



www.nepalitimes.com

NEPALI

Times

#153

11 - 17 July 2003

16 pages

Rs 25

TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE:

Covers

Personal Accident  
Medical, Emergency Expenses  
Hospital Benefits  
Loss of checked baggage  
Delay of checked baggage  
Loss of passport  
Personal liability

NOW OUR TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE  
IS MORE WORTHWHILE FOR OUR  
CORPORATE CLIENTS

It is more economical

It is time saving

It is unique

It is backed by best securities and world  
class assistance service

Travelling

abroad

Business or pleasure,  
now you can travel with a free mind...

Balloon safari, South Africa


EVEREST INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

GPO: 10675, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 4425758, 4444717, 4444718

SAARC to summit

Foreign secretaries of SAARC member nations finally agreed in Kathmandu on dates for the 12<sup>th</sup> 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 a recent thaw allowed officials from the two countries to agree on the summit. All eyes were on Pakistani foreign secretary Riaz Khokhar and his Indian counterpart, Kanwal Sibal, but the two did not have any official one-on-ones in Kathmandu. Sibal will have time for a meeting with Nepal on Friday. SAARC doesn't allow bilateral issues to be raised, but tensions between India and Pakistan have been a chronic curse for SAARC.

NEPALNEWS.COM



SUBHAS RAI

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #93

Q. Rate the issues raised by the agitating parties?

Very important 22.98

Important 6.23

Somewhat important 11.71

Not important 56.30

Don't know 2.27


No opinion 2.58

Total votes: 1,316

Weekly Internet Poll #94. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you agree that enough is enough, and all political forces should now unite for the good of the nation?

Weekdays Buffet Lunch




Price: 350 per person  
Time: 12:30 to 2:30 pm  
Monday to Friday

Godavari

Village Resort  
Kathmandu • Nepal

Please contact: 5-560675



Welcome to

Patan Museum Café

Opening from 1030 – 1930 hrs


Enjoy our new Cocktail & Snacks of the Week from 1700 – 1930 hrs

For reservations please call  
552 6271, 552 4694

Summit Hotel

My make you feel better!

Weekend Summer Package



Swimming & Lavish Buffet Lunch - Rs. 400/-

Full board, swimming, cinema, billiard & other Recreational activities for couple with one child below 10 years  
Rate - Rs. 4000 /-

Tel: 4 375 280 pvh@wlink.com.np

The people need a ceasefire that guarantees human rights.

ANALYSIS by KANAK MANI DIXIT

Five months into the ceasefire, Nepalis are without representation, without security, and without development. Reconstruction and rehabilitation is still a mirage. But an even larger tragedy looms: an institutional loss of human rights, militarisation, and a change in the very nature of the Nepali state.

The Maoists could be blamed for creating the conditions for all this to happen, but it is up to the palace, Maoists and the parties to undo the damage. In this three-way tug-of-war the growing rift between the palace and the parties seriously threatens the peace process. The urgent goal of disarming the rebels so that politics can be revived at the grassroots, is nowhere in sight. Kathmandu is sleep-walking, while the Maoists control the countryside.

The end to this road will be a Maoist leadership that willingly (if this has been their strategy all along) or unwillingly (if they are forced by the cadre) returns to the jungle. A

return to conflict more vicious than before will mean innocents will die by the thousands. Some analysts reckon it may take up to three years to defeat the Maoists militarily. But even if that were possible, it would leave a country in ruins, no civil society, and wipe out the freedoms we do enjoy even today.

In five months, the Maoists have lost some of their mystique, but elsewhere they have continued to consolidate, extort, arm and even administer. The Maoist leaders' desire to enter the mainstream appears genuine, but they need to be able to convince their followers to lay down the gun at one go. The present deadlock, however, allows the local cadre to fortify itself, so that the tail begins to wag the dog. The worst that could happen is if the rebel leadership fractures, leaving arms in the hands of local warlords and bandits—a mess that could take decades to sort out.

It could be that the king's military advisers believe the Maoists will lose strength

if they are left to dangle, and a short and decisive military campaign will finish them off. This is unlikely, due to the lack of political activity and administrative initiative countrywide which is an advantage for the Maoists. Besides, Nepal is still the best terrain for guerrilla warfare.

It is not clear if an army that appears so excited about the Congo mission has upgraded its intelligence and fighting capability to deliver a decisive victory in-country. Some seem to believe that a round of fighting will weaken the Maoists enough to make them more amenable at the table. Others, particularly those who have actual experience in fighting insurgencies, say the Maoists cannot be beaten, they just have to be regarded as a political force, and adequate concessions made.

"The Maoist came out of the jungle strong. Their leadership is too smart to allow power to fizzle away," says one close international observer of the insurgency. "They have not

used a large part of the possibilities. There can be top level assassinations, attacks on large infrastructure. And all will be lost once they begin urban guerrilla warfare in the by-lanes of the Valley towns."

At present, King Gyanendra is the inscrutable power at the apex of the establishment, and it is not clear what he thinks. The talks which he doubtless guides from backstage could have been an opportunity to get the Maoists to prove their bonafides, for instance spelling out exactly what they mean by "constituent assembly". We only have backdoor channels to tell us they are actually okay with "constitutional monarchy".

Part of the answer seems to lie in giving the Maoists their due as a political force and negotiating a respectful way out for the leadership, given that they have come above ground due to foreign (read: Indian) pressure and the professed fear of foreign (read: US) intervention.

We have seen elsewhere that every time a peace process breaks down, the next round of fighting is more vicious, more brutal and with more civilian deaths. Nepal is presently at the brink of such a disaster. In the past weeks, the Maoists have gone eerily silent and there is clearly a rethink going on about strategy in the run-up to informal talks slated for Friday.

Those talks must extricate the peace process from the quagmire. Since other actions would require rapprochement between the palace and the parties, the most urgent need is to have human rights safeguards in place and to monitor the ceasefire.

It is the tragedy of Nepali polity that there hasn't been a groundswell demand for such a life-saving as well as confidence-building measure. Now, the National Human Rights Commission has prepared a draft human rights accord which is supported by UNDP, the EU, Amnesty International and the political parties. The government and the Maoists now need to sign on it. (Draft accord is posted on www.nepalitimes.com)

The Accord will follow up on the Code of Conduct agreed in March, and allow a country-wide monitoring mechanism managed by the NHRC with technical support from the UN. This immediate action by the government and the Maoists would give the people the breathing space needed to let the king and the parties solve their differences. There is no time to lose. ♦

No freedom to roam

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

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.

Plagued 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. But 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 Shakya told us: "We are arranging to set up the service. But there are technical and human resource constraints." Nepali customers have heard it all before, and those who can afford it are going for satellite phones like Thuraya which are designed for use in the earth's remotest regions. In tarai towns, Nepalis are buying 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 go for the Israeli Telerad system that supplied Canadian-made Nortel equipment for the initial 10,000 mobile lines. Telerad had a fatal flaw: it didn't allow roaming. One NTC engineer admitted to us: "They bought it in a hurry

Official indifference deprives Nepalis of cell phones that work abroad.

and didn't bother to check if it allowed roaming. Big mistake." In the NTC's politicised and unaccountable system, no one ever 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 regulatory Nepal Telecommunication Authority, Shrish Prasad Sen passes the buck back to NTC, saying: "It is the NTC's decision to providing 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. ♦





Nepali Times is published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd,  
Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit  
Desk Editor: Trishna Gurung, Design: Kiran Maharjan  
Webmaster: Bhushan Shilpakar  
editors@nepalitimes.com, www.nepalitimes.com  
Advertising: Sunaina Shah advertising@himalmedia.com  
Subscription: Anil Karki subscription@himalmedia.com  
Sales: Sudan Bista sales@himalmedia.com  
Sanchaya Kosh Building, Block A-4th Floor, Lalitpur  
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 01-5543333/5523845 Fax: 01-5521013  
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hattiban: 01-5547018/17

## BOTTOM UP

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 Bahadurji's fault.

His real incompetence was not using legal provisions to extend the terms of VDCs and DDCs 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 Maoists 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 an ordinance 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 DDCs 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 Maoists 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 Maoists 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 in an 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 DDCs, 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 politicians 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.



## STATE OF THE STATE

by CK LAL



# Kingdom of the bahuns

## Secularism is the only way to govern a caste-ridden, multi-ethnic nation state.

Secularism is one of the 18 forward-looking agendas collectively adopted by the five party coalition campaigning against 'regression'. 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 sure to be much less unsettling than the idol-smashing, cow-butchering, temple-desecrating, and Sanskrit-censuring atheistic politics of the Maoists.

Yet, this harmless agenda of parliamentary parties has ignited vociferous protests. All kinds of Hindu outfits that mutely 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 modernist 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 Vadodara, pretending to be modern avatars of mythological Parsuram (the Hindu sage who attained Brahmin status on the strength of his penance, and then went on to eliminate sinning Kshatriyas) seldom venture out to places like Kashmir and Nagaland 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 to be 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, Chhetris 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 hosting the foreign secretaries' meet of SAARC, and Madhu Raman Acharya, is leading the Nepali delegation. Yet another Bahun, Madan Bhattarai 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 Pyarjung Thapa may be at the helm of the Royal Nepali Army, but its psy-war expert is none other than Biye Kumar Sharma.

Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai was recently spotted circumambulating the temple of Manakamana with his elderly parents, journalists dutifully in tow. Even years of ruthless war doesn't seem to erase the caste legacy of 6,000 years. The janjati, dalit, and women base of Maoists notwithstanding, its leadership too is firmly in the hands of Comrades Dahal and Bhattarai.

The legislative arm of government, when it is functional, is also Bahun dominated, with the leaders Messrs Koirala, Nepal and Pokhrel all caste-mates. Graftbuster Surya Nath Upadhyay and most of his colleagues in the CIAA are Bahuns. Chief Justice Kedar Nath Upadhyay, the entire judiciary, including most Bars, are Bahun-dominated.

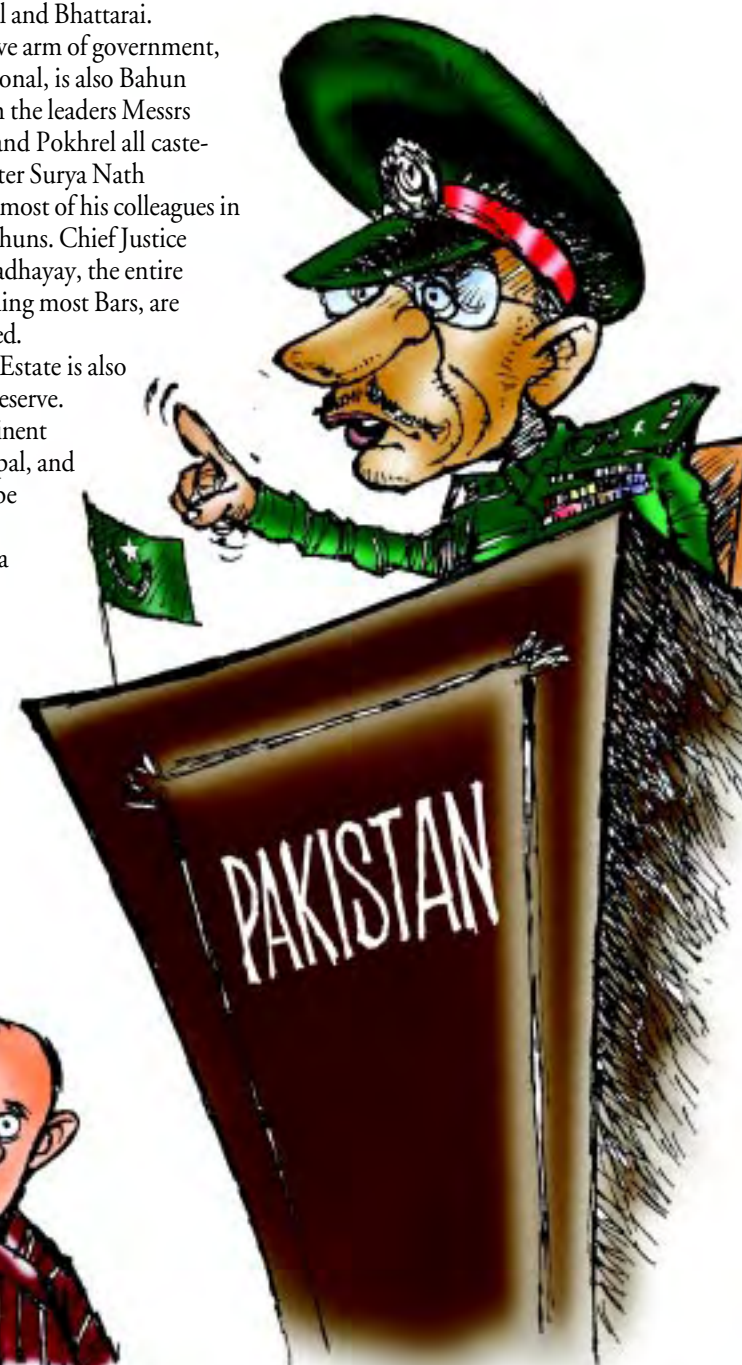
The Fourth Estate is also a near-Bahun preserve. Name any prominent journalist in Nepal, and you can almost be sure he (media continues to be a

male preserve) is likely to be a Ghimire, Koirala, Dahal, Upadhyay or, as with this paper, a Dixit. Bahuns were, and still are, scribes.

This is why the World Brahmin Conference couldn't have chosen a better venue than Kathmandu. It's convener restaurateur B L Sharma may or may not have his own political agenda, but it wouldn't be surprising at all if the meet comes up with a

decision to uphold the primacy of monarchy in the only Hindu Kingdom of the world.

Noted Indian constitutionalist B R Ambedkar once observed that graded inequality and supremacy of the heaven-born was an inalienable part of Hinduism. In disgust, he later embraced Buddhism. If Brahmins don't reform Hinduism, they 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 polity. No other form of statecraft can meet the challenges of governing a multi-ethnic nation state. ♦





## LETTERS

## BABURAM BHATTARAI

I was quite amused to read in your esteemed paper (*Nepali Times/Nepalnews.com* Poll, #91) last week that the largest number of email voters have chosen me as the prospective 'prime minister' if 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 consequences. It is impossible for our party and me personally to think of occupying any post, howsoever high and prestigious it may be, within the prevailing state dispensation. The ongoing Peoples' War and recent peace talks are aimed at a progressive, democratic change in 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 just no chance of our sharing the spoils of power within the present autocratic monarchical 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 roundtable conference, interim government and elections to a constituent assembly. And nothing more or nothing less. I hope I have not hurt the feelings of your enlightened email voters.

And more to the point, I would like to add something else to this short letter, 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, Luitel, Gorkha. While most of your reporting was quite objective, there were some serious, if not deliberate, omissions. While talking of people who made a great impact on my childhood and contributed to the rise of Amar Jyoti High School to national glory, one can never forget a great lady called Miss Eleanor Elkins. A devout Christian missionary from Scotland, now settled in New York, she was single-handedly instrumental for the excellent quality of education and discipline in our school for more than two decades. I can never forget her, even though your reporter conveniently omitted her while writing about Amar Jyoti. There can be no objective history of my school and my childhood days without that great soul, Miss Elkins. Let her 'god' bless her forever! At least thousands of her students will cherish fond memories of her throughout their lives. You also missed the name of Verghese Thomas from Kerala, who was actually the headmaster of our school when we passed out in 1970. Maybe you got 'Thomas Verghese' and 'Verghese Thomas' mixed up. As far as I remember names and dates correctly, Thomas Verghese, the



earlier headmaster left the school in 1968 and Verghese Thomas took the mantle successfully till the mid-eighties. Hence it would be a gross injustice to omit Verghese Thomas' name, who was a good mathematics teacher as well.

**Baburam Bhattarai, courier**

● I was perplexed to see the results of your last two internet polls in which the RPP and the Maoists come out on top. Since these polls were done before you say you tightened your multiple-voting software I must say, could it be that we are seeing a Nani Maiya-effect here from your internet voters? Either that, or we look at the political parties and we don't see any faces in the leadership that we like.

**Shambu Shakya, Australia**

● First, thank you for fixing the internet polling page to prevent multiple polling. Now, as you say, it takes a lot of free time (which is not worth it) to click in that second vote. I looked at the last two polls and thought that the trend was interesting, notwithstanding the editorial caveat about the accuracy of internet polling. It seems that between them, both the socialist/communists and the Maoists have the hearts and minds of the Nepalis. Combined, the UML and the Maoists received 43.79 percent of the votes. If you combine the individual leaders leading these two parties, the total is 48.89 percent. You don't have to be a statistics genius to see that there is a definite trend here. Another interesting observation is that the individual leaders fared a tiny bit better than their parties.

**Deepak Neupane, email**

## NOT EQUAL

Your writers should stop making accusations against the army without any basis ('Jajarkot's tense frontline', #152). The army cannot be treated on equal terms with the rebels. As one of the nation's leading newspapers, your exaltation of the armed rebels will only serve their propaganda machine. Your comment on 'two armies' gives the impression that the Royal Nepali Army is up against an equal opponent. It is not and such comparisons are misleading. You write as if you are a mere umpire 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.

**'Ajay', Kathmandu**

## 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 so quickly start its insurgency after 1990? This movement, which Puskar was initially a part of, has wrecked the economy and introduced historically 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 or Maoists can be spun 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 recovery. 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.

**PS Rana, USA**

## MORE ON TIBET

First Nepal buckles to Chinese pressure and deports Tibetan refugees, and now HMG is banning celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday? What's happening to the democratic, religious and press freedom that Nepalis have fought so long and hard for over the past 50 years? As a great admirer of Nepal over the past 40 years, and having lived there for 13 years, I appreciate the pressures this small nation is under, sandwiched between India and China and subject to both external forces from the global community. I also understand the enormous internal stress Nepal faces from its rugged environment, poverty and still-emerging political and social institutions as they grapple with the extremes of tradition and modernisation. But in the face of

all this Nepal has usually stood proud and firm in resisting these forces, whether from India, China, Pakistan, the US, EC, Japan, UN, or the World Bank, for example. Now Nepal seems to be buckling shamelessly to China's infantile denial of the prestige and respect the world holds for the Dalai Lama, as well as the adoration he commands by millions of Nepali Buddhists and their Tibetan guests.

**Malcolm Odell, USA**

## ADS

You mention your strict policy of keeping advertisement to content ratio below 1:3 in response to a comment made by Mark Zimmerman ('Letters', #152). However, I have carefully calculated your ads to content ratio in the same issue and your ads exceed content by 132.2 sq inches out of a total paper area of 3,888 sq inches. Regular readers of your paper, like Mark Zimmerman and myself, prefer reading material to ads.

**Amrit KC, Bishalnagar**



## HAIKU

Recently, on going through pictures on your news sites, I saw our so-called leaders taking part in a relay hunger strike. I was inspired to pen this haiku in tribute:

*Fat fellows 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**

● Do you know if our venerable politicians get their own "fix" of the *Nepali Times* every Friday? I suggest you send them all a copy (two copies, if they have offspring who are political wannabes), early every Friday morning.

**Ashok Pokharel, Kathmandu**

## CORRECTION

The distance from Khalanga to Chaujharai airfield in Jajarkot is only two hours and not 16 hours as erroneously stated in 'Jajarkot's tense frontline', #152.

Satellite + GSM + GPS

THURAYA

WE GO FURTHER, YOU STAY CLOSER

When you're in an extraordinary place, you need an extraordinary phone to keep you in touch. That's where the Thuraya satellite mobile phone comes in.

You can use it as a GSM phone, but where there's no signal, it switches to satellite mode, giving you uninterrupted coverage in 99 countries across Europe, Northern and Central Africa, the CIS, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent and total coverage of Nepal.

Thuraya Satellite phone also offers fax and data up to 9.6 kbps plus value added services such as short messaging (SMS), voice mail and many other features.

What's more, the built-in Global Positioning System (GPS) also lets you pin point your exact location. But the most amazing thing about the new Thuraya phone is that it allows you to be fully mobile at an affordable price.

Visit Constellation Pvt. Ltd. and find out why Thuraya is the only mobile phone that really lets you be mobile.

Constellation PVT. LTD.  
PO Box 8975, EPC 2277, Lalitpur-3, Kathmandu, Nepal.  
Tel: 977-1-5549252, 5548836; Fax: 977-1-5548879  
admin@constellation.com.np  
www.thuraya.com

32 years in Art and Picture Framing

park GALLERY

Main Gallery: Pulchowk (East of Fire Brigade), Tel: 5-522307

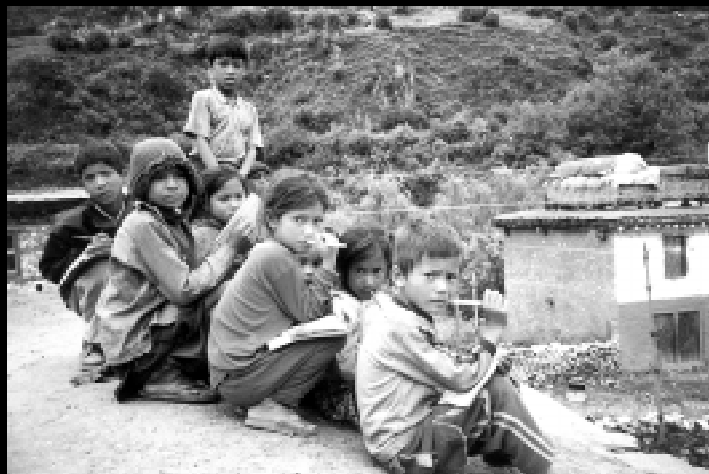




# Karnali gives up waiting



**Nepal's five remote northwestern districts want to take destiny into their own hands.**



**PULLING ITSELF UP:** The Nepal Bank building in Jumla (*left*) that was destroyed in a Maoist attack in November 2002, with the new building coming up alongside.

Jumla children take classes on the roof because the classrooms are too dark.

## HEMLATA RAI IN JUMLA

It has been 40 years since the government in Kathmandu launched a special development package for the remote Karnali region of northwestern Nepal. The idea was to stop the influence of Maoists in China, and there was ready financial and technical help from India and the United States.

Today, the tables are turned. The Maoists are on the Nepali side. And northwest Nepal is as underdeveloped and more dependent on the outside than ever before.

The original idea in setting up the Remote Area Development Committee was a recognition of the Karnali's remoteness, and the catching up it needed to do with the rest of Nepal. The infant mortality rate in Mugu,

Humla, Jumla is almost double the national average, only three out of a 100 women are literate, and life expectancy at birth is only 40 years. Poverty is higher here than anywhere else, with per capita income only two-third of Nepalis in other parts of the country earn.

Geographer and former minister Harka Gurung remembers visiting the districts of the Karnali basin nearly 40 years ago when he was vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC). "The only achievement has been that now the people of the Karnali know what needs to be done, and are willing to get it done," he says. But they need help from the centre.

Development experts who had gathered in Jumla two weeks ago for a seminar on the development of the

Karnali say it 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 targets only can make the region more visible in the country's development map," says Shankar Sharma, the current vice-chairman of NPC.

Mohan Baniya, the DDC 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 our biggest resource," Baniya told us.

It is not only physically that Karnali is removed from Kathmandu. There is a psychological distance as well. It costs more 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 Bhutani Nepalis than Nepalis of the Karnali. For decades, people here have been resigned to this apathy, and got used to not expect anything 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.

Jumlis who want to fly down to Nepalganj have to call relatives in Kathmandu through VSAT phones to book them a seat. In many other

## BEYOND COMPARE

|  | National Average | Karnali     |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| People per sq km                       | 157              | 14          |
| Family size                            | 5.44             | 5.58        |
| Infant mortality (per 1000 live birth) | 97               | 150         |
| <b>Labour force in agriculture</b>     | 57%              | 93.5%       |
| <b>Life expectancy at birth</b>        |                  |             |
| Women                                  | 52.4 years       | 50.4 years  |
| Men                                    | 55 years         | 52.7 years  |
| <b>Adult literacy</b>                  |                  |             |
| Women                                  | 21.3%            | 03.0%       |
| Men                                    | 54.3%            | 35.7%       |
| <b>Illiteracy (children under 14)</b>  |                  |             |
| Girls                                  | 50.4%            | 85.9%       |
| Boys                                   | 23.9%            | 41.1%       |
| <b>Maternal mortality</b>              | 875/100,000      | 980/100,000 |

## HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK



# Death in the family

My mother died this past week. It was not unexpected but it was a shock, of course. Death is most problematic to the living, let there be no doubt about that. Those who slip away into that "good night", as the poet Dylan Thomas calls it, are gone for good someplace else or returned to the elements from whence they came. But the living, they hang around and have holes in their lives to fill. Thus the mourning process.

Death in a developed country like Canada is orderly and accountability is mandatory. Even when someone dies of a serious illness in hospital—as my mother did—the authorities must ensure that wrongdoing didn't take place. The slightest doubt here will get the police and the forensic scientists involved. A natural death must be reported to various levels of government so that records be changed and sums of money paid out to survivors. The glorious Canadian welfare state, for which people of my grandparents' generation fought epic political battles, is being gutted by the mindless conservatism of the present age. But the spirit of sharing and compassion lives on among the elderly, the dying. They, after all, founded the system and it is only right that they benefit.

I've been going through my mother's will, her bits of property and her assets. Her bank accounts and credit cards must be cancelled, transferred to her husband's name. Property that they both held in common must be notified as having a single owner. The will is simple. Everything goes to my stepfather, my mother's spouse, but even then a lawyer will oversee the process to make sure other relatives—like me—aren't up to no-good. It's a deeply sad affair but also quietly encouraging. As ever when I'm in this part of the world, I feel fortunate, blessed, by the level of support that society and the system give to ordinary people. Like my mother. Like me.

Inevitably, I then start to think about what happens when a member of the citizenry dies in Nepal or anywhere else in the developing world. Understand here that I don't mean someone from the top the heap, of the blood royal or clan Rana. Not a business leader or someone who balances at



the top of the caste pyramid. No one who is privileged enough to speak English or have a top class education, who reports to any institutes, think tanks or international aid agencies. No senior government people or former ministers or sports figures or members of Kathmandu's so-called intelligentsia. Not even the literati, the pop culture elite or the heritage mafia of the Kathmandu Valley. In short, I'm talking about the deaths of people who have, in their lives, not a single shard of privilege. Probably 95 percent of the Nepali people.

What happens when they die? Well, of course, a family mourns. Probably. There will be friends and neighbours too, distant relations and people who shared employment or labour with the deceased. A period of

## Death, like life, among the poor is a hard business.

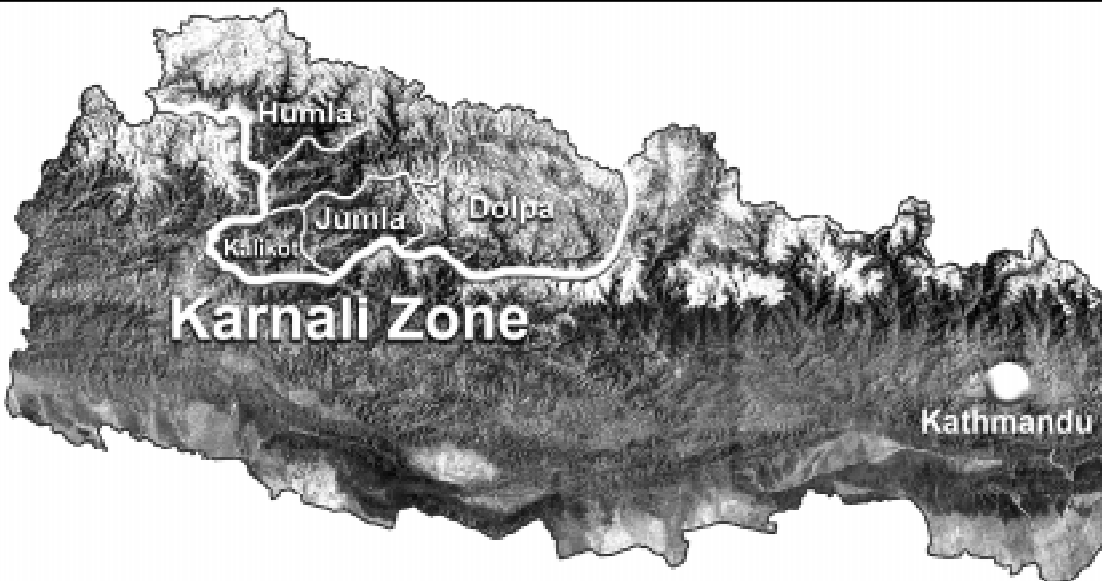
mourning will pass and life will go on. But what of the achievements of the dead—the possessions, the wishes for disbursement of assets and posthumous favours and so on? Even the poor have property. In Nepal at least, there are no guarantees of anything being just, fair or according to the last wishes of the deceased. For we all know how families behave, given a smell of booty or a chance to redress past grievances. And then there's the system, little changed in practise from two centuries ago. Rent seeking government officials and local power brokers of the left and right could come calling, demanding something in a property settlement. Anything is possible.

Various reforms to the Mulki Ain over the years have done little but entrench its vast inequities by tinkering with flavour of the month detail. As for provision of any sort for the survivors, welfare or a sharing out of accumulated centuries of booty by the landed rich, it's a laughable thought in a country where less than a tenth of one per cent pay taxes and no one with any money is willing to own up to its source.

On balance, I'm glad my mother died in Canada. For if I were Nepali, and the local equivalent of the social class that I am in my native land (lowly, some sort of Sudra probably), we'd be just nearing the end of the period of mourning, and bracing ourselves for the onslaught. The closure provided by tradition's benchmarks would soon be eclipsed by modernity's material demands. Death, like life, among the poor of this country is a hard business, little changed over hundreds of years.

Someone should pay for that someday. ♦

# for Kathmandu



districts, Royal Nepal Airlines flights sell tickets after the flight takes off, like in a bus, because the airlines doesn't have an office.

Those who have never been able to afford to fly are also hampered. They have to pass a gauntlet of hostile Maoists and security forces checkpoints with permits required to travel anywhere. Three of the mule trail bridges joining Humla and Mugu to the south have been destroyed by Maoists, and this requires detours sometimes lasting five days. It is a two-day walk from Kalikot and eight-day walk from Humla for anyone to needing to attend the zonal appellate court in Jumla.

"This region has been doubly victimised, by the state that ignored our development needs and recently by an insurgency that destroyed whatever little infrastructure we had," says Tula Ram Bista of Kalikot DDC.

Now, political and development leaders here believe the solutions can come from the people of the Karnali themselves. At the the Karnali Conference in Khalanga they demanded autonomy to decide their own development priorities and how they want to spend their budget.

Former NPC head, Mohan Man Sainju, even proposed at the seminar that an autonomous planning commission be created for the region. Kathmandu doesn't seem to know, or

care, about the realities on the ground here. The system of budget allocation and the delineation of fiscal years, for example, contradicts the seasonal variations here, when winter closes up the high passes with snow and the monsoons are late and erratic. The fiscal year that starts in July allows only limited time to carry out development activities, and most of the money has to be sent back to Kathmandu unspent.

Since the national budget is allocated on the basis of population and constituencies, Karnali gets too little to carry out development activities in the large areas it covers. The five districts of Jumla, Humla, Kalikot, Mugu and Dolpa cover almost 15 percent of Nepal's soil, but is home for only 1.3 percent of the population. Population density here is only 14 people per sq km against 157 per sq km national average.

"Budget allocation should be based on remoteness and geographical area than based on constituency like at present," says Dilli Bahadur Mahat former parliamentarian from Jumla.

The political leadership here is particularly unhappy about misplaced priorities and scattered budgets. The central government has been providing food subsidies to Karnali for the past 30 years without ever considering alternatives like investments in local

agriculture. The Talcha airfield in Mugu was prioritised as a lifeline for the district, but it took 20 years for it to be completed and even now there have only been test flights.

Kathmandu-centric development plans are also the reason why the Karnali is still Nepal's only roadless region. It has been easier to build a road to connect Simikot to the Tibet border than to get a road to Jumla from the south. Kathmandu 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 inaccessibility affects every facet of life: health care, education, social welfare, tourism and development plans. Jumla health posts didn't get their quota of medicines last year. Despite the complete disinterest shown by tourism promoters in Kathmandu, locals got together to hold the Rara festival two years ago, and private companies are taking trekkers and pilgrims to Mansarovar through Simikot. Karnali's potential for fruits, nuts, herbs all lie wasted.

"We have been wrongly portrayed as failed communities, and this had given us an inferiority complex in the past," says Jivan Bahadur Shahi, the charismatic leader of the Humla DDC. "No more. Now we are going to take our destiny in our own hands." ♦

DOMESTIC BRIEFS



MIN. BAIRACHARYA

## Mahesh Chandra Regmi, 74

Eminent historian, researcher and scholar Mahesh Chandra 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 Nepali Economic History 1768-1846*, detailing the agrarian basis of Nepali society during unification, appeared in 1971. In 1976, Regmi published his seminal work, *Landownership in Nepal*. He also launched and successfully ran the weekly *Nepal Press Digest*, 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 recognised for "chronicling of Nepal's past and present, enabling his people to discover their origins and delineating national options". Regmi graduated from Kathmandu's Tri-Chandra College 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 Nepali Democracy in May during which Harka Gurung delivered the annual Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture (see pic, left).

## The Bill

Industrialists are pressurising the government to request US Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif) to reintroduce the customs and quota free bill for Nepali garments that she withdrew in May after 18 Tibetan 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 Ministry 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."

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

The Nepali mission in Washington has been preoccupied 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 quota and customs-free Nepali exports would enable them to compete with

other exporters after Nepal joins the WTO. Nepal's garment industry had registered exports worth \$175 million in 2001, with more than 90 percent going to the US.

## Endangered heritage

Seven of the Valley's World Heritage Sites have been placed on the danger list by UNESCO. The announcement came as a shock for conservationists, tourism industry and many other professionals, but the government is playing it cool. The reason? They claim that the UN agency is yet to inform them about its latest findings. Instead, they brandish a "positive" report the UNESCO faxed them in the past. "There is no reason to panic," says Binod Gyawali, spokesperson at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. "So far, we have a UNESCO report that says almost everything is OK."

The new report blames rampant urbanisation for deterioration of the sites at Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur that were put on the World Heritage Site list in 1979. Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, was also on the same list. The Royal Chitwan National Park and the Sagarmatha National Park have been placed on the UNESCO list of World Natural Sites.

Meanwhile, the American Alpine Club has pledged financial support for a major new conservation initiative in the Sagarmatha National Park. Community-Based Conservation and Restoration of the Mt Everest Alpine Zone will address the impact of trekkers and climbers. It will be implemented in partnership with Sherpa communities, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, and The Mountain Institute.

SHANGRI-LA



The  
AZZ  
BAR

PRESENTS



**LIVE!** EVERY FRIDAY

11TH JULY

**SALSA**

18TH JULY

**Jazz vocal Encounters**

25TH JULY

**Acid JAZZ**



SHANGRI-LA  
KATHMANDU

8PM ONWARDS | COVER CHARGE: RS.300  
WITH A FREE WELCOME DRINK



LAZIMPAT, KATHMANDU | TEL 441-2999

**EASY TIMES**

It's never been easier to subscribe to  
Nepali Times  
Just dial this number  
and leave your address.

**5543333**

**Mandala House**

APARTMENT HOTEL

Luxury Apartments  
at Comfortable Rates

Baluwatar, Kathmandu  
Tel: 412412, 429019 (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)  
9810-35322 (after 5:00 pm & Saturdays)  
E-mail: mandala@nlink.com.np  
Web site: www.mandala.com.np



Discount  
on New Stock  
for the month  
of July

Vajra Book Shop  
Pysha, Thamel (Hotel Noring)  
P.O. Box: 21779, Kathmandu  
Tel/Fax: 4220562  
email: bidur\_bajracharya@np

**A SOCIAL APPROACH**

Hospice Nepal is a center that takes care of terminally ill cancer patients with love and compassion. It is a non-profit organization that runs with the help of volunteers and contributions from various donors. TNT Nepal has been one of the answers for this desperate need to give relief from pain. TNT Nepal has decided to support this noble mission with your generous act. We have already contributed a generous amount since the year 2000.

With our policy of "penny and penny laid up will be many", TNT believes that it can further help Hospice Nepal without much burden to any specific party. Our valuable clients, at the same time, can be proud of the fact that whenever they use the services of TNT, they are actually participating for the greater social cause. So, TNT has promised to donate NRs. 5 from each courier sent out by TNT International Express, from Jan 1st 2003.

**TNT International Express**  
Teenkune, Kathmandu  
Ph.No. 4474594, 4243237

**Adding life to days  
Not days to life**

## 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, Dhashain 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**

Responsible for leading all aspects of our work in Nepal, s/he 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 organization, 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.

S/he 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. S/he 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. S/he should possess:

- 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 organization / 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](mailto:wateraid@wateraidnepal.org.np).

*Due to under-representation at all levels in the organisation, WaterAid welcomes applications from women candidates*

COMMENT

by BP GIRI



# Radical and upwardly mobile

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



DILHUSAN PATHAK

For centuries Nepal's politics was run by a handful of hereditary elite who ran the country as if it was 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 abuzz with 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 babble saturates the media. Streets are crowded with assertive, sometimes violent, crowds. A so-called krantikari group staring from above the barrel of a gun is terrorising more than half the country. The sum total of our national politics since the fall of the Ranas has been an unprecedented radicalisation of the people.

This process has proceeded along three distinct paths. The first was traversed by the group that fought the Ranas while putting its faith in a pluralist and secular form of democracy. Led by BP Koirala, the movement for parliamentary democracy has sought to pull the country out of its authoritarian past and remake it along Western social democratic ideals. In and out of power many times, its leaders have mobilised the country's youth and the middle classes along a distinct reformist ideology.

Another path of radicalisation has been nationalism. While its roots are old, the idea was mass-produced during the Panchayat to defend itself from competing political groups. Fear of India trying to swamp Nepal with its goods and people remains nationalism's main source of sustenance even though it is also true that Nepali nationalism is simultaneously driven by the

desire to turn a fragmented collage of castes and ethnicities into a unified nation. In an ironic twist of fortunes, Nepali nationalism has been co-opted by various left-radical groups to discredit others seen to be closer to India at one time or another.

The next path is communism, the mother of all radicalisations. It may be passé elsewhere in the world, but in Nepal communism is enjoying a powerful afterlife—such is the power of history's time lag and contradictions. The spread of communist ideology in Nepal has benefited from the Chinese revolution of 1949, and our obsession with comparing China favourably to India and weighing which country has been nicer to us. Its popularity among the large sections of the masses is a sign of the failure of Nepal's democratic experiment in the pluralist mode, helped no doubt by the persistence of authoritarianism on both the left and the right.

The rise of 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 failed modernisation on the one hand and a high level of political radicalism opposed to the state 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 principled accommodation with the agitating groups is the best course of action for the state as well as its adversaries.

Among the three ideologies of mass mobilisation, radical communism appears most aggressive at the moment while parliamentary democracy has suffered setbacks. Still, the chances the Maoists will grab state power seems unlikely mainly for geopolitical reasons. Earlier their movement was empowered by contradictions in Indo-Nepal relations on the one hand, and a scramble for power among the ruling elites on the other. But things have changed since then. America has the rising power of China to contain, India has a regional empire to build. The insurgents are likely to become their 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 become weaker 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.



BIZ NEWS

### 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 fiscal sustainability. It has also committed a technical assistance grant of \$425,000 to provide overall management support for the program, while helping the government to develop an effective privatisation process and build capacity to undertake divestment. The bank says the program is in line with the government's poverty reduction drive.

The loan comes from its concessional Asian 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

Kumari 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 offer only 3 percent interest rate on saving accounts. The scheme also has benefits like 50 percent reduction in the loan processing fee and free internet banking facilities for high and low value depositors. A deposit of Rs 500,000 has fringe facilities like 50 percent off at various hotels, restaurants, shopping complexes, readymade clothes, hospitals and other commercial outlets. As a further bonus, the bank is even offering to pay electricity, water and telephone bills of selected account holders.

### New internships

Silver Mountain School of Hotel Management (SMSh) is the first institute to offer a four-year internationally recognised Bachelor Degree in Hotel Management in the kingdom. It is affiliated to the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and recently signed an agreement with CHN-University of Professional Education, the Netherlands who will provide internships in



Holland. SMSh offers five scholarships per semester. Their faculty includes senior management staff from Nepal's five star hotels and resorts. After two and half years students can transfer to a university abroad or complete their degree here.

### Flight plan

The Dutch airline, Martinair, is filling in the gap left after Transavia Airlines pulled out this spring. From November, both tourists and Nepali travellers will have a weekly direct service to Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The Boeing 767 flights will be operated through Sharjah (UAE) and offers worldwide connections.

### 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 runner up will compete for Miss Asia Pacific Quest.

### Showcase



Samsung has opened its new showroom at Darbar Marg with a full range of the Korean company'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 Biratnagar and has plans to do so in other towns soon.

ECONOMIC SENSE

by ARTHA BEED

# Building bridges



It's not too late.

The last two months have taken a toll on Nepal's geo-political standing not only in the region but also on the world stage. The refolement of Tibetan refugees may cost us the garment quota, and the patching of differences between China and India makes us rather expendable to the equation.

The Beed laments the myopia of a certain US senator who misses the wood for the trees: 18 Tibetan refugees at the cost of thousands of garment 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. The economic impact of supporting approximately 100,000 refugees has been tremendous on the Nepali economy and yet there was precious little international attention or sanctions placed against either of the two nation states. On the contrary, Bhutani tourism continues to draw well-heeled travellers and India became the economic tiger of the sub-continent—the latter not without considerable 'help' from the United States—the same country that is whipping Nepal's economy and tourism. It is unwarranted for the international community to clog the wheels of tourism that has been stuck in a rut ever since SARS damaged the small upswing that the nation was experiencing.

(Unfortunately, the Nepali government seems intent on acting just as insensibly. How can one excuse the recent ban on birthday celebrations by the Tibetan community of the Dalai Lama?)

The larger issue, of course, remains the economic impact of the mutually beneficial agreements

*ghiu*. What they should have done was join hands to oil the mechanism to create a conducive trade and transit environment.

The opening of a direct Sino-Indian corridor means quicker access for Chinese goods to the market, not only to India but also into the Middle East and Africa.

Rather than Shanghai or Hongkong, goods will be re-routed through to Indian ports and then further afield to the West. China will benefit in trade and transit and India from the service industry. The rail and road networks in China are being built taking into consideration the old transit route with India rather than through Nepal.

The Beed's crystal ball shows a decrease in trans-Himalayan trade unless Nepali associations and businesses find more creative and lucrative ways of maintaining ties with our northern neighbour. One way to leverage our position would be to build roads and networks in the western part of the country, because the east is lost to us with the renewed ties between India and China. There is Kailash-centric tourism and the large mass of western China that must be nurtured. The Beed believes there is still enough time to literally build our bridges and pave our roads. ♦



between China and India. The two control a third of the world market and realised it made more economic sense to smooth over prickly political issues in favour of commerce. Nepal has been affected by the change in status quo. We can no longer bargain on our strategic importance as a trade conduit between China and India. Our government floundered over an institutional framework for a trading centre and transit point, the private sector focused on vegetable

Readers can post their comments or suggestions to [arthabeed@yahoo.com](mailto:arthabeed@yahoo.com)

INTERVIEW

# “There is no military solution to this problem.”



**Ambassador Wendy J Chamberlin, before taking up her present position as the USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East was ambassador to Pakistan (a position she gave up because of the pressures of being a single mother). She served earlier in Zaire, Malaysia, Laos and Afghanistan among others. Nepali Times spoke to her last week during her visit to Nepal.**

**Nepali Times:** What is the USAID's own self-evaluation of its activities in Nepal since 1950?

**Wendy J Chamberlin:** What we have learnt in our long association here is about what really works in development. As you know USAID has been here since 1951 and the 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 program acting as an enabler. For example, in the forestry field, we have assisted villagers invest their personal efforts in managing the forests. In the beginning, many people were doubtful about whether erosion and deforestation could be arrested, but it could. And the key has been Nepali villagers themselves. Another impressive example is with the women health volunteers 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 Nepali politics?**

To achieve success you really need to involve all the forces, all 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 and is not in the people's interest.

**Does the USAID also take some of the blame that is being heaped on a lot of Nepali actors for the lack of development in Nepal? More than any aid agency, USAID Nepal has been here for our entire modern era starting in the 1950s.**

Ultimately it is up to the Nepali people and the government. You need a government that is accountable to the people in every sector. Now what USAID can do is to assist and to enable as a partner. But, the decision of how you develop is that of the Nepali people.

**USAID's public profile in Nepal has dipped considerably over the years. Why is this so?**

That's a misperception. Last year the levels of our assistance spiked. It is now \$38 million, up from \$24 million the previous year. There has thus been a dramatic increase in assistance, and this is not counting military aid. It's the highest that it has ever been, and you have to understand that this is in the context of funds required for Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

**Where does the military assistance from the US fall within that matrix?**

Let's also be very clear that real peace is based on state security and in fact real development for the people throughout the country is based on the extent that the state can provide security for them. So, having a strong, responsible, accountable military providing security for all the people, that respects their human rights, is very much the foundation for an accountable political system and potential for economic growth. That's where we are supporting.

One thing I would like to stress is that we are fully supportive of the peace talks that are going on because we believe that there is no military solution to this problem. We would also like to point out, and this should not be lost on anybody around the world, that President Bush has taken a very strong position against terrorists and those who practice terrorist methods. So, our position is to very clearly encourage progress at the peace table.

**How was it that the Maoists arose from the very area where the Rapti Project supported by USAID was active for such a long time?**

The reason why we got involved in the Rapti region was because we recognised that this was the one of the most disadvantaged parts of the country, with severe problems of exclusion. Perhaps there was some correlation with our presence in that USAID programs caused people to think differently. It broadened their horizons and people started to [question] why things are the way they are. It is very good when people 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 Rapti. 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-abortion 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 has Congressional support. But, we still have very active and successful 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 Nepali women and 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 in education in Nepal over the last few years, but we are interested in getting reinvolved. And this is not Nepal-specific. Throughout the world we moved away from the education sector to put emphasis on other areas. Under Andrew Nadsios [USAID chief] and more specifically President Bush, there is much greater interest in channelling more of our support to education.



# Looking good

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



FULBARI RESORT

## SRADDHA BASNYAT

The jury is in. Three years into the millennium we now know that despite the sophistry of artificial aids, nothing can replicate the beauty of a healthy glow.

The cry of "return to nature" is the not-so-new mantra on the lips of those who want to rediscover a more holistic approach. From ancient times we have known of nature's bountiful generosity to our well-being, but in an increasingly compartmentalised world, there's scarcely time to schedule a homework review with Junior, let alone grow and gather roots and berries to rustle up beauty potions or soothing herbal baths.

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 (01-4416200)**: 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 lobstered because guests are welcome to sink themselves in only after it's a comfortable 45 degrees. Everything from towels to a bathing sarong or shorts are 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, surely a dose of pure oxygen will do the trick. The fad that took the world by storm a few years ago has been in operation in our fair city for two years. Ananta Basnet was so horrified to learn

Kathmandu'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 noxious fumes—short of moving to the country—than by O<sub>2</sub>

piped straight to the lungs.

With the lungs taken care of, it's time to turn our attention to a rarely pampered body part. Tired, aching feet are in for a treat at the **Oriental Anma Centre (01-4231940)**. Reflexology, long considered a fancy name for toe-tickling, is finally coming into its own as an ancient Chinese healing system. It begins from the premise that the soles of our feet bear a map of our bodies, internal organs and all. Co-owners, Prabin Maharjan and Rosani Shrestha have treated clients at the Darbar Marg centre for the past few years. They specialise in acupressure to relieve muscle stress, acupuncture for more chronic conditions and also moxibustion—the use of mugwort (Moxa) with acupuncture to improve the flow of vital energy (Qi) and blood through the body.

**Spa Avatar** at the Fulbari Resort in Pokhara (Kathmandu: 01-4477305, Pokhara: 061-523451) offers treatments ranging from aromatherapy with exotic Himalayan herb scents to a combination of deep cleaning facials and massages. Indulge in a volcanic mud masque or bask in 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-energized, you're ready for a stimulating cleanses and anti-oxidant 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 sport's 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 (981054787)**. He combines the ancient healing art of acupressure (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' is pressure. As you lay on the massage mat, the soft trills of classical music gently lulling,

**Do You have any problem with your Skin & Hair ?**

**Introducing: Hair Spa, Hair Wax Thai Massage, Thai foot Massage & Thai Facial Massage**

**OUR SERVICES:**

- Vegetable Dye, Hair Treatment for Falling Hair & Dandruff
- Hair Straightening, Hair Highlight & Hair Style
- Skin- Aromatherapy, Anti Wrinkle, Anti Acne/Pimples Treatment, Pigmentation & Under Eye Treatment
- Painless Permanent Hair Removal by Microlysis

Open: 7 days a week, 10 am to 7 pm

**SWORUPAZ BEAUTY HOME**  
HERBAL BEAUTY CLINIC & TRAINING INSTITUTE  
Hariharbawan, Pulchowk, Lalitpur ( in front of Sajha Bus garage)  
Tel : 5550692, Res : 5533493, 5535513 (before 10am. after 7pm)

**FIRST TIME IN NEPAL**

**OXYGEN PARLOUR**

Oxygen Therapy combined with aromatherapy, flushes out toxins, improves stamina, decreases stress, calms nerves, relieves headaches and eases tension.

It is a complete skin and beauty treatment which detoxifies blood, recommended by experts all over for a glowing and healthy skin.

**FOR ENQUIRIES**  
SANJIVANI OXYGEN PARLOUR, THAMEL, PH: 4474413 MOBILE: 981040818



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.



MIN BAURACHARYA

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 skintone while relieving headaches and insomnia. All treatments are done using Lavette products, a Chinese herbal line containing aloe vera, ginkgo and extracts of vitamins A, C and E. Lei acknowledges the Lavette products work slowly but she is confident they improve the condition of skin, hair and nails.

in the vicinity between the eyebrows (*see pic, above*). The treatment is testified 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 (01-4445080)**, 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. It's important to maintain what you have. Whenever you have time, go pamper yourself."

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: witch hazel, 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 **Sworupaz Beauty Home (01-5550692)** 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 age gracefully without a fight, Sworupa offers Quantis non-surgical face-lifts. Stimulating acupressure 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 all you need do is sit back, close your eyes and surrender to her blissful ministrations.

**EPSON**  
THE POWER TO CREATE

PROJECTORS  
**EMP-52**  
Multimedia Projector



is your  
**PROJECTOR**  
reproducing the  
**TRU COLOR?**  
It's time to use an **EPSON sRGB Complaint Projector!**

Images



EMP 53 SVGA 1700 ANSI Lumens | EMP 73 XGA 1500 ANSI Lumens | EMP 811 XGA 2000 ANSI Lumens

- Equipped with world's first horizontal keystone correction
- Comply with Microsoft-developed sRGB colour matching specification
- Exclusive EPSON ColourReality colour processing technology
- Whisper-quiet operation • Light weight at 2.9 kg



EMP 53 SVGA 1700  
ANSI Lumens



EMP 720 XGA 1500  
ANSI Lumens



EMP 735 XGA 2000  
ANSI Lumens



EMP 811 XGA 2000  
ANSI Lumens



EMP 8300 XGA 5200  
ANSI Lumens

**MERCANTILE**  
**OFFICE SYSTEMS**

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

Ancient, traditional, indigenous art of the Mithali People that depict their everyday lives and activities as well as religious figures in symbolic ways.

**Mithila Art**

**Janakpur Handicraft Center**  
Proudly Presents

**mithila ART exhibition**

To benefit the Mithali Women Empowerment Movement

Date: 19th -26th July 2003  
Time: 12 pm - 7pm  
Venue: Gallery-9, Lazimpat

Event by: Organized By:

**Le MERIDIEN**  
KATHMANDU

**GOKARNA FOREST GOLF RESORT & SPA**

Ranikun Forest, Thail, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 4451212-6 Email: www.gokarna.com

**WORLD CLASS PRINTING IN NEPAL.**



**JAGADAMBA PRESS**  
Tel: (01) 5543017, 5547018  
Fax: 977-1-5536390  
Email: jayray@mos.com.np

Free 20,000 THAILAND return tickets

Travel inbound on THAI to Thailand and you could win one of 16,000 free round-trip tickets for a return visit to our beautiful kingdom.

If you don't win, your ticket will be entered into a second draw, with 4,000 domestic round-trip tickets on offer as prizes.

The second draw is also open to passengers on domestic routes and passengers flying outbound from Thailand.

Come relax in the natural beauty of Thailand with THAI, smooth as silk.

**Inbound to Thailand.** At least one winner will be drawn and announced onboard every inbound flight. Winner will receive by post a ticket for the same route and class of travel as his/ her winning ticket.

**Domestic and Outbound from Thailand.** Prizes will be drawn weekly and winners notified by post. Winner will receive round-trip domestic Thailand tickets which routing will be specified by THAI.

Note: Winners are responsible for payment of any applicable taxes as required by the laws of their country. Prizes and tickets are non-negotiable, non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. The lucky draw is only applicable in countries where local laws and restrictions permit. Other conditions apply. Please visit [www.thaiairways.com](http://www.thaiairways.com) for full details. THAI reserves the right to change or cancel competition without notice.



## Right to work

LEAMINGTON — A union that wants to represent migrant farm workers in Ontario has filed a court challenge to the repressive farm labour laws in Canada's largest province. The United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) is pursuing a court challenge of the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act, charging that it violates the constitutional rights of farm workers by forbidding them to join unions and excluding them from wage and safety laws. The union held a news conference recently at Leamington, the hub of Canada's vegetable farming and orchard region near the US border.

About 3,000 migrant farm workers come to this region each year, mostly from Mexico. The mainly male workers described being forced to spray pesticides without safety protection, living in overcrowded buildings with leaking sewage, long work hours without overtime pay, lack of access to medical care, and not being able to recoup government pay deductions. The workers said they feared being sent back to Mexico if they dared to complain about the conditions. The union has filed an application in the Superior Court of Ontario seeking the right of farm workers to unionise and have the same wages and safety rights as other workers. (IPS)

## Little victims



ROME — Unexploded munitions are an immediate danger to Iraqis. In the last two weeks of April, 260 civilians were injured or killed just in the city of Kirkuk, according to an official report. More than half of them were children. None of the approximately 210,000 children born in Iraq in the past three months has been vaccinated against any of the diseases they are vulnerable to. Disease and unexploded ammunition could kill thousands of Iraqi children unless immediate priority is given to their protection, says the UNICEF chief representative in Baghdad. Many more are prone to injury, abuse and exploitation, the United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF) representative

Carel de Rooy said.

About 4.2 million children below five are now considered vulnerable to preventable diseases such as polio, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, measles and tuberculosis. Iraq lost all its vaccine stocks when the Vaccine and Serum Institute of Baghdad was hit by missiles, and electricity to the store room was cut. UNICEF has repaired five out of ten huge storage refrigerators and brought doses of vaccines worth \$25 million to restart the immunisation program in partnership with the reactivated Ministry of Health. (IPS)

## COMMENT

# Populists are sometimes

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

Developing countries are often advised, or instructed, to undertake reforms recommended by "experts" who are called "technocrats" and are often backed by the IMF. Opposition to the reforms they propose is usually dismissed as "populist". Countries that fail to undertake these reforms are dismissed as craven or lacking political will, and soon suffer the consequences: higher interest rates when borrowing abroad.

But look closely at some of these "technocratic" proposals: many are more often based on ideology than economic science. Technocrats can of course reliably make an electricity plant work better. The goal is simple: to produce electricity at as low a price as possible. This is mostly a matter of engineering, not politics. Economic policies are usually not technocratic in this sense. They involve tradeoffs: some may 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, ie, has no Pareto-efficient alternatives, it is said to be Pareto dominant. If choices among policies were purely Paretian, ie, if 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 Paretian. 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 bailouts helped international lenders, but hit workers and domestic firms hard. Different policies 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 even when 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 as if they were Pareto efficient



are in fact flawed and make 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 soon required 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 also a more

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 criticisms of technocratic remedies may be populist posturing, but sometimes they contain insights that ivory-towered (and usually US-trained) technocrats miss. Consider the case of Mexico, where a proposal to raise revenue by taxing food and medicines consumed by the poor was, unsurprisingly, rejected by a democratically accountable legislature.



'Violin' by Yan Lei

## ANTOANETA BEZLOVA in BEIJING

Being hip and avant-garde are hardly the criteria that Chinese cultural mandarins like to adhere to when they judge which Chinese contemporary art is worth presenting to the world. Underground art is spiritual pollution; gaudy art is pornography and post-Mao pop art is reactionary trash are but a few of their judgements.

Times change though. With all the art indicators pointing east at the 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Beijing's arbiters of taste are pointedly being reminded that much of Chinese contemporary art discarded as trash here at home is a hot commodity abroad. At least 30 Chinese artists are showcasing their work at the international exhibitions at the Biennale, which opened on 14 June and runs

# A new cultural revolution

until 2 November this year. The official representation of six artists—ironically those led by the Ministry of Culture—was cancelled because of the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

There is much that Ministry of Culture commissars can be annoyed about. Had it not been for the SARS crisis, the 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale the most significant showcase of contemporary art in the world, would have unveiled China's national pavilion for the first time in the Biennale's more than a hundred years of history. The participation of the Ministry of Culture marks the first time the state has given its blessing to the display of China's avant-garde art at the all-important Biennale.

It also indicates a watershed in official policy, which has thus far held that Chinese contemporary art as subversive, disturbing and too abstract to appeal to Chinese aesthetics. According to the organisers of the Biennale, the China International Exhibition Agency, appointed by the Chinese Ministry of Culture, announced with "deep regret" its withdrawal from the art event. All other works by Chinese artists involved in the various different sections of 'Dreams and Conflicts - The Dictatorship of the Viewer', directed by the Italian curator Francesco Bonami, are exhibited at the Arsenale Giardini, said the organisers on their official website.

Most of the works in Venice are being curated by Hou Hanru under the rubric of 'Zone of Urgency', a melange of new media installations and video art selected to illustrate his notions about the chaos of Asia's new cities. He believes that urban development has been so fast that it has entered what he calls 'post-planning phase'. It includes the works by the likes of Yan Lei, who in the past has parodied China's new consumer society with installation works with live pigs—and another with

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



'International Landscapes Series' by Ai Weiwei

noodles, in which he eats a string of noodles that he then pulls back out of his mouth.

However shocking these works may appear to Chinese state curators, they now have come to realise that contemporary art is imbued with sharp-edged social commentary, unlike the state-enforced strictures of 'socialist realism' that depicted beaming model workers and peasants. Official tolerance toward the new, abrasive modern Chinese art has been on display since 1999, when 19 Chinese artists appeared at the Venice Biennale, more than from any other country, and took the event by storm. "That was the big breakthrough," says Ai Weiwei, a sculpture and installation artist who left China to study in New York but is back at work in Beijing. "After that the police began to leave us alone." He added, "People here now want to be seen as Western and contemporary. And the government now wants Beijing to become more international, a place of mixed culture."

Treating artists as employees of the state propaganda department is a risky strategy for a Communist Party that has always kept a tight

grip on culture. In the past, when they insisted on doing art for art's sake, artists were rounded up and criticised. In the late 1980s, hundreds of artists flocked to Beijing—regarded as the art capital of the country not only because of its celebrated Academy of Fine Arts but also for its support of art inspirations foreign community.

Settled in a collection of villages near Yuanmingyuan, the Old Summer Palace on the outskirts of Beijing, they were regularly raided by the police, fined and sometimes expelled. The repeated crackdowns, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen pro-democracy protests, forced many contemporary artists to go into exile. Now they are coming back and like Ai Weiwei, opening up their own exhibition centres and workshops.

Beijing is also changing in a way that embodies the very changes in official policy toward contemporary art. Once underground-turned-official artists have carved a niche for themselves in the very heart of China's sprawling and secretive military industrial complex. Factory 798, where tens of

thousands of workers once produced military products in workshops designed by East German architects, has become a New York-style Soho artist colony complete with galleries, bars and nightclubs.

The factory, like thousands of other obsolete state factories in the capital, has been relocated but the walls still carry slogans exhorting the proletariat to keep Mao as the 'red sun in their hearts'. Some of the redundant and factory machinery remain, but in the liberated spaces dozens of artists, sculptors, designers and architects have moved in.

"The painters are here now becoming part of a network of artists in global cities," says Robert Bernell from the United States, the first foreigner to move in and rent an old engine workshop. "Chinese art is no longer being shrugged off as a fad like post-Soviet art but is here to stay," he adds. Burnell worked for the US multinational Motorola before setting up 'Timezone8' to publish books on Chinese contemporary art. The art colony now includes the Tokyo Gallery of Japan, which opened the Beijing-Tokyo Art projects in October. The New York-based Long March Foundation also launched its Cultural Transmission Centre here in February. Both initiatives focus on Chinese contemporary art.

"The Loft" is another former military research factory that has been turned into a new media restaurant-gallery. The manager, Lin Tianfang, says Chinese contemporary art is a success not least because of its political background. "The Cultural Revolution was a shock but it liberated people's thoughts," she says. "It gave them freedom from traditional ideas and allowed artists to be more daring and forceful." ♦ (IPS)



by JOSEPH E STIGLITZ



# right

Rejecting this proposal was not a matter of unbridled populism. The problem was with the proposal. Its advocates argued that efficiency required adopting a comprehensive Value Added Tax. Advanced industrial countries in Europe use such a tax. Developing countries, the technocrats said, should do likewise.

But there is a fundamental difference between developed European countries and emerging markets: the size of the informal sector, from which VAT is not collected. This vast "black economy" makes VAT inefficient in most developing countries. Indeed, because VAT is a tax on the formal sector—the new factories, banks, and so forth that pay regular salaries and whose incomes and expenditures can easily be traced (as distinct from those of the cash-based street vendors, village enterprises, and poor farmers)—VAT impedes development.

The logic is simple. Developing countries that impose a VAT perversely encourage production to remain in the informal sector, which often produces the goods that are consumed domestically or used as inputs in the developed world. But it is the formal sector that produces higher value-added manufactured goods that compete with developed countries.

There are other sources of tax revenue in many developing

countries that are both more equitable and distort economic incentives far less than VAT. Many developing countries lack a corporate income tax: the huge profits of the telecom, cement, and other monopoly sectors escape taxation. (If one worried about double taxation, one could allow a credit for corporate taxes on individual tax returns.) It may also be possible to impose taxes on luxury goods (many of which are imported), thereby promoting equity without stifling growth.

Economic theory supports a VAT only if one does not care about distribution and if one can impose a tax on all commodities. You don't need an economics doctorate to recognise that, in developing countries, you can't impose a tax on all commodities. Moreover, you should care about equity.

So the next time you hear rumblings in the legislature of an emerging democratic country against this or that "technocratic" proposal, think twice before dismissing the deputies' doubts as populist rants. Perhaps the populists are popular because they know something that the technocrats don't. ♦

(© Project Syndicate)

Joseph E Stiglitz is professor of economics and finance at Columbia University and was the 2001 Nobel laureate in Economics.

OPINION

# The lessons of SARS

by GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND



SARS is the first new public health epidemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 unwarranted discrimination.

But we have also seen unprecedented international solidarity against this shared microbial threat of unknown dimensions. And we have seen SARS stopped 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 developing country, hit by an especially 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, commitment, and determination 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-dedicated 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 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

**Public health is, as never before, a priority on the global agenda.**



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 underscore this all too well.

Surveillance and effective response are an important expression of solidarity 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. ♦ (IPS)

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

COMMENT

by DANIEL PAULY

# 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 increased rapidly since WWII, stalled in the late 1980s and have been declining ever since. That decline will be difficult to halt.

The rapid depletion of fish stocks is the inevitable outcome of sophisticated industrial technology being thrown at dwindling marine populations as demand rises, fuelled by growth in human population and incomes. The decline has so far been masked in the developed world by seafood products that were not previously available, such as farmed salmon, and by massive fish imports from developing countries.

But over-fishing has become a severe problem in the developing world as well. So fisheries worldwide are due for wrenching changes in the near future. A clear indication of the problem is "fishing down the marine food web"—the increasing tendency to land fish and shellfish from the bottom of marine food chains.

The fishing industry is, on its own, incapable of reversing the "fishing down" trend, notwithstanding arguments by commentators who should know better. In his recent book *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, for example, the Danish public-policy analyst Bjorn Lomborg cited data reported by the UN Food and



Agriculture Organization (FAO) that showed increasing figures for global fish catches. Lomborg used the figures to argue that if catches are up, then the underlying ecosystems must be in good shape, despite all the warnings from experts.

The experts are right. We now know that the apparent increases in global fish catches in the 1990s were due to massive over-reporting to the FAO by China. We also know that fish catches can remain high (and in fact usually do) even as stocks collapse, as illustrated by cod off Eastern Canada, which yielded good catches until the fishery had to be closed because there were literally no fish left.

But excessive catches are not even the whole story. Many fishing techniques now in use—bottom trawls

foremost among them—literally tear up the habitat. As a result, some fish stocks exploited in this manner do not seem to recover, regardless of quotas or other regulations on catches.

Aquaculture, the farming of fish and other aquatic organisms, could in principle ameliorate the coming shortfall. However, aquaculture refers to two fundamentally different kinds of operations. One is devoted to the farming of bivalves such as oysters and mussels, or to freshwater fish such as carp and tilapia. It relies on plants (plankton sometimes supplemented by agricultural by-products in the case of freshwater fish) to generate a net addition to the fish food supply available to consumers. Moreover, because this type of aquaculture is based predominantly in developing

countries, it supplies cheap animal protein right where it is needed.

The second type of aquaculture entails the farming of carnivorous fish such as salmon or seabass, and increasingly, the fattening of wild tuna in captivity. These fish eat flesh—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.

One reason why aquaculture's practitioners can get away with this is that the public assumes that all of these operations are similar, and that they all add to the global fish supply. This is simply not the case. There is still time to save our fisheries, but only if they are reinvented not 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 grain-based diets. Moreover, such reinvented fisheries will be smaller, and they will rely on fish that move out of marine reserves, the protected ocean areas that we must establish to enable marine ecosystems and the species within them to rebuild some of their past abundance, and to share it with us again. ♦

(© Project Syndicate)

Daniel Pauly is professor of fisheries at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

ROAD GEARS

RAIN/NO PROBLEM Sale!

We have the right aftermarket stuffs for 2-wheelers, Spare parts and accessories.

Mask

Goggles

Helmets

Wears/Gears

Rain Suit

Gloves

Luggage Box

Rain Shoe Cover

Order Now

International Motorcycle Spare Parts

Siddhi Bhawan, Kantipath - 4240385

IMPS - Ramsah Path - 4418161

Global Motorcycle Spare Parts, Jyatha, Thamel - 4226641

Our Workshop "Bikes"

Lazimpat, Dhobicheur

tel: 4428086

Chiso chiso hawama, Himalaba hakhama, Nagarkotko dandama...

CLUB HIMALAYA

Nagarkot

"Mid Summer Nights at Windy Hills - 15°C cool"

Chiso chiso hawama package

Windy Hills (Club Himalaya) 6680080, 6680083

Lazimpat (Hotel Ambassador) 4410432, 4414482

ACE HOTELS & RESORTS

www.nepalshotel.com

email: acehotel@sachotel.com.np



# “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.

**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 keep national unity 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.

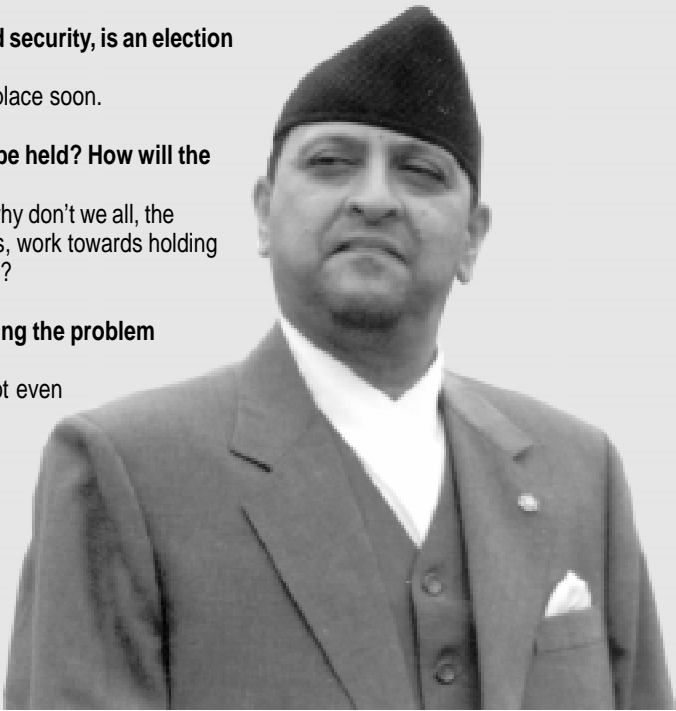
**The Maoists have demanded an end to the present constitution. Does solving the technical aspects of this issue require Your Majesty’s personal involvement?**  
It has been a tradition with the Shah dynasty to administer the kingdom for the goodwill of the masses in accordance with the expectations of the people. His Majesty late King Birendra set about the present constitution according to the wishes of the Nepali 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?



## Priorities

Chhalphal, 7 July

The five agitating political parties held the second special session of the third House of Representatives on 4-5 July and came up with an 18-point common agenda:

- Constitutional proposition would be established to allow a referendum on constitutional, political and other issues of national importance to strengthen people’s sovereignty.
- Termination of the present clause that allows the king to use his discretion in ruling and in formulating laws. Management of the royal palace brought under a ministry. Provision introduced for the king to announce his wealth regularly. Annulment of the provision for the Royal Council (Raj Parishad) to make the monarch completely constitutional.
- Bring the national army under an elected government.
- Automatic reinstatement of the dissolved parliament in the case of a prime minister failing to hold elections on time.
- Political solution for the Maoist insurgency. Government-funded relief, compensation and rehabilitation to victims of the conflict.
- Decentralisation of resources and autonomy given to strengthen the local bodies.
- No protection awarded to any one religion. End all kinds of discrimination based on religion, language, ethnicity, caste and culture.
- No political interference in bureaucracy.

## More refugees

Gopal Gadtaula in Spacetime, 8 July

The Bhutani government continues to drive away Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas (southerners) while it is engaged in finalising procedures for the repatriation of its citizens who have been languishing in Nepali refugee camps for more than a decade. A refugee leader living in a Jhapa camp reported that in the last month alone eight Lhotsampa families were forced to leave their homes in the Sarbhang district of Bhutan. Among them were the widow and children of Harka Bahadur Sapkota who was tortured to

death in army custody ten years ago. Chief of Sarbhang district, Sonam Dawa, himself handed over a government notice ordering the Sapkotas to immediately vacate their land. Seven other families from the same locality were served with similar notices. Dhan Maya Rai and her five daughters were forced to vacate their home on 8 June for a Drukpa family. They were forced to take shelter in a neighbour’s cowshed. Refugee leaders in Nepal have expressed doubts about the Bhutani government protecting the rights of those who have been allowed to return home. Pratap Subba, secretary of the Sanischare Refugee Camp in Morang, said under the present circumstances there was a possibility of intensified suppression of refugees from the Bhutani government when they return home.

## Directions

Drishti, 8 July

Extract from an interview with educationist Chaitanya Sharma.

**What created the present chaos in our education sector?**  
We are reaping what we sowed in the 1980s. It was then that the privatisation of education began, which accelerated in the 90s. Education was over-commercialised. Private institutions totally ignored their social responsibilities and the government failed to regulate. Over the years Nepal has received generous aid for education and the government spends anything between 12 to 15 percent of the annual budget on education, but none of it was used properly. In my calculation, every Nepali shoulders Rs 2,000 of the education debt, yet there’s very little to show for it. Politicisation weakened public education.

**What are the main problems?**  
We need a more realistic education policy. Education is also about practicality—policy should be guided by practicalities like human resources the country needs backed by good management and effective implementation. In our context getting an education is equivalent to landing a blue-collar job. Young people get frustrated when they fail to get a job. Our education fails to teach creativity and doesn’t cater to the needs of the

students. As a result so many youths migrate abroad for menial jobs.

**So, how do we reform education?**  
We should be able to decide on the kind of education policy we want to adopt, and then discuss practicalities like management, monitoring and implementation. We also need to review our examination system. We teach the children for 10 years and evaluate their abilities in three hours, which is very impractical. If school level education is in a bad shape, then tertiary education is even worse. Nobody pays attention to how many students appear for university exams and how many pass. If you bar the technical institutions, only 15-20 percent of the students get through university exams. People discuss SLC results because the exam has been made into an ‘iron gate’, a source of stress and terror for students as well as parents. Unless primary education is systematised, investment made in the higher education will be wasted. There is a gap between those who attend public schools and those who go to private ones. It is just an illusion that expensive private schools offer better education. Most of them concentrate solely on good exam results—killing all creative instincts.

Political instability and over politicisation is further destabilising education. Everyone has their own agenda: the state, students, parents and teachers.

## Branding

Gorkhapatra, 6 July

The farmers of Saptari district are being flooded with substandard fertiliser smuggled in from India. Empty fertiliser sacks bearing recognised and trusted Nepali brand names are refilled in India and smuggled in through custom points in Raghunathpur, Khairavni, Samsi and Pokravinda among others, according to a local trader in custody. Following the tip-off, the police and a team of revenue department officials raided many warehouses and recovered several sacks of substandard fertiliser. About two years ago, the government even deployed the army to check smuggling but the activity has not abated in this border district.



Peace talks

Budhabar, 8 July

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

In the past, as old acquaintances, I did help them [the Maoists]. Fortunately, they haven’t demanded monetary donations from me till date.

- Pradip Kumar Shrestha, chairman of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries. Sanghu, 7 July

# Unemployed docs

Pradeep Pokhrel in Deshantar, 6 July

देशान्तर साप्ताहिक

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 their private practice.

More than 4,100 doctors have received licences from the medical council. Around 2,000 foreign doctors have also been granted licences for one year and nearly 2,200 junior doctors are still in training. And now Indian doctors are taking jobs that Nepali doctors need.





Back at Sundarijal >39

# ‘I have shown myself to be a weak person in these pages.’

Saturday, 9 April 1977

Sundarijal

I have been writing very freely without any reservation in these pages my innermost thoughts, because absolute truth is of the essence on the writings of this personal nature. It is like speaking to yourself, and you can't speak lies to yourself. Well, of course, one wants to hide certain things from oneself too—not in a blatant way, but very insidiously, like exaggerating one's virtues, if any, or finding excuses for one's vices, however atrocious. I try to be as true as possible in recording my thoughts, here of course thoughts are for free therefore in recording my moods or state of my mind. But sometimes I get a sneaking suspicion that perhaps they turn over the pages of my diary when I am busy at the table. If my suspicion is correct then the whole exercise is worse than useless. I have shown myself to be a weak person in these pages, and they mustn't fall within the hands of the people can take mean advantage of this. However, what is the guarantee that they will not openly confiscate it? This is all a matter of vague suspicion that sometimes appears to lurk in my mind. Perhaps they won't do it—altho 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 what ... of the present set is. Anyway, I can't but be truthful in my diary—otherwise I should stop writing diaries.

Today also I coughed blood in the morning—the look of the blood saturated sputum is very sinister. Yesterday Dr Bhattarai when looking at it, 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 time about a month ago they didn't find anything—and the symptom disappeared after a week by itself. I told Dr Bhattarai yesterday that when very clearly the blood in the sputum indicated some disease, and that it was not enough for a doctor to say that no pathogen was isolated. So far as I am concerned, I think this is a very serious trouble, some infection perhaps [needing] antibiotic treatment. Or it may be a symptom of a very serious disease—like cancer. My health is deteriorating and I seem to lose weight. Dr Vaish has told me that I should take care of my persistent cough—because that may develop into a trouble of a serious nature. Today's sputum was also sent for exam.

Sunday, 10 April

Sundarijal

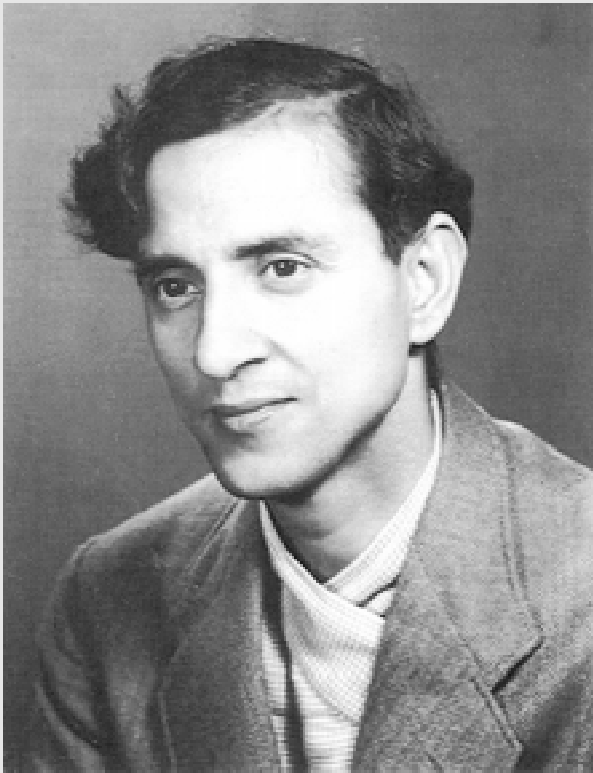
|          |      |       |
|----------|------|-------|
|          | Temp | Pulse |
| 5AM      | 97   | 80    |
| 11:30 AM | 96.5 | 104   |
| 5PM      | 97.6 | 76    |
| 8PM      | 96   | 72    |

Monday 11 April

Sundarijal

Today at about 7AM Major, ie camp commander came in with the ...breakfast people. In the breakfast there are usually 2 or 3 pieces of bread and some milk. There was no bread today, and time for serving it is unchangingly 8AM. The Major appeared to be bustling with extra energy. I asked him why the early serving of my breakfast, and that too without toasts. He said that in a hurry the toasts could not be brought out from the Ganeshmanji's prison ("uta patti bata") and that also Anchaladish was likely to pay a visit today—hence breakfast was being served an hour in advance. Lunch was served at 11AM and in fact Ass Anchaladish did come at 11:30 AM to ask me which of the advocates I would like to engage for my defence in the cases pending before a special tribunal. When this team had come on 25<sup>th</sup> March for interrogation in connection with my case I had told them that I won't answer any questions unless I get the benefit of the advice of legal experts who, I would engage in consultation with my family members. I told the Ass. An. that unless I meet my people I can't decide whom to employ. Then he asked whom I wanted to consult from among the family members. I said Sushila, Nanu, Rosa, and Sriharsha all together. Ultimately I agreed on Sushila alone meeting me, but I told him definitely that I agree to this arrangement with one reservation, which is that if I feel that she would not be able to convey my ideas about my case there where advice is needed for the appointment of a defence lawyer I must meet the other members of my family also. He didn't say anything about it. He gave me a hint that Sushila is already here, and as the name of Sushila came from him I have a feeling that she has applied for an interview with me to the king. Then by allowing her to meet me they would like to kill two birds with one stone: to meet my demand as well as Sushila's request for an interview. Later, I started feeling that I should have stuck to the demand of meeting all the 4 members of my family—they would perhaps have agreed to it. Sushila is so innocent about everything, particularly about politics that, apart from my emotional satisfaction, from the political point of view the interview with her would be of very little consequence. Still by the general behaviour of her, her demeanour, I may be able to assess the atmosphere outside. The whole day I was extremely excited at the thought of meeting her. It may be the breakthrough. Ass. Anchaldish again assured me that our isolation would be lifted soon after the preliminary inquiries are over. I told him that it was against Human Rights to keep a prisoner in solitary confinement which for sensitive people, and the ... like ourselves are sensitive men, is the worst type of torture, psychological torture. Moreover I am under-trial, who is in the point of law supposed to be innocent. And as such I must get at least all the facilities that are normally provided to convicted prisoners even in Nepal jails.

Today also there was blood in my sputum which was also sent for examination. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> specimen of sputum sent for exam.



**BP Koirala, in solitary confinement at Sundarijal Prison, starts having suspicions that someone may be reading his diary and discovering his weak health and psychological state. But, he says, “I can’t but be truthful in my diary—otherwise I should stop writing diaries.” He is still coughing blood, and for the first time BP is worried that it may be something serious, like the throat cancer that afflicted him. The next day there is a visit from the Assistant Zonal Commisioner and a hint that Sushila Koirala may be allowed to visit her husband in prison. BP is excited.**

BOOK REVIEW

by AJAYA DIXIT

# Unbundling the World Bank

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

The World Bank began as a funding agency for post Second World War reconstruction of Europe. Subsequently, the agency transformed itself into a development bank, an aid agency, an anti poverty campaigner, a leading proponent of state entrenchment under the rubric of structural adjustment, an advocate of neo-liberal regime of unfettered markets, and a knowledge bank.

In the process of its transformation, the Bank has taken on governance, biodiversity, post conflict reconstruction, anti-corruption drive and public participation. The agency searches for its soul as it attempts to grapple with the challenges of reforms to become effective in what it does.

The reform story of the World Bank is the subject of the book *Reinventing the World Bank* edited by Jonathan R Pincus and Jeffrey A Winters. Ten chapters of the book analyze the Bank's lending policies, projects, operational procedures, measures of accountability and structure of governance. Each chapter addresses the operational, conceptual, and power dimensions of the World Bank reinvention.

Bruce Rich reviews the World Bank under Wolfensohn who took over in 1995. Devesh Kapur explores the Bank's Anatomy of Governance, Jonathan Pincus analyses institution building in World Bank financed

projects. The questions of Criminal Debt and Corruption are addressed by Jeffrey Winters and Mushtaq Khan respectively. John Sender assesses the World Bank's role in Sub-Saharan Africa while the agency's Speculation on Social Capital is discussed by Ben Fine. The editors finally provide conclusions. The collection is a thorough no-holds-barred, yet balanced, examination of the Global Agency vilified by champions of anti-globalisation as an imperialist plot. The conservative right, on the other hand, sees it as a socialist giveaway doling out money to corrupt and unaccountable Third World governments.

By positing itself as the temple of modern development practice, the World Bank has ended up being every thing to every one. It conducts its own research, does evaluation of its policies, is a lender, and has economic advisory roles as aid coordinator, social reformer, law formulator and enforcer. But thickening of bureaucratic layers in its more than 50-years of being has riddled the Bank with many fault lines. Institutional filters reject timely cautions by social auditors at the cost of operation effectiveness.

Consequently, the Bank's reform as presently constituted has failed to address the problem of disconnect between the institution's publicly stated goals and its operational

performance. Reform, according to the contributors to the book, cannot come from within the Bank but has to be externally imposed. They further suggest that the agency shareholders are unlikely to be agents for such reform.

So, what is the point of leverage so that Bank-supported programs suit specific conditions? The case of Nepal's own Arun III hydropower project demonstrates that informed contestation by social auditors can bring about changes. After 1990, egalitarian social auditors questioned 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 quintessentially a democratic exercise.

In the post Arun III era, Nepal's hydropower development policy terrain is pluralised and involves the government, the private sector and communitarian initiatives. New projects started and completed under these institutional modes produce more electricity than Arun II would have. However, many constraints such as an expensive tariff, limited access to electricity, diversifying end use and reconciling competing water users remain to be overcome. Second generation institutional issues have also emerged. These are related, for

example, with upgrading performances of the recently constituted distribution centers of NEA, and getting the Community-based Rural Electrification Initiative off the ground.

Alongside Arun III, the Bank had two other projects (India's Sardar Sarovar Project and Bangladesh's Flood Action Plan) whose assumptions were questioned on technical, social and environmental grounds. The Bank withdrew support from all of them in the mid-1990s. In all the three cases, the Bank was challenged by independent groups within Bangladesh, India and Nepal in coalition with transnational counterparts. The agency has attempted to adapt to the disjuncture 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, falls short of commenting on this paradigm shift.

The World Bank was a major contributor to the Nepal Development Project. The agency continues to exercise influence in shaping the country's development and public policies. The agency recently upgraded its lending level to Nepal from a 'low case' (\$0-50 million a year) to 'base year' (\$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 that in itself does not solve Nepal's problems, which is matching public policy goals with operational effectiveness. The country's problem was, and continues to be institutional dysfunction and lack of systemic checks and balances. According to Pincus and Winters: 'Barring a major realignment of shareholders attitude and expectations the World Bank will in all likelihood stumble forward along the current dysfunctional path.'

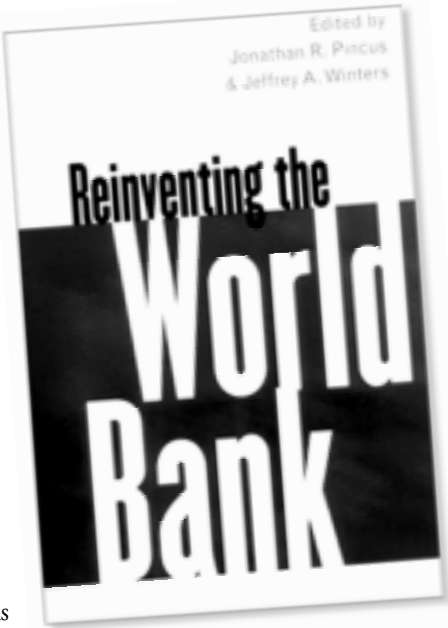
So, what to do? The editors of *Reinventing the World Bank* suggest unbundling the Bank. It would maintain commitment to public capital flows across a range of countries and focus on physical investments amenable to external supervision, and balance of payments support in tandem with bilateral donors to suit the requirements of individual countries. Independent agencies would provide policy advice, research and evaluation that would minimise moral hazard, and conflict of interest problems.

*Reinventing the World Bank* emphasises that balance of power is

central for effective and accountable governance. The book will be valuable for academics, aid watchers and those working towards reconciling public policy goals with operational effectiveness. ♦

Water management analyst Ajaya Dixit is based in Kathmandu and edits the journal *Water Nepal*.

Reinventing the World Bank Jonathan R Pincus and Jeffrey A Winters (eds) Cornell University Press, 2002 288 pages





ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **The Eastern Essence** Paintings by Chirag Bangdel at the Alliance Francaise gallery till 15 July. 4241163
- ❖ **Poetry Festival** Mark Wyatt reads from "Snow and Other Adventures" 18 July, Pratibha Tuladhar and Smriti Jaiswal on 20 July. Both at 7.30 PM at the Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Traditional and modern Nepali paintings** 4-8PM at The October Gallery, Hotel Vajra. 4271545
- ❖ **Innovative & Quality Crafts** Exhibition/Sale by Moni's Creation, 12-13 July at Hotel de l'Annapurna, Darbar Marg. 4432122
- ❖ **A fresh pair of eyes** Paintings, sketches and photographs by volunteers living and working in Nepal. from 18 July at the Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Monsoon Moods** Paintings by Uttam Nepali, Shashi Shah, Batsa Gopal Vaidya, Shashikala Tiwari, Kiran Manandhar, Ragini Upadhyay-Grela at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 4411122
- ❖ **Imaging Everest** Photographic exhibition by the Royal Geographical Society, London, in association with The British Council, Kathmandu. 8.30 AM-4.45 PM till 31 July at the British Council, Lainchour.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Martin Chautari Discussions** every 3PM Sunday on political issues, 5PM Tuesday on various topics, 3PM Thursday on media, and 3PM Friday on youth related issues. Participation is open to all.
- ❖ **Party at Baber Mahal Revisited** 7.30 PM onwards, 11 July. Entry Rs 100
- ❖ **Ghetto Dance Blast** International artists, DJ Arjun, bottomless bar on 18 July Yak & Yeti. Tickets: Rs 1,111 for drinks and dinner. 4248999
- ❖ **Newroad-Basantapur Street Festival-2060** 12 July at Hanumandhoka Durbar Square and surrounding areas.
- ❖ **The God Dance of Kathmandu Valley** 7PM every Tuesday at the Big Pagoda, Hotel Vajra. 4271545
- ❖ **Kathmandu Toastmasters Club** 5.45-7.30 PM every Tuesday. Improve your speaking and listening skills. Free at IEM, Tripureshwor. 4429638

MUSIC

- ❖ **Yale Whiffenpoofs** Tickets: Rs 799. World renowned a cappella group on 15-16 July at Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Salsa** featuring Cadenza and Latin Section. 8PM on 11 July at The Jazz Bar, Shangri-la Hotel. Entry Rs 300. 4412999
- ❖ **Live Acoustic Jam** 7PM on Saturdays at Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 4256738
- ❖ **Cadenza live** 7.30PM every Wednesday and Saturday. Rs 200 entry. Interested musicians welcome to jam. Upstairs Jazz Bar, Lazimpat.
- ❖ **Full Circle** acoustic jam every Friday at New Orleans Café, Thamel. 4427311
- ❖ **Thunderbolt** with Ram Shrestha 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. 4411818
- ❖ **Fusion** offers over 100 cocktails. Happy hour from 6-7PM. Dwarika's Hotel.
- ❖ **K-too! Special** Tropical Khukri drinks Rs 125 or Rs 750 for every 1.5 litre. Free Irish Coffee with every main course. K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4433043.

FOOD

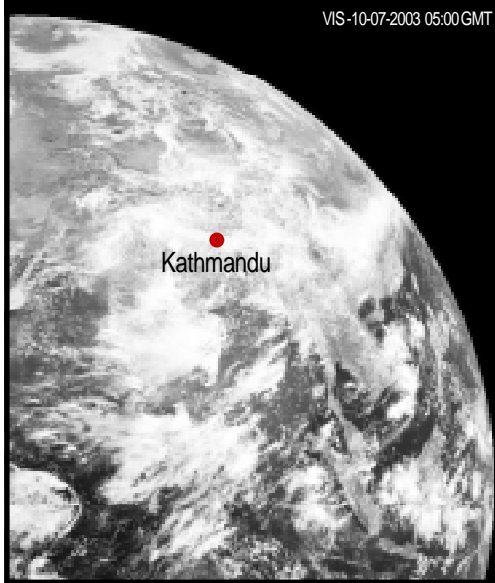
- ❖ **Weekends Late Riser BBQ** fixed lunch at the Shambala Garden. Upto 66 percent discount. Shangri-La Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999
- ❖ **Executive lunch meals** at Bhanchha Ghar Restaurant and Bar, Kamaladi. 4225172
- ❖ **Cajun Food Festival** at Rox Restaurant, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu from till 13 July. 4491234
- ❖ **Belle Momo** for more 15 varieties of momos at Darbar Marg. 4230890
- ❖ **Exquisite dining** at the Chimney. Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Expresso Bar** newly renovated at La Dolce Vita, Thamel. 4419612
- ❖ **Friday BBQ** at the Summit Hotel with 6.30 PM onwards. Rs 500 + tax. 5521810
- ❖ **Breakaway Buffet Lunch** Rs 325-375 (weekdays), Rs 650 (weekends) at the Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. 4411818
- ❖ **Traditional Nepali Thali lunch** at Patan Museum Café inside Patan Museum. 11AM-2.30 PM. Cocktails and snacks 4-6.30 PM. 5526271
- ❖ **Summer specials** smoked salmon soufflé, shrimp Newburg and crispy duck breast. Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 4250440
- ❖ **Wood fired pizzas, Baskin Robbins icecream, cocktails and coffee** at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel.
- ❖ **Saturday BBQ Lunch** at Club Himalaya Nagarkot. Rs 500 per person. 4680083
- ❖ **Papaya salad**, seasonal vegetables with fillet or chicken and Italian icecream at Singma, Jawlakhel, Lalitpur. 552004

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Five Star getaway deals** at The Fort Resort, Nagarkot. 4226799
- ❖ **Dakshinkali Package** every Saturday Rs 500+tax. 4370714, 4371537
- ❖ **Shivapuri Heights** a traditional cottage with modern facilities. Rs 1,850 pp. www.escape2nepal.com, Email: info@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Great Godavari Getaway** special weekend packages. Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **The Secret of Kathmandu** Overnight package \$99. Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Gamcha Organic Farm Guesthouse** Traditional Nepali farmhouse. 6631734.
- ❖ **Writing Retreat** Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 375280
- ❖ **Bardia Tiger Madness** special deals for expats. Jungle Base camp, Bardia. 061-532112. Email: junglebasecamp@yahoo.com.
- ❖ **Escape to Jomsom** this summer. Rs 3,999 per person at Jomsom Mountain Resort. 449610

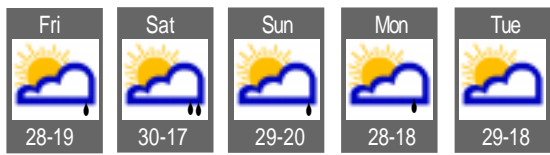
NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

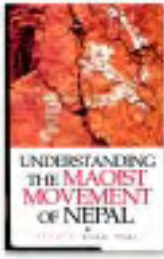


Since last week, the monsoon pulses have been coming in thick and fast over the eastern Mahabharat and tarai dumping copious amounts of rains. Surprisingly, the deaths are more from lightning than floods, signifying formidable cloud buildups at the point where the mountains meet the plains. This satellite image taken on Thursday morning shows why there is less rainfall in western Nepal, residues of westerlies are blocking the advance of the moisture-laden winds from the Bay. When this happens, the water vapour is dammed up and cloudbursts occur as the clouds condense above the Himalaya. Maximum temperatures will plummet by another two degrees because of overcast skies.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



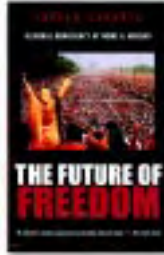
BOOKWORM



**Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal** Deepak Thapa (ed) Martin Chautari, 2003  
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 dilemma: A Nepalese perspective** Radabhir D Khati, PhD  
Udaya Books, 2003  
Rs 290

This very timely book makes an in-depth examination of the education sector in Nepal. Policy, processes of decision making in an educational institution and the student-politics nexus, rural and female literacy are some of the most pressing issues that the author addresses.



**The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home & Abroad** Fareed Zakaria  
Penguin Viking, 2003  
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 spread of democracy has not produced a corresponding growth in liberty.

Courtesy: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 4227711, mandala@ccsl.com.np

CLASSIFIED

**Visit Ground Zero** Fine wines, designer candles, cards, gifts, stationery, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l'Annapurna

**Visit Femiliines**, the Exclusive Lingerie Store for ladies undergarments, nightwear, bathrobes and more. Ladies staff. Opposite Sajha Yatayat, Harihar Bhawan, Pulchowk. Tel: 547428

**Flowerlovers:** Flowerlovers, it's FUCHSIA time again !! See 60 beautiful varieties in bloom! Our lovely CYCLAMEN are also flowering. Only at THE BISHALNAGAR NURSERY, tel. 4431797; 5 min. from Bhatbateni Supermarket, 2min. from Bishalnagar Chowk (turn right and downhill).

**Custom Made:** Generate Wealth with Feng Shui.... Get a Tabletop Fountain Custom made for you.... Call 981054102

**Co-Q10 and all dietary supplements imported from Singapore & Malaysia** Contact: 5520294

**To Let:** Rabibhawan area two storey house 4

bedrooms 2 bathrooms large kitchen dining living terrace lobby and porch and telephone. Contact: **Roshani** 4275180

**New York Pizza:** Free Home delivery  
Contact: 5539345

**To Let:** In Jawalakhel near zoo, fully furnished apartment 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, spacious living / dining, modern kitchen individual telephone, terrace, overlooking English garden with tall trees in quiet surrounding. Available immediately Contact: 5524389

**To let:** Furnished air-conditioned computer lab on rent per use basis. Mail: itlabrent@hotmail.com or call Mrs. Khadka at 4246346.

**NEW BOOK** *Nepal: Politics of Stalemate, Confusion and Uncertainty*, by MR Josse, a prominent journalist in Nepal, is available at leading department and book stores in Kathmandu. For trade information please contact: Bazaar International. Phone: 4255125 Fax: 4229437 Email: sales@subscriptionkiosk.com Website: www.subscriptionkiosk.com

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

### Urgent notice for Kathmandu Valley residents

**What you burn is what you breathe. Is your vehicle emitting black smoke?**

Kathmandu cannot take it anymore. Nothing will happen unless you take individual action. Please get your vehicle checked to see it is burning fuel efficiently. Better still, ride a bike or walk wherever possible. This reminder is brought to you by the station that hits you where it matters, Hits FM 91.2.

It's the summer of sequels—this time round it's the onscreen trio of Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu who are back in *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*. All the absurd elements of the 1970s TV show is pushed to the maximum and there is no situation these glamorous undercover agents can't get in or out of with gleeful airheaded nonchalance. This loud, fun, dumb, funny, ridiculous movie delivers what it sets out to do—entertain—with plenty of martial arts, surprise cameo roles and a slick production. Good morning Angels!

JAINEPAL CINEMA

11.15 AM, 1.45 PM, 4.15 PM, 6.45 PM  
Telephone booking: 4442220  
Online booking  
www.jainepal.com



|         |            |  |
|---------|------------|--|
| Daily   | 2045-2115  | BBC नेपाली सेवा                        |
| Daily   | 2245-2300  | BBC नेपाली सेवा                        |
| Sun-Fri | 0740- 0800 | एकैछिन् (रेडियो पत्रिका)               |
| Sun-Fri | 0800- 0830 | डबली (विषयगत अन्तरक्रिया)              |
| Sun-Fri | 2000- 2030 | आजका कुरा (समसामयिक विषयमा बहस)        |
| Sat     | 0800- 0830 | शान्ति अभियान                          |
| Sat     | 1930- 2000 | आचार विचार (भ्रष्टाचारविरुद्ध सहकार्य) |
| Sat     | 2000- 2030 | कूटनीतिक मञ्च                          |

**Radio Sagarmatha**  
P.O. Box 6958, Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal  
Tel: ++977-1-545680, 545681, Fax: ++ 977-1- 530227  
E-mail: radio@radiosagarmatha.org, www.radiosagarmatha.org



# Aural pleasure with The Whiffenpoofs



**SOPHIA PANDE** . . . . .  
A touch of whimsy led to the 'Gentlemen Songsters' of Yale naming themselves 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 Himalaya. And there could be no better setting than Bir Shumshere's entertainment theatre, Naachghar, now a part of the Yak & Yeti Hotel. I had the pleasure of watching them in performance before, and must warn you that Whiffenpoofian (!) *joie de vivre* is highly infectious.  
The group takes the stage impeccably turned out in

tuxedos—complete with pristine white gloves—but are far from stodgy. In fact, they are renowned for their 'presence' that includes much jumping around and the occasional dance routine. As I recall, they carry the old Yale-Harvard-Princeton rivalry right under the arc lights through outrageous jokes, all at the expense of the other Ivy Leaguers, charming the audience into a complicit understanding that Yale is undoubtedly the best of the lot. The Whiffenpoofs repertoire is an eclectic mix of traditional Yale songs, Broadway favourites and traditional folk songs from all around the world. The Bohemian Marching Song "Aj, Lucka, Lucka Siroka" is a favourite opener that will set your feet tapping.  
The Whiffenpoofs of 2001, 2002 and 2003 have three albums to their credit, so at the end of the evening if you need to stock up on a little of their legendary aural pleasure, you can leave with a CD, two or maybe even three. ♦

## NEPALI SOCIETY

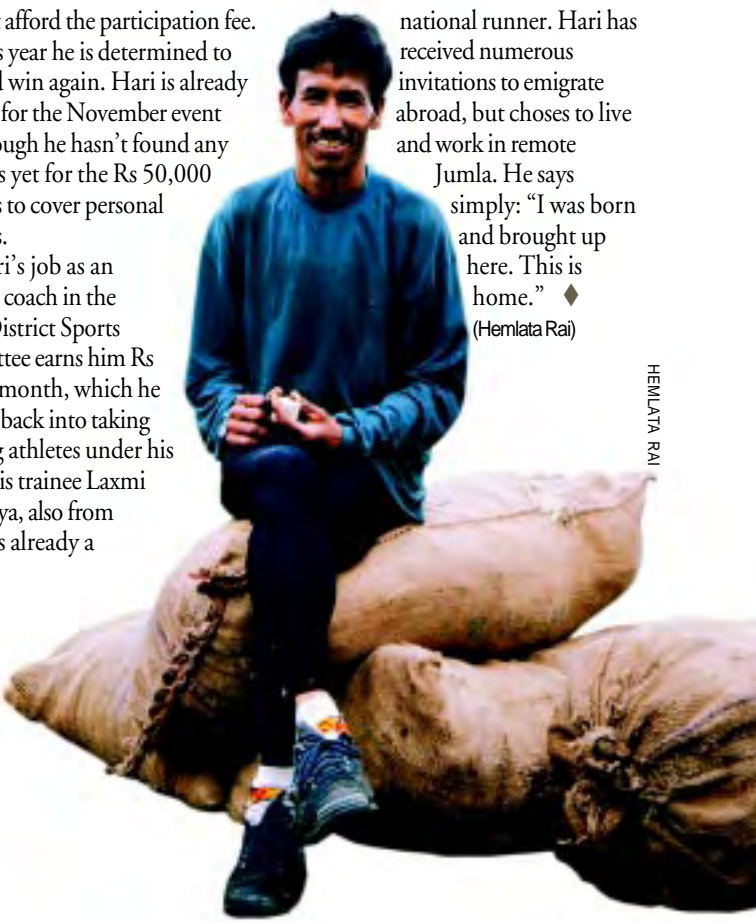
# Run, Hari, run

**H**ari 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 glistening 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 trekkers two days.  
Hari's life reads like a highland version of *Forrest Gump*. From a shy lad at Chandannath Secondary School in Jumla, he became a celebrated athlete at the 26<sup>th</sup> National Athletics Meet in Kathmandu in 1985 where he won

gold and a silver in the 5km and 10km races. Since then he has won every other major national long distance run and participated in 30 international events. He has represented Nepal in the SAF Games, Asian Games and even at the Olympics. Hari also prides himself in being among the few Nepalis to take part in the famous Jungfrau Marathon held annually in Switzerland in 2001. He stood eighth among 3,700 runners. "I am a highland runner—so I gain momentum uphill but my performance slows along the flat stretches, I wish they had more hills in Switzerland," Hari says with a grin.  
But it was the Everest Marathon, the world's highest marathon held every 18 months, that made him famous. This 42.2km race reaches an altitude of 5184m, and Hari won it three consecutive years in 1997, 1999 and 2000, and set a record by finishing in 3 hours 50 minutes and 23 seconds. In 2002, Hari couldn't take part because he

couldn't afford the participation fee.  
This year he is determined to run, and win again. Hari is already training for the November event even though he hasn't found any sponsors yet for the Rs 50,000 he needs to cover personal expenses.  
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 budding athletes under his wing. His 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 home." ♦  
(Hemlata Rai)



HEMLATA RAI

**SKY LIGHT (P) Ltd.**  
A foreign-owned Nepali company, in technical collaboration with TECHNAL of France

Approved **TECHNAL** Fabricator

A complete range of high quality European Standard aluminium window and door frames, enclosures, railings, shower cabins, skylights, office/home furniture and more.

- Elegant and beautiful
- Weather proof
- Colourfast
- Dust proof
- Anti corrosive
- Durable
- Eco friendly
- Cost effective

Save Nepal's trees! Use Sky Light's perfect alternative to wood!

**Naxal Opp. Police HQ Tel: 4423851 Fax: 4420789 Email: skylight@mail.com.np**

**KALINTA** picture framing  
classic & modern frames: imported and manufactured by Kalinta

10am-6pm  
East side of Royal Palace  
Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu  
Tel: 4442437

Mounting Over Lamination Canvas Bonding  
**HOT PRESS**

new collection from Italy on display now





# Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

## Going to the dogs

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 in 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 speciest 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:** Nepal's have now realised that you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

**CORRECT:** Kathmandu'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.



### In the July Himal

Civilising civil society: Donors and democratic space in Nepal

"Mysterious" afflictions in Nepal's 'remote' districts

Review of *Foreign Aid and Politics in Nepal*

To subscribe: Call 554-3333 or write to [subscription@himalmag.com](mailto:subscription@himalmag.com)

Surplus and starvation in Orissa

India-China: bhai-bhai once again

South Asia and homosexuality

Karachi's 'illegals'

Bengal's cultural borderlands

THE YAK & YETI

MONSOON MANIA

PINE Lights Presents

*The Yale Whiffenpoofs*

A Yak & Yeti Event

Date: 15th & 16th July 2003  
Time: 6:45 PM onwards  
Ticket: Rs. 799/- nett per persons (inclusive of welcome drink & snacks)  
Cash Bar at Venue

Get ready to be mesmerised by the world's most famous A Capella group. From Classic Jazz to English folksong and Motown hits, they have performed across the world to audiences that include President Bush & Clinton and the Dalai Lama. This monsoon it's time to feel 'Yale & Hearty' at the Yak & Yeti.

SAMSUNG

digitalworld

SHOWROOM

DigitALL

Life style

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 10:00 AM - 8:00PM

DVD/VCD PLAYERS | MINI COMPONENT | HI-FI SYSTEMS | VACUUM CLEANERS | MICROWAVE OVEN | WASHING MACHINES | TELEVISIONS | REFRIGERATORS

Exclusive Showroom at Durbar Marg. HH & Co. Pvt. Ltd. Phone: 4230382, 4230378, e-mail: [digitalworld@golchha.com.np](mailto:digitalworld@golchha.com.np)