,000 people. It currently works with 5 NGO partners in Nepal and has an annual budget of $900,000. WaterAid Nepal (WAN) seeks to fill the following posts. All candidates should have excellent written and spoken English and good computer skills in word-processing, spreadsheets etc. All remuneration packages also include allowances for Provident Fund, medical and child education expenses, Dhaushan and end-of-contract payments in addition to basic salary. All positions are based in Kathmandu with travel and have a six months probation period.

1. COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Total annual package (salary and benefits) in the region of Rs 2.2 million (taxable) equivalent to £ 18,000
4 years contract (renewable)
Closing date: August 18, 2003
Responsibility for leading all aspects of our work in Nepal, she should have good education, wide work experience, a history of achieving results, excellent written and spoken English and strong experience in:
- senior programme management in Asia, ideally within a development organisa-
tion, for 10 years or more
- preparing strategies, plans and budgets, and monitoring their progress
- programme, personnel and financial management
- working with civil society and to develop the capacity of NGOs
- research and advocacy
- development programming with poor communities in Nepal
- networking and policy dialogue with HMGN, INGOs and donors.

Candidates should have a demonstrated commitment to the values and mission of WaterAid. It is desirable but not essential to also have experience with programmes of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.

2. RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY MANAGER

Monthly basic salary Rs 40,000 – Rs 44,000 (taxable) plus allowances
3.5 years contract (renewable)
closing date: July 24, 2003
Responsible for design and implementation of all stages of research activities by WAN and partners and dissemination of their findings to influence policy and programmes. She should possess:
- an advanced degree in sociology, economics or a related discipline
- experience in conducting research and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
- excellent written and spoken Nepali
- experience of preparing reports, publications and learning products, and their dissemination
- minimum 5 years relevant experience
- participation in development activities with poor communities in Nepal
- an interest in analysing and overcoming the obstacles that prevent poor people from accessing water and sanitation.

3. DOCUMENTATION MANAGER

Monthly basic salary Rs 24,000 – Rs 27,000 (taxable) plus allowances
2.5 years contract (may be renewed)
closing date: July 24, 2003
Responsible for implementing the computerised WAN document classification system for the Resource Centres at WAN and its NGO partners, for obtaining and cataloguing new materials, and for enhancing the developmental results from these Resource Centres. She should possess:
- a degree in library science or related discipline
- experience with similar computer software
- minimum 5 years relevant experience
- knowledge of development literature, especially those produced in Nepal
- excellent written and spoken Nepali
- experience in secondary research using existing documents and supporting the research activities of others
- English – Nepali translation skills

4. ACCOUNTANT / ACCOUNTS OFFICER

Monthly basic salary Rs 24,000 – 27,000 (taxable) plus allowances
3.5 years contract (renewable)
Closing date: July 24, 2003
Responsible for daily accounting transactions, preparing reports using WAN software, and providing support to NGO partners. She should possess:
- a Bachelor or Masters degree in accounting, commerce or business administration
- experience with similar accounting software packages
- excellent written and spoken Nepali
- minimum 5 years relevant experience, preferably with a development organisation / project

Applicants interested in any of these positions must first obtain further details from WaterAid Nepal, Bishal Nagar, Box 20214, Kathmandu or by email wateraid@wateraidnepal.org.np
Due to under-representation at all levels in the organisation, WaterAid welcomes applications from women candidates.

Radical and upwardly mobile

Communism is enjoying an afterlife in Nepal, such is the power of history’s time lag and contradictions.

F or centuries Nepal’s politics has been a bane of the dominant elite who ran the country as if it were their private estate. Rules were made arbitrarily at the top before they were passed on to the masses with the threat of violence if opposed. Things, it seems, have changed drastically in the last 60 years. Today, the country is about what a leftist would happily call “people’s politics”. Instead of one central authority that speaks with a commanding voice, we now have a cacophony of competing voices. Their dissonant bubble saturates the media. Streets are crowded with assertive, sometimes violent, crowds. A so-called krantikari group staring from above the crowds. A so-called krantikari group staring from above the masses.

The pattern of political structures. The best hope for South Asian Studies

Global Trends

radicalism opposed to the state — the insurgency of the Maoists in Nepal. The Maoist insurgency is often explained in terms of its social causes, such as underdevelopment and official corruption. Social deprivation, however, does not translate itself into anti-state insurgency without the ideological investment of vested groups. The insurgency, therefore, can be better theorised as an outcome of a wide gap between the ruling elites on the one hand and the Maoists on the other. The pattern of political mobilisation has graduated from moderate to extreme forms over the decades. Violence now is the chosen instrument for those seeking radical political change. Such violence has invited counter-violence from the state, leading to the suppression of democratic freedoms as a distinct possibility.

Since political radicalism within the country has already reached a critical mass, repression of the traditional sort is not likely to bring about lasting peace. Finding a principled accommodation with the agitating groups is the best course of action for the state as well as its adversaries.

The Maoist insurgency in Nepal has benefited from the Chinese revolution of 1949, and our obsession with comparing China rather than India. The insurgents are likely to become the unwitting tools, but they will never become their trusted partners. Isolation is not an option.

From the perspective of distance, the current dismal situation in Nepal appears to be the result of radicalisation proceeding on divergent paths, while the state has been weak in providing leadership for modernisation. Ideological warfare of the sort the political forces are fighting is not likely to make the country progress. In fact, there is a real danger that it may lead to the collapse of the country and its governing structures. The best hope for competing political forces is to urgently find an accommodation and begin the task of rebuilding a viable state.

BP Giri is the editor of the Centre for South Asian Studies Newsletter at the University of Virginia, USA.
On loan

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $35 million loan to Nepal for a public sector management program aimed at boosting revenue collection, prioritising expenditure and strengthening without sustainability. It has also committed a technical assistance grant of $425,000 to provide overall management support for the program while working to develop an effective privatisation process and build capacity to undertake divestiture. The bank says the program is in line with the government’s poverty reduction drive.

The loan comes from its concessionary Asia Development Bank Fund, with a 24-year term, including a grace period of eight years. Interest will be charged at 1 percent per annum during the grace period and 1.5 percent per annum subsequently.

Banking on perks

Kummar Bank has begun a ‘super saving’ scheme that offers 4.25 percent interest on daily balances, with interests paid on a quarterly basis. The bank believes this is an advantage for depositors at a time when other banks are offering only 1 percent interest on saving accounts. The scheme also benefits like 50 percent reduction in the loan processing fee and free internet banking, among other things.

New internships

Silver Mountain School of Hotel Management (AH&LA) is the first in the country to offer a two-year internationally recognised Bachelor Degree in Hotel Management in Nepal. If enrolled with the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and recently signed an agreement with the University of Professional Education, the Netherlands, who will provide internships in

Building bridges

It’s not too late.

The last two months have been an indication on Nepal’s geo-political standing not only in the region but also in the world stage. The referral of Tibetan refugees may cost us the garmant quota, and that reaching of differences between China and India makes us rather inexplicable to deal with both. The Beed suggests the motto of a certain US senator who was sited at a tree of refugees at the cost of thousands of garmant workers left straddling the poverty line. There was no outrage when people of Nepali origin were forcefully evicted from Bhutan and India in the final decades of the last century; China and India seems more concerned with supporting approximately 100,000 refugees has been tremendous on the Nepal economy and yet there was precious little international attention or sanctions placed against either of the two nation states. On the contrary, Bhutan tourism continues to draw well-wishing, and India because the economic tig of the sub-continent—the latter without considerable help from the United States—the same country that is whipping Nepal’s economy and tourism, has been guaranteed a role for the international community to draw the wheels of tourism that has been stuck in a rut since SARS damaged the small upswing that the nation was experiencing.

Crowning glory

Nepali girls have begun to hand in their applications for the Dabur Vatika Miss Nepal Beauty Pageant 2003 to be held on 13 September at BICC. The contest, organised by the Hidden Treasure event management company, in association with Kathmandu Jaycees, is the biggest and most well known pageant in the nation. This is the second consecutive year that Dabur Nepal has hosted the event as the main sponsor. The pageant winner will represent Nepal at Miss World 2003 and the first run up will compete for Miss Asia Pacific Quest.

Showcase

Samsung has opened its new service centre in Darbar Marg with a full range of the Korean giant’s consumer electronic products. The state-of-the-art premises allows customers to test any of the Samsung products before purchasing them. The Golchha Organisation, national dealer for Samsung, has already opened a showroom in Bhaktapur and has plans to do so in other towns soon.

Interview

“there is no military solution to this problem.”

Nepal Times: What is the USAID’s own self-evaluation of its activities in Nepal?

Wendy J Chamberlin: What we have in our long association here is about what really works in development. As you know USAID has been here since 1950 as a US government through USAID, invested nearly $700 million in Nepal and it has been, for the most part, wildly successful. What has worked is when the Nepali people have participated in their own development; with our aid and enabling. For example, in the forestry field, we have assisted villages invest their personal efforts in managing the deposits. In the beginning, many people were doubt two questions about whether erosion and deforestation could be arrested, it could not. And the key has been Nepal villagers themselves. Another impressive example is with road building, the USAID works all over the country in all 75 districts, where again USAID has only been an enabler. The success of the Vitamin A program is a case in point.

What about the problems plaguing Nepal politics?

To achieve success you have to involve the forces, the players, and they have to work together for the common good. To the extent there is a political gridlock today in Kathmandu, among the different players, it presents a grave danger to Nepal and the future of Nepali democracy. It undermines true democratic forces and, perhaps most dangerously, it emboldens those that practice violence and terrorism.

How has USAID’s own development agenda in Nepal evolved over the decades?

In the 1950s we were involved in malaria eradication, among others. In the 1960s, we were deeply involved in training Nepal’s first generation of technical specialists in the public sector and education. At one point in the 1970s, we were in agriculture and we moved on to public health. We have also worked in energy, water resources basically, in the last 12 years.

Have you moved away from development of infrastructure?

That’s true; we go where the needs are. You had taken some strides in your infrastructure. That’s why I am particularly concerned for the Nepali people when the terrorists destroy the infrastructure, which is a step back in the country, with severe problems of exclusion. Perhaps there was some correlation with our presence in that USAID programs caused people to question the status quo and start thinking differently with a broadened horizon. I do not think we should make any apology for our work in Nepal. I think it was appropriate at the time. One wishes, however, that the people who did ask questions had stayed on the side of peace rather than going for violence because violence is very corrupting.

Is there any impact on lives of Nepali women due to Washington’s anti-babon stance that began in the Reagan era and has continued?

The USAID is a US government program, and it has to reflect the values and policies of our government. This is also a policy that was continued through Bill Clinton. We still have very active assistance in maternal and child health, immunisation, and family planning programs and we have got some active HIV/AIDS programs in Nepal. Our anti-trafficking support is also aimed at improving the lives of the Nepali people; it brings a great deal of effective assistance to the Nepali people.

Where is USAID when it comes to education?

We have not been doing very much education in Nepal over the last few years, but we are interested in getting retrofitted. And this is not Nepal-specific. Throughout the world we moved away from the education sector to put emphasis on other areas. Under Andrew Nadasio (USAID chief) and more specifically President Bush, there is much greater interest in channeling more of our support to education.

ECONOMY

Banking on perks

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Get that healthy glow with nature’s bounty and some time-tested pampering.

If anything, DIY would only compound the stress factor.

Fortunately for us, the business of beauty can be left in the capable hands of our betters—the havens of health and beauty that specialise in beauty treatments the way nature intended, found right here in the Valley.

In a little garden oasis, pouches of neem, eucalyptus and other herbs steep in warm water baths, releasing a pleasant bouquet of aroma that soothes and refreshes. This is Royal Hana Garden (01-4162000): the stuff of deadline fantasies. The management guarantees it'll even heal summer skin irritations. The baths are emptied daily and the tubs scrubbed before fresh water boiled to 90 degrees is poured in.

Fortunately you won’t be lobotomised because guests are welcome to sit themselves in only after it’s comfortable 45 degrees. Everything from towels to a bathing sarong or short is provided.

The open-air stone baths are surrounded by a lush garden and as you sip a cup of Japanese tea surrounded by a mist of herb steam you will feel the knots unwind and the peace dropping slow as molasses.

If water isn’t your element, cooled and revitalised. The favourites are lemongrass to refresh, cleanse and stimulate, and peppermint, a summer special. Ananta’s, oxygen and aromatherapy come together in a delightful olfactory combination. Ananta’s air had twice the particulate concentrate acceptable by WHO standards that he opened the Oxygen Parlour (01-4474413) in Thamel. This therapy is said to flush out toxins, decrease stress, clear the mind and relieve headaches. It’s even a great hangover buster for the post-Friday night alcoholic binge. At Ananta’s, oxygen and aromatherapy come together in a delightful olfactory combination. The favourites are lemongrass to refresh, cleanse and stimulate, and peppermint, a summer special that cools and revitalises.

The trend has yet to catch on, but taking into account the dismal quality of our air, there would be few better ways to counteract the toxic fumes—short of moving to a floral jacuzzi. Could there be a more divine way to unwind after a rigorous trek around Annapurna? Well, maybe one: Annapurna Adventure package, four- and a half hours of pure pleasure. You start with an aromatic steam to soothe those tired aching bones. Re-energised, you’re ready for a stimulating cleanse and anti-inflammatory treatment with a Body Stimulating Polish. Next is the Energiser Body Masque using specially blended pure essential oils. A relaxing dip in the jacuzzi is in order before a deep-tissue sports massage relieving sore muscles and easing tired joints. Finally, to restore the soft glow to your cheeks, a deep cleansing and purifying facial gently exfoliates to reveal healthy skin. Revived, rejuvenated and $130 lighter, you truly feel new.

In Café U, boywonder Tora Akita has set up his Massage Kendra (0981054787). He combines the ancient healing art of acupuncture (Shiatsu) with massage for a deeply relaxing therapy. Tora invites the sceptical to relieve themselves of pain related to muscle and bone. ‘Shi’ he explains means finger and ‘atsu’ pressure. As you lay on the massage mat, the soft trills of classical music gently hailing.
Tora’s magic fingers go to work, and submission is easy. His thumbs press, releasing the tight muscles. Muscles on the opposite side compensate and are slightly raised he explains. “It probably hurts here?” His intuition is spot on. As it should be. Tora has been training with his father since he was 13.

The only Chinese beauty centre in the city, Right-Timing Beauty Centre, (01-4223500) has been in operation for six months and is gaining popularity especially among their Nepali clientele. When Gao Lei visited Nepal three years ago she tried out various parlours and found it very different to the treatments back home. Facials in China involve acupressure that improves skin tone while relieving headaches and insomnia. All treatments are done using Lavette products, a Chinese herbal line containing aloe vera, gingko and extracts of vitamins A, C and E. Lei acknowledges the Levette products work slowly but she is confident they improve the condition of skin, hair and nails.

Somewhat closer to home, Ayurveda, the Indian science of healing, is gaining a following. At the Ayurveda Health Home (01-4387867), the pioneer Panca-Karma Centre of Nepal you can check in for a five-day session of 45 minutes each at their new centre in Dhapasi. You’ll be at the receiving end of head and body massages and a downright spiritual experience of Siro Dhara—the gentle rhythmic flow of therapeutic herbal oils from a suspended metal or clay vessel upon the Third Eye, that space in the vicinity between the eyebrows (see pic, above). The treatment is intended to enhance memory, concentration and creativity while relaxing and relieving headaches or sleep disorders. The ultimate therapy for stress and anxiety.

In Dolly’s Exquisite Creations (01-4445898), Dolly Singh is partial to a line of Spanish products and swears by the oxygen facial, which she claims directly nourishes the epidermis for noticeable results. The 30-minute treatment once a month fades scars and pigmentation but Dolly advocates prevention is better than cure: “Women everywhere who think they have good skin won’t treat themselves to a facial, but once a problem starts it is very difficult to reverse.”

Indulgence is certainly good for the soul, but Shrijana Pradhan at Sipi Beauty Club (01-4244592) is somewhat more cautious. “If you have good skin why tamper with it?” she asks. Shrijana uses a topical brew she concocted herself, chamomile, herb extracts and distilled water that is sold as part of the Sipi line of products. A trained cosmetologist, she’s often in her lab, perfecting ‘grandma’s traditional recipes’. Most of her ingredients may sound like the fixings of an exotic salad, but Shrijana knows they work. Just don’t expect an immediate makeover. “People want instant results. Our bodies have an internal healing system but sometimes things have to get worse to get better.”

It’s too bad that Sworupa Beauty Home (01-4588682) in Pulchowk is a ‘Ladies Only’ outfit. Sworupa Shrestha, who has an advanced training course in natural beauty therapy from Blossom Kochhar (India’s queen of aromatherapy), insists beauty is a reflection of internal health. She picks up a lock of lacklustre hair on a regular customer and asks, “Stressed?” A client who snuck out for a facial during her lunch hour, said some of the facial masks smelled good enough to eat, especially the one with oranges in it. And for those who won’t wage gracefully without a fight, Sworupa offers Quinto non-surgical face-lifts. Stimulation of acupuncture points on the face, it strengthens and tightens facial muscles, while increasing blood flow that visibly softens wrinkles and banishes dark circles. The procedure is painless so the need to sit is back, close your eyes and surrender to her blissful ministrations.

MERCANTILE OFFICE SYSTEMS

Mercantile Building, Durbur Marg, Kathmandu
Tel: 4220773, 4243566 Fax: 977-1-4225407 Email: market@mos.com.np
RIGHT TO WORK

Pointedly being reminded that much of their judgements.

Little victims

Little victims

A new cultural revolution

Contemporary Chinese art is all the rage—and the state supports it.

Volin’ by Yan Lei.

“A new cultural revolution

Contemporary Chinese art is all the rage—and the state supports it.

‘International Landscapes Series’ by Ai Weiwei

Populists are sometimes

Democratic processes are likely to be more sensitive to the real tradeoffs involved.

Development countries are often advised to, in order, to undertake reforms recommended by “experts” who promote them as the “technocrats” and are often backed by the IMF. Opposition to these reforms is usually dismissed as a “populist”. Countries that fail to undertake these reforms are described as craven or lacking political will, and soon suffer the consequences: higher interest rates when borrowing becoming.

But look closely at some of these “technocratic” proposals. Many are more often based on ideology than economic science. Technocrats can of course really make an electric plant work better. The goal is simple: to produce electricity at a lower cost as possible. This is mostly a matter of engineering, not politics. Economic policies are usually not technocratic in this sense. They involve tradeoffs: some lead to higher inflation but lower unemployment; some help investors, others workers.

Economists call policies where no one can be made better off without making someone else worse off Pareto efficient. If a single policy is better than all others for everyone, it is, has no Pareto-efficient alternatives, it is said to be Pareto dominant. If choices among policies were purely Pareto, if in no one was made worse off by choosing one policy, as against another, the choices involved would indeed be purely “technical”.

But in reality, few policy choices are Pareto. Instead, some policies are better for some groups, but worse for others. Different policies benefit and hurt different groups. In East Asia, for example, IMF policies helped international lenders, but hit workers and domestic firms hard.

Different policy choices might have imposed more risk on international lenders, and less on workers and domestic firms. Deciding which policy to choose involves choices among values, not just technical questions about which policy is in some morally uncontroversial sense “better”. These value choices are political choices, which cannot be left to technocrats.

Of course, there is scope for technical analysis where political choices are at the crux of the decision. Technocrats can sometimes help avoid Pareto inferior policies, that is, policies that make everyone worse off. Sometimes there are policies that can promote both growth and equality, and the job of good economists is to search for them.

The problem is that many policies advanced by technocrats are, if they are Pareto efficient, in fact flawed and many people—sometimes entire countries—worse off.

Look at the litany of technocratically inspired examples of privatisation and deregulation in the 1990s. “Banking reform”, for example, frequently sole too soon on government bail-outs, leaving a few people much richer, but the country much poorer. These failures suggest that we should have less confidence in the supposed professional skills of technocrats—or at least less confidence than they have in themselves.

But there is more a fundamental point here.

Democratic processes are likely to be more sensitive to the real consequences of policies, to the real tradeoffs involved. Of course, some critics of technocratic remedies may be popular positioning, but sometimes the might be that irony-touched (and usually US-trained) technocrats.

Consider the case of Mexico, where a proposal to raise revenue by taxing food and medicines assumed by the poor was, unsurprisingly, rejected by a democratically accountable legislature.
I produces higher value-added inputs in the developed world. But production remains in the Developing countries that impose poor farmers—VAT impedes vendors, village enterprises, and easily be traced (as distinct from pay regular salaries and whose Indeed, because VAT is a tax on economy makes VAT inefficient in most developing countries. should do likewise. Advanced industrial countries in that efficiency required adopting a proposal. Its advocates argued that VAT is the inevitable outcome of the technocrats said, for countries, you can't impose a tax on all commodities. The Skeptical Environmentalist should know better. In his recent book (plankton sometimes supplemented by agricultural by-products in the case of freshwater fish) to generate a net protein right where it is needed. In captivity. These fish eat flesh—such as salmon or seabass, and increasingly, the farming of wild tunas in captivity. These fish eat fish—the they are the wolves and lions of the sea. When fed only vegetable matter, such as soy meal, salmon do not grow well, and end up looking and tasting like tofu.

The reality is that public health is a priority on the global agenda for public health is, as never before, a priority on the global agenda for. On the negative side, SARS exposed weaknesses in health systems worldwide. The tenacity of the SARS virus and the public health and economic uncertainty it brings underscore this all too well.

The lessons of SARS
SARS is the first new public health epidemic of the 21st century and the public health community’s first opportunity to mount a coordinated, early response. We are dealing with a new disease striking a globalised society. We have seen its rapid international spread. We have seen stock markets rise or fall in response to the latest success or setback in the SARS situation. We have seen the disease on the front pages and on television. We have seen the closure of hospitals, schools and borders and witnessed economic fallout, population movements from affected cities, and unexplained disappearances.

But we have also seen unprecedented international solidarity against this shared microbial threat of unknown dimensions. And we have seen SARS stop dead in its tracks in some of the worst affected areas. SARS has changed the perception of the infectious disease threat. It has also raised public health to a new level of importance.

The first and most compelling lesson we must learn from SARS concerns the need to report, promptly and openly, cases of any disease with the potential for international spread. In a globalised, electronically-interconnected world, attempts to conceal cases of an infectious disease for fear of social and economic consequences must now be recognised as carrying a very high price. This includes the loss of credibility in the eyes of the international community, and its negative economic impact, damage to the health and economies of neighbouring countries, and a very real risk that outbreaks within the country’s own territory can spiral out of control.

SARS also shows the decisive role of political commitment at the highest level. Vietnam, which became the first country to break the chain of transmission in late April, showed how a developed country, hit by an unusually severe outbreak, can triumph over a disease when reporting is prompt and open and when World Health Organisation (WHO) assistance is quickly requested and fully supported. When awareness, confidence, and detection rates are high, even such traditional control tools as isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine can be sufficiently powerful to break the chain of transmission.

The urgency of SARS challenged the WHO to set in motion high-level scientific and medical collaboration. Within a week of the first global alert, the WHO had established three ‘virtual’ SARS-related networks of virologists, clinicians, and epidemiologists to ensure a continuous research effort equal to the magnitude of the SARS emergency. One month after, 11 leading laboratories had joined the WHO collaborative effort and participated in the development of a rapid and sensitive diagnostic test

The experts are right. We now have the incredible opportunity to identify the SARS virus. Complete sequencing of its RNA effort, and participating scientists collectively announced conclusive identification of the SARS virus. Complete sequencing of its RNA followed shortly. This success showed the willingness of the scientific community to collaborate, rather than compete with each other.

On the negative side, SARS exposed weaknesses in health systems around the world. Even with highly-developed social services, the burden of coping with SARS and the number of hospital patients and health workers who became infected brought health systems to the verge of collapse.

The reality is that public health is a priority on the global agenda for the simple reason that so many of the challenges we now face have a global impact and thus require global solutions and a global response. Our task is to build trust and solidarity. In an interconnected and interdependent world, bacteria and viruses travel almost as fast as email messages. Globalisation has shrunk distances, broken down old barriers, and linked people together. It has also made problems halfway around the world everyone’s problem. The tenacity of the SARS virus and the public health and economic uncertainty it brings underscores this all too well.

Survival and effectiveness requires an enormous commitment in public health. They save lives, protect economies and are an essential pillar of both national and international security. If the world can unite against SARS, we should be able to address other health scourges, especially those which affect not thousands but millions of people.

By Gro Harlem Brundtland
Director-General of the World Health Organization and former Prime Minister of Norway.

Save the fish. It will be difficult to revive the rapidly dwindling fish population.

It is difficult not to be a pessimist about the future of the world’s fish population. Global marine catches, which had been growing for most of the 20th century, plunged in the late 1980s and have declined ever since. That decline was all the more disturbing because the world’s oceans are so vast.

The rapid depletion of fish stocks is the inevitable outcome of the over-exploitation of open-sea fisheries. Sophisticated marine technology permits us to catch fish at a far greater rate than nature can produce them. In the last 50 years, marine catches have increased by an average of 10% per year. Today, the world’s catches are four times the level of 50 years ago. But these gains have been achieved at a steep price, in terms of what our oceans are capable of producing.

Over-fishing has become a severe problem in the developing world as well. So fisheries worldwide are due for a depletion and are currently experiencing a worldwide collapse. Many of the catch zones are in the verge of collapse. To save our fisheries, but only if they are not destroyed or as the source of an endlessly growing supply of fish for an endlessly growing human population, but as a provider of a healthy complement to grains-based diets.

Save the fish. It will be difficult to revive the rapidly dwindling fish population.
Has the goodwill expressed by friendly Kingdom view us? That is a hypothetical question. Let us not even and keep national unity secure? We understand that it is only in the hands of us Nepalis to strengthen our nationalism. We are confident that if the leaders elected by the people work towards fulfilling their expectations, and an environment is created where the constitutional bodies can execute their responsibilities. Civil wars and ethnic strife have torn many countries apart. Could this be Nepal’s fate as well? History stands proof of the commitment and sacrifices we Nepalis are capable of making to save the country. We understand that it is only in the hands of us Nepalis to strengthen our nationalism. We are confident that if all of us are committed and aware, our flag will always fly high.

In Your Majesty’s view, what could be the ways to end the violence, return to peace, develop the country and maintain nationality secure? If all the concerned parties work honestly and remain committed to solving the problems of the people, giving them the gains of democracy, the nation can move forward.

The Maoists have demanded an end to the present constitution. Does solving the technical aspects of this issue require Your Majesty’s personal involvement? It has been a tradition with the Shah dynasty to administer the kingdom for the good of the masses in accordance with the expectations of the people. His Majesty late King Birendra sat about the present constitution according to the wishes of the Nepalese people. We have already stated that the people are the medium of change.

Looking at the state of the economy and security, is an election possible? We are confident that elections will take place soon.

What will happen if the elections can’t be held? How will the ensuing problems be solved? Why have negative views now? Instead, why don’t we all, the political parties, civil servants, and citizens, work towards holding the elections in the earliest date possible?

Will Your Majesty have any role in solving the problem incase an election cannot be held? That is a hypothetical question. Let us not even think about that.

Your Majesty became the heir to the throne in the most unconventional manner. Has this caused any change in the way our traditional friends, especially India, China and the United Kingdom view us? Has the goodwill expressed by friendly nations towards Nepal changed?

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"We are confident elections will take place soon."

Janamanch, 6 July 2003

Special interview with His Majesty King Gyanendra

What is your role in the context of violence against both the monarchy and democracy as well as about good governance? Our country was a symbol of peace in the past but today it is caught in violence, terrorism and destruction. We feel that the path to finding the reason and solution to the problems through constitutional means has not closed. The monarchy has and will always be active within the framework of the constitution to fulfill the common goals of Nepal and all Nepalis. We will never step back to remove the worries and concerns of the people.

How can this dissatisfaction and mistrust caused by violence and bad governance be addressed? Mistrust and dissatisfaction increases when the people’s basic necessities are not met, and leaders disregard the expectations of the people. We feel that it will not be difficult to lead the country towards a better future if the leaders elected by the people work towards fulfilling their expectations, and an environment is created where the constitutional bodies can execute their responsibilities.

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Peace talks

Buddhastha, 8 July

In the past, as old acquaintances, I did help them [the Maoists]. Fortunately, they haven’t demanded - Pradip Kumar Shrestha, chairman of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

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Unemployed docs

Pradeep Pokhrel in Deshantar, 6 July

Medicine has always been considered a moneyed profession that guarantees prestige along with a steady job. Unemployment was never a problem for a medical doctor. But times are changing. Each year around 700 fresh medical graduates pass out of colleges in Nepal. These include the products from more than a dozen private medical colleges in the country and those who return home after completing their studies abroad. To their swelling numbers add the significant number of doctors who already have established practices, predominantly in urban areas. This only serves to make jobs scarcer, since few are willing to go to the districts. A medical degree costs an average of Rs 2 million and fresh doctors prefer public hospital jobs, even though they are poorly paid, which is why there are so many volunteer doctors in city hospitals these days. Finding jobs fresh out of college is difficult because almost all the positions are reserved for established senior practitioners, so many graduates end up as assistants to the latter at state-run institutions.

More than 4,100 doctors have received licenses from the medical council. Around 2,000 foreign doctors have also been granted licenses for one year and nearly 2,200 junior doctors are still in training. And now Indian doctors are taking jobs that Nepali doctors need.
I have shown myself to be a weak person in these pages.

Sundarijal

I have been writing very freely without any reservation in these pages my thoughts that perhaps something as simple as fear of public opinion or suspicion that sometimes appears to lurk in my mind. Perhaps they won’t do it—although I cannot credit them with a sense of aristocratic honour. During our last detention in this very prison for 8 years our personal papers were never tampered with, and on our release we took them out without inspection by them. I don’t know why. Perhaps they were afraid of us. Today also I coughed blood in the morning—the look of the blood saturated spit between my fingers was something I had always thought that there were pus like things in the sputum. I will have to wait for 4 or 5 days or even longer to know the result of the pathological exam. Last Tuesday, about a month ago they didn’t find anything—and the symptom disappeared after a week by itself. I told Dr Bhatarai yesterday that when I see blood in the sputum I get very nervous, and that it was often due to a blood disorder that had no pathogen was isolated. So far as I’m concerned, I am very happy as a serious infection perhaps (needing) antibiotic treatment. Or I may be a symptom of some very serious illness—like cancer. My health is deteriorating and I seem to lose weight. Dr Vashishta has told me that I should take care of my physical health too. Tomorrow, I may develop a serious trouble of a serious nature. Today’s sputum was too bad for me to examine. This is the 3rd specimen of sputum sent for exam.

T he World Bank began as a lending agency for post-World War II reconstruction of Europe. Subsequently, the agency transformed itself into a development bank, an aid agency, an anti-poverty campaigner, a mediator in state enterprise restructuring under the rubs of structural adjustment, an advocate of non-labor unionised market and a knowledge bank. In the process of its transformation, the bank has taken on governance, biodiversity, post-conflict reconstruction, and anti-terrorism as growth drivers and public participation. The agency searches for its soul as it attempts to grapple with the challenges of change to become effective in what it does.


Reinventing the World Bank begins with the Athens’ Tourism Governance. Jonathan Pincus analyses institution building in World Bank financed projects. The questions of Criminal Debt and Corruption are addressed by Jeffrey Winters and Munsif Khan respectively. John Sender assesses the World Bank’s role in Sub-Saharan Africa while the agency’s Special Unit on Social Change is discussed by Ben Fine. The editors finally provide conditions that the collection is a thorough no-holds-barred, yet balanced, examination of the Global Agenda By dismissing of anti-globalisation as an imperialism. The conservative right, on the other hand, has seen it as a socialist giveaway doling out money to corrupt and unaccountable Third World governments.

By posing itself at the temple of modern development practice, the World Bank has endeavored to bring every thing to one body. It conducts its own, engages in evaluation of its policies, is a lending agency, and has advisory roles as aid coordinator, social reformer, law formulator and enforcer. It is a lender, and has been in more than 50 years of being hindered with many fault lines. Illustrative filters are timely cautionary signals to cautionary signals to the cost of economic growth.

Consequently, the Bank’s present and past problems has failed to grapple with the problem of how to reconcile between the institution’s publicly stated goals and its operational performance. Reform, according to the contribution to the book, cannot be done within the framework of the Bank: it has to be essentially improved. They further suggest that the agency shareholders are unlikely to be agents for such reforms.

So, what is the point of this book? Banks that supported programs with specific conditions? The case of Nepal’s own Arun III hydropower project demonstrates that informed consultation by social actors can bring about changes. After 1990, egalitarian social forces against the appropriateness of the hydropower project. A liberalised political atmosphere in the country had created the space for creative engagement. Toni Hagen termed the Arun III engagement as a democratic and democratic exercise.

In the post-Arun III era, Nepal’s hydropower development policy terrain is pluralized and involves the government, the private sector and local communities. Now, water projects started and completed under these institutional conditions produce more electricity than Arun III would have. However, many constraints such as a lack of practical, limited access to electricity, diversifying end use and reconciling competing water users water and environmental grounds. The Bank withdrawal support from all of them in the mid-1990s. In all three cases, the Bank was challenged by independent groups within Bangladesh, India and Nepal in coalition with international organisations. The agency has attempted to adapt to the dichotomy by helping set up the World Commission on Dams. The Commission’s report Dams and Development made public in 2000 has suggested a negotiated process for building dams. Reinventing the World Bank, however, fails short of commenting on this paradigm shift.

The World Bank was a major contributor in the Nepal Development Project. The agency continues to exercise influence in shaping the country’s development and public policies. The agency recently upgraded in lending level to Nepal from a ‘low case’ ($50-50 million a year) to ‘base case’ ($100 million or more a year). Subsequently, the Power Development Fund (PDF) was sanctioned. Confidence of the lender may be good news for a country attempting to limp back to normalcy after the violence of the past seven years but it has not done solve Nepal’s problems, which is matching public policy goals with operational effectiveness.


Unbundling the World Bank

A paradigm shift in the world’s bank is necessary, and possible.

The World Bank began a funding agency for post World War II reconstruction of Europe. Subsequently, the agency transformed itself into a development bank, an aid agency, an anti poverty campaigner, a mediator in state enterprise restructuring under the rubs of structural adjustment, an advocate of non-labor unionised market and a knowledge bank. In the process of its transformation, the bank has taken on governance, biodiversity, post-conflict reconstruction, and anti-terrorism as growth drivers and public participation. The agency searches for its soul as it attempts to grapple with the challenges of change to become effective in what it does.


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Unbundling the World Bank

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FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- The Eastern Essence Paintings by Chirag Bangdel at the Alliance Francaise gallery till 15 July. 4249163
- Poetry Festival Mark Wyatt reads from “Snow and Other Adventures” 18 July, Prabati Tuladhar and Smiti Josarlo on 20 July both at 7:30 PM at the Last Lap Gallery, Cafes. 4283459
- Traditional and modern Nepali paintings 4-8PM at The Octagon Gallery, Hotel Viraaj. 4271455
- Innovative & Quality Crafts Exhibition Sale by Men’s Creation, 12-13 July at Hotel de l’Armanou, Dharahara Marg, 4420129
- A fresh pair of eyes Paintings, sketches and photographs by volunteers living and working in Nepal. 18 July at the Lazimpat Gallery Cafe. 4249304
- Monsoon Mood Paintings by Umitt Nepali, Gahini Shah, Batsa Gopal Vaidya, Shashikala Thani, Kran Manandhar, Rupin Upadhyaya-Greis at Siddharth Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revised, 4411122

EVENTS

- Martin Chautari Discussions every 3PM Sunday on political issues, 3PM Tuesday on various topics, 3PM Thursday on media, and 3PM Friday on youth related issues. Participation is open to all.
- Party at Baber Mahal Revised 7.30 PM onwards, 11 July. Entry Rs 100
- Ghento Dance Blast International artists, DJ Arjun, bottomless brass on bar 18 July & Yak & Yeti. Tickets: Rs 1,111 for dinner and drink. 4248989
- Newroad-Basantapur Street Festival-2002 10-11 July at Hanumanchno Durbar Square and surrounding areas.
- The God Dance of Kathmandu Valley 7PM every Tuesday at the Big Pagoda, Hotel Viraaj. 4271455
- Kathmandu Toastmasters Club 5.45-7.30 PM every Tuesday. Improve your speaking and listening skills. Free at EME, Trimurti Park. 4426368

MUSIC

- Yale Whitenuffs Tickets: Rs 799. World renowned a cappella group on 15-16 July at Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248989
- Salsa featuring Cadenza and Latin Section. 8PM on 11 July at The Jazz Live. Shankar Hotel, Entry Rs 300. 4412999
- Live Acoustic Jam 7PM on Saturdays at Himali Cafe, Thamel. 4240788
- Cadence live 7.30PM every Wednesday and Saturday. Rs 200 entry. Interested musicians welcome to jam. Upstair Jazz Bar, Lazzampat. 4247311
- Full Circle acoustic jam every Friday at New Orleans Cafe, Thamel. 4247311
- Thunderclap with Ram Shrinesh and Sabu Lama. 8PM onwards Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Red Onion Bar, Lazimpat. 4416071

DRINKS

- Liquor Buffet 7-9PM at the Splash Bar & Grill. Rs 550 per person. Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. 4416071
- Fusion offers over 100 cocktails. Happy hour from 6-7PM, Dwarika’s Hotel. 4479488
- K-teo Special Tropical Vietnamese drinks Rs 125 or Rs 750 for every 1l.5 litre. Free Irish Coffee with every main course. K-teo Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4430403

FOOD

- Weekends Later Riser BBQ fixed lunch at the Shambala Garden. Up to 66 percent discount. Shankari Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999
- Executive lunch menu at Bharat Cheetah Restaurant and Bar, Kamaldumpa 4242172
- Cajun Food Festival at Rox Restaurant, Hatai Regency Kathmandu from 11 July 13. 4491234
- Belle Momo for more 15 varieties of momos at Darbar Marg. 4203999
- Exquisite dining at the Chimney, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248989
- Expresso Bar newly renovated at La Dolce Vita, Thamel. 4419612
- Friday BBQ at the Summit Hotel with 6.30 PM onwards. Rs 500 + tax. 5521910
- Breakaway Buffet Lunch at 325-375 (weekday), Rs 650 (weekend) at the Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. 4411814
- Traditional Nepali Thali Lunch at Patan Museum Cafe inside Patan Museum, 11AM-3:30 PM. Cocktails and snacks 4-6.30 PM. 5526271
- Summer specials smoked salmon soufflé, shrimp Newburg and crispy duck breast. Kilroy’s of New Zealand 4245899
- Free Home delivery Flowerlovers, it’s FUCHSIA time again 5.45-7.30 PM every Tuesday. Improve your speaking and listening skills. Free at IEM, Tripureshwor. 4429638
- Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candies, cards, gifts, stationary, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg. opposite Hotel de l’Armanou, Dharahara Marg. 4420129
- Visit Femilines, the Exclusive Lingere Store for ladies under garments, nightwear, bathrobes and more. Ladies. Tankodara Infertility treatment and Ayurvedic consultation. 4426495
- Flowerowers: Flowerows, its FUCHSIA time again 5.45-7.30 PM every Tuesday at The BHOJNASAL HARU NURSERY, 100m from Bhatbateni Supermarket, then from Bhaktapur Chowk (turn right and down). 5523498
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BOOKWORM

Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal Deepak Thapa (ed) Martin Chautari, 2013 Rs 475
- This collection of writings taken from a variety of sources provides wide-ranging perspectives on the Maoist insurrection to inform readers of the many facets of Nepal’s internal conflict. The selection analyses and explains the failure of the state to meet the aspiration of the people.

Education in dilema: A Nepalese perspective Rababuddin D Khali, PhD Udaya BookCo, 2003 Rs 290

The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home & Abroad Farel Zakaria Pegasus Vikas, 2013 Rs 395
- At a period when democracy is the one political system is unquestioned, this deeply important book points out the tension between democracy and freedom. Zakaria argues that in many parts of the world, the spurt of democracy has not produced a corresponding growth in liberty.

CLASSIFIED

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Run, Hari, run

Hari Bahadur Rokaya’s practice schedule is as tough as his home terrain in Jumla. Like most marathon runners he prefers setting off in the early morning, past the bazar, along the trail down to the Bheri, over the suspension bridge, past paddy terraces glittering in the sun, along the edge of the pine-scented forest. After two hours, this world class athlete is back home in time for a snack of instant noodles.

His training may be ‘low tech’, his shoes frayed, but Hari more than makes up for it with his determination and patriotism. The up-and-down and the thin air at 3,300m is good training. The 41-year-old sets himself a grueling pace; he has reached Rara Lake from Jumla in seven hours, a distance that takes most marathon runners three consecutive years in 1997, an altitude of 5184m, and Hari won the world’s highest marathon held every 18 months, that made him run, and win again. Hari is already a world class athlete is back home in Jumla, is already a legendary aural pleasure, you can lease with a CD, two or maybe even three.

Hari’s job as an assistant coach in the Jumla District Sports Committee earns him Rs 7,000 a month, which he ploughs back into taking training for the November event. Hari’s trainee Laxmi Upadhaya, also from Jumla, is already a national runner. Hari has received numerous invitations to emigrate abroad, but choses to live and work in remote Jumla. He says simply: “I was born and brought up here. This is my home.”

SOPHIA PANDE

A touch of whimsy led to the ‘Gentlemen Songsters’ of Yale naming themselves Whiffenpoofs. The Whiffenpoofs after one of the characters in a Victor Herbert musical comedy. Don’t let the name fool you. This group of 14 fresh-faced Yale men is very, very talented and has a 96-year-old history behind it as one of the best collegiate a cappella groups in the United States. The 2003 group—a new batch is culled from the Yale senior men every year—is on their annual world tour and we are very fortunate to have them here in our patch of the Himalayas. And there could be no better setting than Bir Shumshere’s entertainment theatre, Naachghar, now a part of Shumshere’s entertainment better setting than Bir Himalaya. And there could be no

SOPHIA PANDE

Aural pleasure with The Whiffenpoofs

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Throughout the long history of Man’s relationship with the Animal Kingdom, we can now say in hindsight that we have been unfair to our fellow creatures—mainly because we’ve barbecued their body parts and eaten them up in large quantities. Ever since our quadruped ancestors climbed down from the acacia trees in the Rift Valley, shed their prehensile tails, and started riding around on mopeds, we have treated animals abominably. Aside from the physical cruelty that we inflict upon them by ascribing nutritional value to their T-bone and ribs, Man has also treated animals with psychological torture. Just look at how we use the names of various animals in everyday language by attaching negative attributes to them.

In referring to our current political scenario as a ‘snake pit’ think of what an insult it is to snakes. Similarly, by describing the peace negotiations as moving at a ‘snail’s pace’, we underestimate and belittle the velocity of snail locomotion. And we show a singular lack of sensitivity to the feelings of our equine friends when we wolf down hors d’oeuvres.

But as animals ourselves, and a species that has reached the pinnacle of evolution and civilisation, we have to learn to be less anthropocentric, more politically correct when referring to our four-legged and feathered friends in everyday conversation. In the beginning it will be difficult, after all we can’t break a habit that we have nurtured over thousands of years to call an unpopular rival the offspring of a bitch.

As a service to our readers we offer below an introductory guide to replacing species language with more politically correct formulations:

**WRONG:** The only fly in the ointment was that the political parties refused to join the government.
**CORRECT:** Finally, towards the end of the cocktail reception, she mustered enough courage to whisper to him that his fly was open.

**WRONG:** Nepalis have now realized that you can’t teach an old dog new tricks.
**CORRECT:** Kailamandha’s canines yowled in celebration when they were told that the country was going to the dogs again.

**WRONG:** It is quite acceptable in politics to be a sycophant and lick your boss’ ass.
**CORRECT:** He has been a visionary statesman for donkey’s years.

**WRONG:** The prime minister has kept a lion’s share of the portfolios.
**CORRECT:** Leopards are generally satisfied with the location of their spots and don’t want to change them unless forced to do so at gunpoint.

**WRONG:** The reporters at the press conference behaved like vultures tearing at a wildebeest carcass.
**CORRECT:** The famished vultures nibbled at the mortal remains of a deceased gnu like a gang of journalists mobbing a press conference announcing the formation of yet another government.