

NEPALI

Times

#180

23-29 January 2004

24 pages

Rs 25

WHERE IN NEPAL WILL YOU GET THIS KIND OF

DISCOUNT ?

HAPPY HOUR

EVERY NIGHT

9:00 PM-12 MIDNIGHT

Enjoy unbelievable storewide discount

(on every item) only at Metro Mall

Metro Mall

'24 HOURS DEPARTMENT STORE'

Metro Mall, Casino Building, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4263233 • 4275515

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 120

Q. Do you trust the current political leadership to lead the nation?

Yes	18.3%
No	77.8%
Don't know	3.9%

Total votes:1,470

Weekly Internet Poll # 121. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Would you like to see the UML's 9-point roadmap implemented?

Park Village

at Budhanil-kantha

Aesthetic Living in Pure Nature

Special Holiday Package

☐ 48 Suites

☐ 7 Conference hall

☐ Amphitheater

☐ 6 acres garden

☐ Swimming pool, Health Club,

☐ Mini Cinema hall & Recreation center

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

GRAPHIC STATION

STATION

Kopwadi, Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel: 55 47 480/500 Fax: 489

E-mail: printing@graphicstation.net

Web: www.graphicstation.net

HOTEL GAUTAM.

Presents

Authentic Indian Cuisine With

Gazal

at city's most renowned

KABAB CORNER RESTAURANT

7:00 pm till 10:00 pm

Kantipath, Jyatha

Information/Reservation : 4263201/2/3

Weekend delights.....

@ the

Godavari

Village Room

A Traditional BBQ Lunch

11.00 A.M onwards

Price reservation recommended

Rate:

—Vegetarian Rs. 299 per person*

—Non-Vegetarian Rs. 499 per person*

—25% discount for children below 4 ft

* Price is subject to tax

SPECIAL OVERNIGHT PACKAGE AVAILABLE

Tel: 977-1-5560775 E-mail: gvsales@gmail.com.np

Open secret !

Public knows but army feigns ignorance on Jajarkot.

RAMESHWOR BOHARA

The Maoists’ invitation to journalists and human rights activists to attend their mass meeting in Jajarkot on 19 January came more than a week before the event. Everybody knew that the rebels intended to declare the Bheri-Karnali region as their autonomous province.

Why had the rebels chosen to disclose the details of the meeting? Were they not fearful of an organised response by the Royal Nepali Army? In retrospect, they almost seemed to have known that the military would not attack.

What the military did conduct was an ineffectual aerial exercise, dropping some bombs from a helicopter on the flank of a hill on the other side from where the Maoist-called rally was being held at Birendra Aishwarya High School in Jungey Thapachaur village.

If the half-hearted bombing was meant to scare the populace from attending the rebel rally, that itself was against good judgement and humanitarian principles. If the decision was to make a militarily significant attack, the outcome was

the killing of a 28-year-old farmer and injuring two others. No thought seems to have gone to cordoning the region and taking on the rebels on the ground.

Two days later, senior journalists at an interaction organised by the RNA at its Bhadrakali headquarters heard the top brass claim that they had no knowledge of the Jajarkot meeting. Army spokesman Deepak Gurung said that a helicopter on patrol had retaliated when the rebels opened fire. He did not have casualty figures.

At a time when the army has been claiming successes in intelligence gathering, which human rights activists hope would lead to fewer killing of innocents by the security forces, the claim of “we did not know” was shocking.

The inability to mount an offensive might have had to do with a number of factors: a strategic military failure, lack of transport logistics or a laudable unwillingness to cause casualties amongst villagers coerced to attend.

The Maoist show of bravado in Jajarkot was important for an insurgent group that has been unable, in recent times, to mount successful attacks on army and armed police posts. With the morale of the cadre dipping dangerously as the rebel operations focused on clandestine killings and mine blasts, the Jajarkot meeting boosted the leadership’s image.

On the grounds of the Birendra-Aishwarya High School, as villagers trooped in from the surrounding region to hear Krishna Bahadur Mahara, fighters manned machine guns trained at the sky (*see pic*). Mahara sought to convince that the Bheri-Karnali autonomous province was merely a prelude to capturing state power at the centre. He said, “The fact that we have not launched any major attack of late does not mean that we have become weak. This is all part of our new policy.” The rebels had now entered the phase of counter-attack after the earlier phase of political equilibrium.

The Maoists’ Bheri-Karnali

regional commissar, using the *nom de guerre* ‘Pratik’, warned, “The present silence should be understood as the calm before the storm.” (For his part, a senior RNA commander at the Bhadrakali interaction cautioned, “You must understand that the Maoists are not lying low. They have been made to lie low.”)

The government at the centre, meanwhile, was dismissive of the claims emanating from Jajarkot. “They are merely an outfit of some armed bands,” said Minister for Information and Communications Kamal Thapa. “If only the agitating political parties allow the government to tackle the Maobadi, the insurgency will be solved within a few months.”

What the Jajarkot meeting showed was an army unable or unwilling to engage the Maobadi, and a Maobadi side desperately in need of a showcase ‘autonomous province’.

(With reporting by Rameshwor Bohara in Jajarkot)

"WHATS NEW ?"

NEW MEMBER SERVICE CENTRE NOW IN NEPAL (KATHMANDU)

The service centre will be open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm to answer any questions you may have, in addition will process your requests for award tickets as well as any claims for missing mileage. Your service centre can be contacted at:

P.O. Box: 9291
Tel: 4255989 Fax: 4219427
Email: npmembersvo@qmail.com

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية
Privilège Club



Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit
Desk Editor: Trishna Gurung, Design: Kiran Maharjan
Webmaster: Bhushan Shilpakar
Advertising: Sunaina Shah advertising@himalmedia.com
Subscription: Anil Karki, subscription@himalmedia.com
Sanchaya Kosh Building, Block A-4th Floor, Lalitpur
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 01-5543333-6, Fax: 01-5521013
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hatiban: 01-5547018



SEEK 'EM

If you think it is impossible for an entire country to have an inferiority complex, then look no further. Our astounding lack of self-esteem begins with the frequency with which officials utter the words “a small country like Nepal”. Compared with our gigantic neighbours to the north and south, we are indeed smaller. But with 25 million people we are bigger than Australia, and are in fact the 46th largest country in the world.

The other trait we have picked up in the last few decades is to blame everyone but ourselves for our woes. We excel in the art of playing victim and finding excuses for not getting our act together: we are landlocked, our topography creates obstacles, our mountains are too high our plains are too low. Foreigners either meddle in our affairs or refuse to do so, depending on our mood. The few things we carry a semblance of pride in are not the result of our own hard work, but symbols that are flukes of history: the world’s highest mountain, the birthplace of the Buddha, our non-colonial past.

But the arena where our insecurity shows most vividly is in our obsession with ‘Sikkimisation’. India annexed our sister Himalayan kingdom and the Sikkimese themselves seem pretty much reconciled to it. But being who we are, the way our left and right express their extreme nationalism is by fanning fears of imminent Sikkimisation. With an area of 7,300sq kms and a population of about half a million, Sikkim is so small even Bhutan would feel insulted if told it should fear Sikkimisation. Maldives doesn’t fear Sikkimisation, either. They are more worried about climate change wiping their nation off the map.

Is our sense of insecurity so acute that we have to quake every moment of our waking day with the fear of India gobbling us up? Or are we spreading this paranoia of insecurity as a part of our own security strategy? If that is so, Sikkimisation may actually turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The way to counter Indian influence and coercion is to be strong and confident ourselves. Let’s not cloak our own lack of self-esteem in xenophobia. What we have to do is institutionalise democracy as a strategy for longterm development and guard against the rise of tinpot dictators. If Finlandisation is a more pragmatic and probable outcome than Sikkimisation, then let’s strategise to take advantage of it just as Helsinki did vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Nepal is too big to be swallowed up. Our edges are too sharp, and outsiders foolish enough to try to do that will die of internal bleeding. And they know it.



Thinking the unthinkable

Rooting for a republic without evaluating the consequences would be a blunder.

GUEST COLUMN
Pramod K Mishra



The republican rhetoric is no longer the exclusive preserve of the Maoists. Student leaders are loudly proclaiming what their party leaders had already expressed in hints, veiled threats and innuendoes as the political mood against the monarchy hardens. As elsewhere, historical circumstances will ultimately determine the longterm fate of monarchy in Nepal.

The mainstream parties have expropriated the Maoists’ republican slogan, and it is time we seriously take up and publicly debate this issue, taking the history of strong and weak monarchs in Nepal into account. The mainstream political forces are flirting with republicanism because of their present frustration with King Gyanendra’s dealings with them, but they need to take a responsible longterm view of what the absence of the crown will mean to Nepal’s national stability.

The Nepali monarchy may not be as important a unifying force as it is made

out to be, but are Nepal’s political forces, from the Maoists to the mainstream parties, ready or mature enough to run the country by themselves, solely based on a mutually accepted code of conduct, or a constitution without a fatherly monarch’s regal gaze or *danda* keeping them well-behaved?

Why are the Maoists displaying such inhuman brutality against ordinary Nepalis? What heinous crime did an 80-year-old man commit to have his throat slit in broad daylight in the presence of his family? Is there a precedence in Nepal that would suggest that those who call themselves leaders would act with judgment, discretion and self-control when in possession (or lack) of political power? Will Nepal’s political parties be satisfied remaining in the opposition for decades and yet adhere to democratic means of voicing their opposition?

Nepal’s history of feudalism tells a different story. It shows that whenever the king is weak, chaos has reigned, and intermediaries profited at the expense of the people. A weak King Rajendra saddled Nepal with Jang Bahadur’s 104-year hereditary prime ministership. Not that people had much say in governance, but a weakened monarchy made matters worse for the people because the Ranas did not have even the religious sanction and responsibility that Hindu kings traditionally had to govern.

After 1950, political leaders showed a similar fractiousness that we see today under a soft King Tribhuban. Certainly, various forces in the palace played games of intrigue, but can the leaders of various parties be given a clean chit for their conduct? Weren’t they ready to compromise their principles in order to taste power by hook or by crook? The

horse trading, petty rivalries, party break-ups and the unscrupulous scramble for power since 1990 are still fresh in our minds. How can we guarantee that these leaders will exhibit accountability and responsibility within a republican framework? They haven’t even shown the gumption to apologise to the people for their mismanagement and lapses since 1990.

During a decade of multi-party rule all we saw were political leaders who behaved as if the country was their fiefdom and the people their peons. No one I have met in Nepal recently, including many with party affiliations, has a single positive word about these mandarins of multiparty and their conduct since 1990. In buses, streets, taxis or villages, there is nothing but contempt among the common people for the leaders they elected. Those of us who care deeply about democracy and believe that it is the only way forward must come to terms with this—regression or no regression.

But none of that justifies the present suspension of democratic rights and the lack of representation. To do so would be to commit democratic hara-kiri. King Mahendra’s Panchayat autocracy protected a feudal, repressive and ethnically biased polity which was basically a modernised extension of the Rana regime and sowed the seeds of the violence of recent years.

Yet, to hastily give in to the republican rhetoric without public debate about the pros and cons would lead to another kind of blunder. Before the Maoists and the parties start competing with each other for who can be a more radical republican, Nepali society will do well to deliberate the consequences of a republican Nepal with cool logic and sharp historical analysis. ●

Pramod K Mishra, PhD, teaches at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, USA.

LETTERS

OUTRAGED

Seems like the only things our student organisations are capable of doing are staging bandhs and vandalising public property or closing down schools (‘Tail wags dog’, #179). How about getting to hear students doing something worthwhile like blood donations or helping their communities instead of setting government vehicles on fire or breaking windows of the nearest bank? Don’t they know they have just set fire to their own money? Another thing: aren’t they a little too old to be called ‘students’? They are suckers who have been manipulated by their political bosses.

B Tamor, Gyaneswor

HOMECOMING

I was really shaken by the translated story ‘Home soon’ (#178). It is an utter outrage that Indian officials abducted a Nepali national from Kathmandu three years ago, and have imprisoned him in Lucknow ever since without any charges. It is a gross

violation of human rights as well as basic legal norms in this age. Prem B Chhetry should be released immediately by India. Why have the scores of individuals who have earned high fame and fortune in the human rights profession not brought this illegal detention to India’s attention even after three years? Or are our human rights professionals just as servile towards the Indian Embassy as our politicians? In the same issue Yubraj Ghimire in ‘Lucknow, Ishwor Pokhrel and the Summit’ got it absolutely right when he says that the usually boisterous bravado of our political parties and students turns to a whimper the minute they hear a sneeze from inside the Indian Embassy. It is a pity that our human rights entrepreneurs also have to operate from within such ‘diplomatic’ constraints.

Jack Shaw,
Lexington, USA

2104

Hats off to Daniel Lak on his article, 2104 (Here and there, #178). Thank god, somebody

appreciates the young blood in Nepal. For the most part, we are kind of beasts of burdens to carry out tasks or the ambitions of our parents or of our communities. Politicians pay us lip service and call us “*bhavishya ka karnadha*” when it serves their purpose and need to flatter us to further their interest. I wasn’t aware that someone in Nepal might even take us into consideration when it came to thinking of the future even though we make up the majority of the population of this nation. I thank Lak for taking note of our existence and for claiming that we have special qualities. As for Lak’s forecast that Kathmandu might become the Brussels for the SAU, it seems a bit farfetched to me given the present hole the country finds itself in. But at least we’ll manage to still remain sovereign, that’s not all bad for starters. Thanks, Lak for the positivity.

As for the Muslims in Europe, one can add that yes, Europe is in the process of becoming half-Muslim. England has its South Asians, France its immigrants from the Maghreb and Germany its Turkish workers.

Also, one must not forget the US, which will probably be half-Hispanic in the future. Ironic revenge of history, the spirits of Gengis Khan, Ogodai and the Invincible Armada must be laughing from the pages of history!

Bhumi, France

QUAKE

I have been reading *Nepali Times* for years. Thanks to the editorial team for providing outstanding news. Naresh Newar’s ‘70 years after’ (#178) was superb. There have been several warnings regarding earthquakes but people are still unaware of the danger. The Nepali government should try to enforce building laws like in Europe. We need young people and old, businessmen, students and teachers, ministers and even the king to set up an awareness program to build a peaceful and safe country.

Buddhi Pant,
University of Coventry, UK

CK LAL

It was very heartwarming to read CK Lal’s ‘A flailing stage’ (#179). No question that the



KIRAN PANDEY

STATE OF THE STATE
CK Lal



The smell of burning tyres on the streets of the capital reeks of democracy in decay. Despite prevailing winds, though, the olfactory message doesn't seem to have wafted yet into nostrils in Narayanhiti.

The silence has goaded students into ever-increasing radical rhetoric. A section of the students have begun to lose self-control, smashing private vehicles and taxis. Fears of anarchy returning to the streets are real again. Hell hath no fury as students scorned. This raw rage comes out of alienation. Marx saw it as 'alienation from one's species'

so the youngsters have been pushed to desperation by circumstances that they are 'so familiar with but of which they are hardly a part'. When the monopoly over the state power is completely in the hands of a small elite, others have no stake in upholding the status quo.

They respond by becoming uncontrollable, aggressive and violent. This kind of violence is much more dangerous than the violence of armed insurgents or the mafia, which emerge from the outside and which can be countered with a peace offensive or counter-violence. But when a social force goes berserk there is no way but to wait for it to spend itself in a cataclysmic upheaval, like what happened in Iran just before the fall

of the Shah.

Street violence is also a response to marginalisation when the power elite pushes all others to the margins. The sense of injustice is even more acute when the system is seen to be illegitimate and brutal. When ex-Mandales in government are deciding on the response to the street protests, you know we have come a full circle to 1990. Hence the statement from the government spokesman that the insurgents have infiltrated the agitating students. Last week, Buddhiman Tamang went to Nepalgunj on an exploratory duty for the public felicitation ceremony of the king in the mid-west region. A reporter counted 22 army SUVs had come to receive the minister, a visiting

American journalist thought the *bandobast* was more elaborate than what the American president is used to. When students start pelting stones, blame a society which has taught them that violence is the only bargaining weapon left to them for negotiation and legitimisation.

Many students are now convinced that mild violence is a necessary evil, and the only way to make an obstinate state take notice. There is a method in the apparent madness of student protests everywhere. They can't afford to alienate the people by mindless vandalism and violence so they try to keep disorder to a minimum, aim at politically significant targets and spare likely supporters from inconvenience. For the political parties

masterminding the current agitation, the risks of students' protests getting out of hand are enormous. From the experience of students' agitation in Indonesia and the Philippines, they know that if imagined grievances are allowed to fester for too long, youth protests can spiral out of control and degenerate into anarchy and end up even justifying strongman rule.

It is not such a big leap from burning tyres on the asphalt to turning them into garlands of death. The army and the government may have been crying wolf when they said Maoists have infiltrated the student protestors. Yet, if society atrophies further, that may become a reality, and we know who would be responsible. ●

problem today is, in addition to everything else, the legitimacy of the state itself. Many believe post-Panchayat democracy failed. The 12 years were the worst, they say. Not many of those elitist slaves wonder about the positive aspirations that were nurtured. The free press, the values of liberty, the power of ideological freedom, all practised during 12 glorious years of democracy, are easily forgotten. Today, growing numbers of people are contemplating the possibilities of a republican set-up of governance. The problems of state are manifold but without a genuine representation of people in the state, how can common Nepalis aspire to live? There may be a fine line differentiating total anarchy and the current statehood, nonetheless a state without the peoples' mandate is heading towards absolute power, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. If only dictatorship would bring development in an already failing state. To make matters worse, the current state of illegitimate

government has a classic Victorian representation—a totally feudal set-up. The country is marred by a history of chronic case of social exclusion, feudal hegemony, centralised governance—nothing could get worse than this.

Pramesh Aryal,
Kathmandu

CHOW CHOW
Sushma Amatya's observations in 'Thoughtless food' (#179) make for an interesting read. Hoarding boards are like sore pimples on the face of Kathmandu. As for the chow chow, yes it's bad, but then isn't it cheaper than a plate of gundruk and bhat?

Bhumika Ghimire,
Florida, US

STUMPED
The cover story 'Stumped' (#179) came with a picture of a cube. Being an avid fan of the "cube" problem and having successfully attempted at solving various cubes in the past, I took a closer look at the different faces of the cube to figure out a "step-wise-

solution" to the problem. Initially, it looked quite easy. All I needed was some thoughtful, logical procedures to arrange the parts in its appropriate positions. However, on closer scrutiny, it came to my attention that given the state of the cube as presented in the picture, it is practically impossible to solve the problem. And the problem lies with the parts of the Thapa, the Maoist and the king.

Let me explain with the picture. As you can see, the yellow Thapa piece at the left-bottom corner has occupied both the side of the same cube-corner. Logically, each corner can only accommodate three pieces of different identity. Therefore, no matter in which orientation we try to fit this Thapa piece, it will always be a mismatch with respect to the other faces.

Similarly the red Maoist piece at the right bottom centre also has a design flaw as it occupies both the faces of the same piece, thus rendering it unadjustable with any of the other faces. And finally, the grey-shade king happens to occupy the central



BILASH RAI

position of the bottom and right faces. Logically, each face must be of a different identity (colour) for the cube to be solved. Thus, as long as we do not replace one of the two centre piece kings, the cube will continue to stump us—literally and metaphorically.

Surendra Sthapit, email



Out-migration and security fears have increased forest cover in Nepal's midhills.

ALL PICS: PRAGYA SHRESTHA

Why the insurgency has protected forests

PRAGYA SHRESTHA in LELE

Located just outside the Valley rim, the villages to the south of Lele show the effects of eight years of Maoist insurgency: settlements devoid of young men, fallow terraces, deserted bazars. But there is another unintended side effect: a dramatic rejuvenation of the once denuded mountains

surrounding this rugged and picturesque region on the outskirts of Kathmandu. The conflict and violence has depopulated Nepal's midhills, reducing pressure on the land, and villagers are afraid of going into the forest for fear of running into Maoists. The two factors combined have given the forests a

chance to grow back. "We don't enter the forest much these days to cut fodder leaves or to graze goats and cattle, that is why the trees are so thick," says Sumitra Godar, who is a forest guard with the all-women Sallaghari Community Forest User Group in the village of Mahat. "There are now

a lot more birds and wildlife." There has been some fighting in the mountains to the south and east of Lele, and the frequent checks along the highways have restricted the mobility of the villagers. This too has helped forest regeneration, and because of the trees the women say they have noticed many more

birds and wild animals such as leopards, bears and pheasants. Regeneration has been so rapid that leopards and other wild animals have actually become the number one concern of many farmers who have suffered increasing livestock losses. "Forest stock has visibly

Networkers rule

In life, in work and in state craft, it's not what you know...it's who you know. Networkers rule. Those who see themselves as unique, with no need to make friends and establish networks well, quite simply, fail. This includes people, companies, organisations of all sorts and—yes—countries.

Now Nepal has a lot of friends around the world. Aside from Bhutan, it's hard to think of any nation that isn't inordinately fond of this Himalayan kingdom. Much of this is because Nepal has behaved with integrity in international affairs. It has no empire, it covets

no other country's territory and it does not

HERE AND THERE
Daniel Lak



wield blunt instruments in its global relationships. Never mind that it doesn't have any. That's secondary. This place made many of its friendships through its intrinsic merits, physical beauty, a tolerant attitude towards faith, an easygoing friendly outlook on life. People are hospitable, kind to a fault and peace-loving. Many non-Nepalis genuinely admire all those aspects of life here, often due to first hand experience.

American Peace Corps volunteers come to mind. So many of them have come to love Nepal and Nepalis. So too Japanese Buddhists,

Nepal needs to actively capitalise on the vast resource of international goodwill it enjoys.



NEPALNEWS.COM

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca meets Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa at his office in December, 2003. US Ambassador Malinowski is at the left.

and backpackers from Europe, Canada and Australia. In many cases, such people become advocates of what they see as this country's interest on their home turf. Witness the movement in 2002 against American arms sales to this country, largely driven—not by expat Nepalis—but by old Himalayan hands with

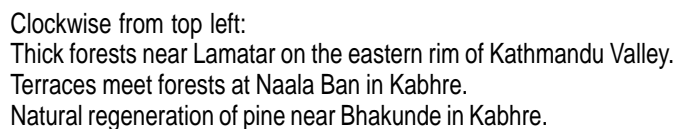
strong views on the need for a peaceful solution to the Maoist insurgency. All well and good then. Money in the bank. Or so it might seem to those fond of deluding themselves. For in this day and age of rough and tumble relations between states, it's far from enough to be a place that gives people

a nice warm feeling. We don't need to look very far afield to realise that. Nepal's northern neighbour, the autonomous region of Tibet, was once independent, widely admired by a certain type of person, without an enemy in the world. But what good did that do when the Peoples' Liberation Army came calling? No good whatsoever, that's what.

I've long thought that Nepal needs to actively capitalise on the vast resource of international goodwill it enjoys. So far, through panchayat, democracy and the current continuous limbo, the country has passively counted on its friendships to help it through troubled times. That now has to change. A starting point might be an honest effort to identify a network of friends in foreign countries and get them involved in doing what's best for Nepal, as Nepal sees it, in their own society.

This should not be a government effort either. Too many governments come and go here. Few have time to get good at governing, if that was ever their goal. In NGO-speak, we need to establish formal links between civil society here and those abroad that can help the place. Not with money, or expensive consultancies, but with policy changes and subtle political pressure. It's doable, it can only benefit Nepal, and it's legal.

What are we waiting for? ●



Other forestry officials caution that it isn't a uniform scenario throughout the country, but the security situation does seem to have dispirited poachers and smugglers. Even in the inner-tarai and tarai, where there has traditionally been much more rapid deforestation in the past 30 years, the insurgency appears to be slowing the trend. Saptari and Rautahat in the east have seen more deforestation, timber smuggling and wildlife poaching. But in other parts of the plains, the security situation has actually protected the trees. There are frequent reports of the security forces shooting wildlife poachers dead in the buffer zones of national parks, and even Maoists apprehending timber smugglers heading towards the border. ●

An optimistic Mishra, also president of the Nepal Dental Council, told us, "The inequitable distribution of the health system faces many constraints: financial, manpower and the state of the roads. But the policy will slowly overcome these challenges."



Year of the monkey

NARESH NEWAR

They're our closest neighbours in the chain of species. Which is exactly why Rhesus monkeys are so highly valued in bio-medical research. Except now there is a global shortage of primates because many countries have imposed bans on their export. Here in Nepal, monkeys share our streets, neighbourhoods and temples—and we're not party to any bans. Little wonder then, that the world's largest primate importers are wooing us.

Plans are already underway to set up a primate facility in the country funded by the US federal government. The Division of International Programs of the Washington National Primate Research Center (WoNPRC), established in 1999, supports two long-standing international programs in Indonesia and Russia. The third one was reportedly established in Nepal in collaboration with Natural History of Society of Nepal (NAHSON). Randall Kyes, head of International Programs at the Washington National Primate Research Centre, has already visited Nepal several times to establish a primate program.

The Nepali face aligned to the American drive is monkey

We could see the beginning of a new Nepali trade—monkeys for medical science.



KIRAN PANDEY

specialist Mukesh Chalise. In 2001, he approached the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) to start a primate research centre and a clinical research laboratory in microbiology in Nepal. His proposal received a strongly worded response from the trustees: "The objectives of the centre can be called a combined wishlist of zoo keepers, epidemiologists, veterinarians, microbiologists, primatologists and biomedical researchers using non-human primates. The

proposal is faulty...(and) ambitiously yields to the international experts and their funds which it says will bring sustainability. It is wrong."

Three years later, Chalise could be luckier. The Wildlife Farming Act passed last year by the government allows anyone to rear and breed certain wildlife. "He has to present a detailed work plan and then only will we decide to what extent the government will support him," says ecologist Shyam Bajimaya

from the Department of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). They are waiting to receive his proposal to start a breeding and research centre.

Conservationists are suspicious about the extent of the government's support of Chalise. They are worried that he may be allowed to export rhesus monkeys abroad to research laboratories where scientists are willing to pay \$5,000 - 10,000 for each monkey. The DNPWC has already agreed to supply the monkeys from the national parks to Chalise for breeding purposes at Rs 25,000 per monkey. He can begin business with the second generation. "If there is surplus population, there is no obstacle for him to export them," adds Bajimaya.

While this may be a simple issue for the government, animal rights activists and conservationists are worried about the cruelty involved in scientific research in US laboratories. Some are asking for a national debate on the issue before the government legalises export of any animals for research. Noted biologist Pralad Yonzon is frustrated with the silence of conservationists working in dozens of international conservation organisations in Nepal. "If the conservationists are not raising the issue then that is a huge problem. We should never allow Nepal's monkeys to be used for bio medical research," says Yonzon who also runs Resource Himalaya, a private independent regional biodiversity organisation.

Until a few years ago, the Philippines and Indonesia used

to be two of the biggest exporters to the United States. But both countries have now made the export of monkeys illegal. One of the first countries to impose the ban was India in 1977, after pressure from the International Primate Protection League (IPPL), begun by Shirley McGreal in 1973. McGreal influenced the Indian ban by publicising gruesome radiation experiments on monkeys, which are sacred to many Hindus. There was a time when India exported more than 100,000 monkeys a year during the 1950s.

Indonesia introduced the ban nearly two years after 110 monkeys died en route from Inquatex, a Jakarta supplier, to Worldwide Primates. This was followed by the Philippines, Bangladesh and Malaysia. But this crucial step had not been easy with US pressure mounting on these countries. McGreal says that the State Department threatened to cut off foreign aid unless Bangladesh renewed monkey exports immediately. "The US government and even the World Health Organisation exerted pressure on India to reopen exports," said McGreal.

Nepal-based animal welfare activist Lucia de Vries says: "The US, keen to conduct bioterrorism experiments on primates, is desperate for lab monkeys, which is why they turn to countries with weak legislation and a willingness to sacrifice its precious wildlife, such as China, Vietnam, Indonesia and, lately, Nepal." While exporting monkeys from Nepal has not begun and may take a while, this is exactly why many believe it is the right time for the government to tackle this issue seriously. "There needs to be a debate before the government takes another big step by letting the monkeys be exported," says noted naturalist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha.

Primates continue to be essential to medical research, especially to study AIDS. Scientists say that monkeys make major contributions to the study of cancer, dental research and malaria treatment as well. According to the US Department of Agriculture, more than 49,000 monkeys and apes were used in medical research in 2001. "If this is about cruelty, then we should stop slaughtering animals and killing vegetables for food too," says Chalise. "Common species should be used for human welfare. There is no harm in exporting monkeys." ●

BUFFET AT ITS BEST

Interactive cuisine

Whether it's Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner, it's a buffet with a difference. So different we have brought the kitchen to the restaurant! Now you can select your pickings and have them cooked right in front of you... just the way you want.

Summer specials-Dosas for breakfast & Chattamari for lunch everyday.

Sunrise Cafe

For details & reservations contact:
Guest Services. Tel: 4248999. extn: 2865

Yubaraj Ghimire



The RSS, an umbrella body of more than 150 organisations spread across the globe, has an ultimate agenda to expand India's border from Sindhu (Indus) to the Himalaya with all the countries in between as part of an Integrated

Last week, Simha announced that the VHM would be crowning King Gyanendra as the 'Vishwa Hindu Samrat'—emperor of over two billion Hindus of the world. And among others, Ashok Singhal, the person who founded Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a RSS outfit way back

Obviously, the king had accepted the invitation on the advice of Tulsi Giri, the then Chairman of the Council of Ministers and his friend Jogendra

SANGHSHAKTI VIJAYATRIYAM

Jha, the latter being the RSS representative in Nepal who was subsequently asked to organise the Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh. All this shows there is not even a thin division when the government of India launched an economic blockade—first in 1962 and then in late 80s? Did Gen Simha, Nepal's ambassador to the United Kingdom during the second blockade, approach Ashok Singhal

How many times, have protagonists of ‘Vishwa Hindu Samrat’ come to the rescue of Nepal aid? For King Gyanendra, wisdom lies in following what his father did (or would have done in a situation) than getting into a new controversy created by his ADC. ●

३ वर्षे ग्राहक

बजार मूल्य २१६०/-

कोसेली उपरान्त
ग्राहक बन्दा १८७५/-

६०% बचत

२ वर्षे ग्राहक

बजार मूल्य १४४०/-

कोसेली उपरान्त
ग्राहक बन्दा १३०५/-

३७% बचत

वार्षिक ग्राहक

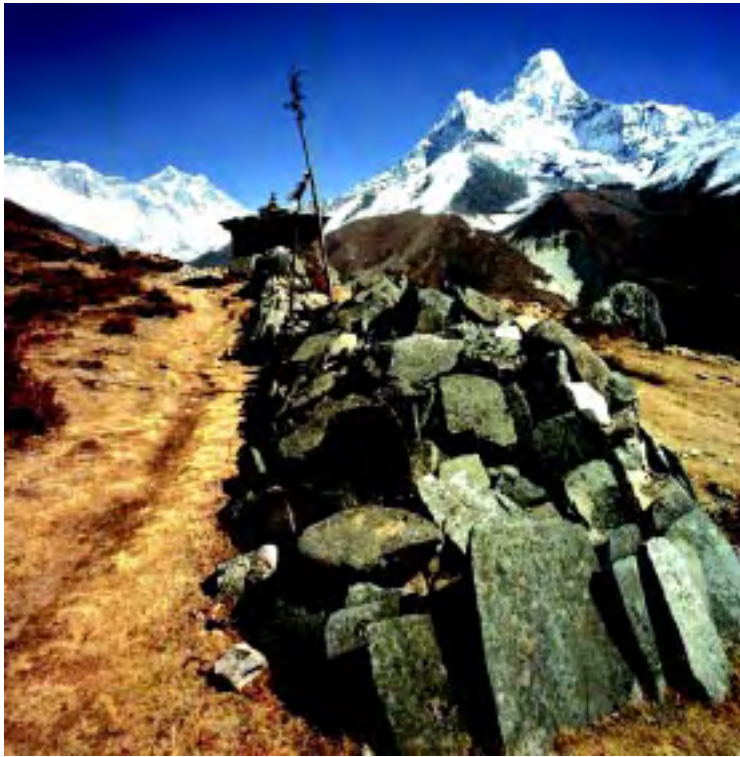
बजार मूल्य ४२०/-

कोसेली उपरान्त
ग्राहक बन्दा ६२५/-

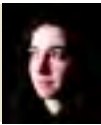
२९% बचत

हिमाल
खबरपत्रिका
नपटी सुखै छैन !

 **हिमान मिडिया प्रा. लि.**
सामग्रिक सेवा, काठमाडौं, नेपाल
फोन नं.: ३४२३३३३, ३४२३४४४



LONDON EYE
Fay Adam



spiritual elation and adventure!...timeless wisdom...medieval life-style...emotional peace'. Nepal's tourism industry has looked expertly into the minds of Londoners (and other Western visitors) and has responded to demand. Hotels are called 'Sanctuary Lodge', 'Pokhara Peace Guest House' and 'Sacred Valley Inn'. Travel agents offer Buddhist respites, shamanic treks, and 'Never Ending Peace And Love' (N.E.P.A.L). Tour guides are well versed at acting the untainted, authentic local, who know a direct path to enlightenment for their clients. The guides exploit their

A Londoner, asked randomly about Nepal, will mention mountains, Buddhism and possibly the royal massacre. Then they will express vagueness. Like clouds obscuring the peak of Machapuchare in the monsoon, Nepal, the roof of the world, is surrounded by a mist of uncertainty and supposition, thickened by shrouds of ideological mystery. A holiday brochure exclaims 'Nepal: the very word evokes images of magic,

Lure of the land

Are we being beckoned by a mythical hand of our own creation to the land of a lost time that no longer exists...if it ever did?

inherent knowledge of their tradition, culture and religion. They know that dharma tourists are hungry for this spirituality—so they rework it into a consumable package. Ironically in this encounter between tour guide and tourist, the identity of the former becomes more and more entangled with that of the latter and less and less like that of their forefathers. Londoners then, can be said to have self-fulfilling expectations. I was shocked to discover that, for the average Londoner, the "darker picture" that Joti Giri spoke in an earlier London Eye column, has not penetrated this dream of Nepal as somewhere "out of this world" (quote from a Londoner). The royal massacre is generally a hazy recollection, but it too does not impinge on enduring imaginings. News of the Maoist insurgency comes as a harsh jolt to Londoners, a conflict so incomprehensible in Shangri-la Nepal. Maybe this is the reason that apart from a documentary almost a year ago and a couple of isolated articles in broadsheets, our media have not mentioned the diseased politics that is ransacking Nepali lives.

The Shangri-la may be dead in reality, but it lives on in Londoners' imaginations, still unearthly, still enticing and still beckoning. The haven of peace of the hippies and backpackers of bygone era no longer lies nestled in a celestial skyscape of snowcaps. Are we being beckoned by a mythical hand of our own creation to the land of a lost time that no longer exists...if it ever did? If so then what *is* this place that us Londoners so crave, to the point that we project our need of it onto Nepal? By retracing the footsteps of people's imaginations we can find out what it is that has made this illusory Nepal look the way it does. The source of such imaginings is not only internal. Each picture we create is a ragged collection of images gathered from the media, from books, geography lessons, conversations and postcards, mixed together with our own tint added. Vincanne Adams, an anthropologist, suggests that often Nepal's visitors are "in pursuit of themselves through the Other". She means that they are looking for something so nameless, so ethereal, so alien to the consumer-orientated

materialism of home, that difference and distance seem to pave the way for them. Nepal is not the only place that fits this bill, but it is certainly one of the most suitable. Moreover this strong ache for something 'Other' in the hearts of Londoners is countered by the longing for all things Western, found in the *man* (heart-mind) of Nepali youth. Little surprise then that the two parties have entered into a seductive relationship where the closer one gets to the other the more it can only see the reflection of each other's desires. I have talked with friends in Nepal about my student debts and London's homeless, but my descriptions of such things as the Underground and double-decker buses meet with a much better reception. Just as selective, Londoners have safely bottled their picture of Nepal within their imaginations and what may break in is dictated by what is deemed desirable. It will take more than intermittent arrows from our media to bring it down. ●

Fay Adams is a Community Researcher in London.



Dove
does not dry your skin like soap
because it is 1/4 moisturiser
Rs. 35/-

STOP YOUR HAIR LOSS MINOXIDIL !

K33 did a fantastic job and I am sure they can do the same for you. Just give them a call

RAJESH HAMAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION: FILL / SEND COUPON

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Tel: _____

Send/fax to: K33 Hairhotel, Koteshwor, GPO Box: 14248, Kathmandu
Call 4499003, Keshav 981023932, E-mail: kathmandu@k33.com

Mandala House
APARTMENT HOTEL

visit us at
www.emandala.com

Baluwatar, Kathmandu
Tel: 4412412 (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)
98412-24635 (after 5:00 pm & Saturdays)
E-mail: mandala@wflink.com.np

Shared Learning
Free training resources for
development professional

www.sharedlearning.org.uk

an ELD initiative
www.eld.org.uk

Awarded

Branching out

To extend its services to a wider customer base, Nepal Investment Bank opened its 12th branch at Putalisadak, Kathmandu. The bank has doubled its branches under the new all-Nepali management and has recorded a phenomenal growth since 2002, even winning London-based *The Banker's* Bank of the Year Award 2003.

DIGIT-ALL: Video conferencing for the technologically challenged just got very easy with the launch of D-Link's the DVC-1000 i2eye™ VideoPhone, available from Mercantile Office System in Kathmandu. The stand-alone device simplifies the previously complicated process of conducting a videoconference and eliminates the need for a computer all together. Connect a standard telephone and a television to the DVC-1000, plug in a standard Ethernet network cable connected to your Internet connection and you are ready to meet and greet. By using advanced video compression technology, it maximises image and audio quality—ideal for businesses big and small, as well as far-flung family members. The built in caller ID ensures privacy.

If you're serious about photo printing, your printer should be a serious piece of equipment too. Keeping this in mind Mercantile Office System introduces Epson Stylus Photo 935 Professional Photos at your fingertips. EPSON Stylus Photo 935 delivers inkjet prints of a quality to satisfy even professionals. You can print directly from your digital camera or from your computer. Printing digital photos at home has never been easier or more fun. The optimised dpi ensures detailed and brilliant print everytime.

CEMENTING BONDS: Cosmos Cement Industries in Dhanusha recently launched Tej 53 grade OPC cement. The manufacturers guarantee that their product made in Nepal's first close-circuit mill meets international standards of quality.

GETZ BETTER: Rated to be among the best budget cars of 2003, Hyundai Getz makes its entry into the Nepali market through AVCO International in Kathmandu. The super mini is smart, stylish, safe and spacious. The SOHC Alpha-series 1.3 liter four-cylinder engine delivers performance and is easy on the fuel. The Getz has power steering, power window, electric power mirror, rear spoiler, defroster and central door locking. With a ground clearance of 165mm and 1341cc the Getz is available in nine attractive shades.



Newspaper price wars

There's more to the story than just a revision in prices.



“The recent selling of two daily newspapers—*The Himalayan Times* (*THT*) and *Annapurna Post*—in a lower price than any other daily newspapers...in the country is probably with predatory intent.” So went a line from an op-ed in *The Kathmandu Post* (*TKP*) on 21 December. Three weeks later, *TKP* slashed its newsstand price by 62 percent down to only Rs1.50 per copy (and 42 *paisa* per copy for subscribers of its sister publication *Kantipur* national daily). Overnight, *TKP* made itself the lowest-priced English daily broadsheet in Nepal, with contents that have long been available for free on the Internet.

Though Kantipur Publications, publishers of the *The Kathmandu Post*, loftily explained that change in terms of how a lower priced newspaper could benefit students learning English, talk has it that the gains made by the rival THT (at Rs 2 per copy) in the last two years was too disturbing for TKP to tolerate. And so, it had no choice but to engage in some kind of a price war.

But is that all there is to this story? Wouldn't it be incomplete to view this price war only through a "TKP versus THT" lens, especially given that Nepali media houses' orbits are bigger in that they publish both English and Nepali newspapers? Instead, could it be that TKP publishers are trying to position their paper as a lower-level niche player that could be used further as a marketing tool to shore up their flagship product *Kantipur's* lead?

A daily newspaper is driven by sales—of printed copies and print space. Regular buyers tend to be

loyal to the papers they read habitually and are reluctant to switch to another newspaper. But advertisers tend to be fickle. The marketing department has to continuously court them by waving large circulation numbers. In theory, by slashing its subscription charge, a newspaper can increase both newsstand sales and the number of subscribers,

Kantipur. Even its rivals agree that *Kantipur* has a sizeable base of subscribers whose demonstrated presence encourages advertisers to place their messages—even if it means that at times the newspaper looks like a catalogue!

Needless to say, most advertisers are based in Kathmandu and other urban towns. Given such a scenario, it makes no sense for TKP



and then use that information to attract big-paying advertisers. But, as similar examples from around the world show, engaging in a price war just for the sake of making your rival blink may give you an ego boost in the short run, but will not necessarily increase your net profits. That's because any additional revenue will have to be plowed back into publicity, personnel, rent and news-gathering resources.

In Nepal, despite facing an increasing competition for advertisement rupees in all forms of media in recent years, Kantipur Publications' biggest money-spinner remains the decade-old

alone to go head-to-head with THT and drain resources. But it makes sense for Kantipur Publications as a whole to have TKP piggy-back on *Kantipur's* existing strengths to: a) steal some of THT's market share, b) reposition TKP as a jazzier lower-level English-language product with a city focus and c) then use the combined increased circulation numbers to make new deals with advertisers to rope in money.

If you look at it this way, this is more like a weaker brother and a stronger brother hanging tight against a common rival as opposed to only the weaker brother fighting the fight. ●

PILGRIM'S BOOKS FESTIVAL
Get Discount upto 90%
Don't miss this Opportunity.

BOOKS FOR ALL

PILGRIMS BOOK HOUSE

Date : February 2nd to 14th, 2004
Place : Pilgrims Book House, Garden
Next to Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel
Tel : 4700942, 4700919

**Door-to-door express delivery to over
210 countries worldwide**

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

5543333

Let there be light

The people are willing to pay for electricity, but can the government deliver on its promise?



SLREC

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

Despite 50 years of planning and with one of the world's highest per capita hydropower generation capacity, only 15 percent of Nepalis have access to electricity.

The government has finally realised there is no way it can get the grid to everyone in the short-term, so it has encouraged local communities to generate their own electricity and connect it to the national grid. Last year, the government announced another ambitious plan to get villages to raise 20 percent of the capital required to construct a distribution network that they can run to get power from the national grid.

That proposal for a community electricity distribution program got such overwhelming response from all over the country that the government is having problem finding the money

it promised to pick up 80 percent of the cost.

When it announced the proposal last August, officials say they had expected, at the most 25, applications a year. In the last five months alone, there have been 160 applicants.

The Community Rural Electrification Department (CRED) has already approved more than two dozen applications and has even signed agreements with seven for building the distribution network. The department already has deposits of around Rs 10 million from 39 communities, leaving the government to match the fund with nearly Rs 70 million. It doesn't seem to have the cash.

Has the community power program become too successful? "That is a huge challenge the government has to overcome," says department director Ram Chandra Pandey. "Going by the increase in demand, it will not be easy to accomplish." Communities

which have paid their share are keeping fingers crossed. Even the South Lalitpur Rural Electricity Cooperatives, which has been enthusiastically building infrastructure for the past six years, doubts the government is in a position to realise such a vast amount.

The cooperative has already collected Rs 4.2 million to prepare the distribution network in 19 VDCs in south Lalitpur. It is anticipating nearly Rs 17 million from the government. "We have been waiting for the money for the last six months," says the Cooperative Chairman Dilli Prasad Ghimire. "We doubt if we will receive it." If that is the case with a recognised community program so close to the capital, what is the fate of the new entrants in remote areas?

Finance Minister Prakash Chandra Lohani is upbeat. He has been trumpeting the popularity of the scheme, and told us: "At a time when certain elements have been destroying electricity infrastructure, people are building them. We will back them in full. There will be no shortage of funds for this work." Finance Ministry officials told us that the government will earmark Rs 350 million for the rural electrification scheme this year.

But, NEA officials say that the money is actually meant for the government's regular and on-going rural electrification project, not for the new program. Lohani admitted that there will be a new allocation for the community electrification part. But even that may not be enough to meet the demand for matching funds as the 20 percent deposits of local communities add up.

For instance, the Annapurna Conservation

Area Project is negotiating with CRED for a bulk distribution network to electrify villages. The locals will come up with nearly Rs 500 million which may not be that difficult for these communities since they have income from tourism. But can a cash-strapped Kathmandu come up with its share?

NEA officials are at a loss about how to deal with it. They have six applications from Gulmi district, among 18 with which it has already signed agreements to build distribution networks. "The question is if one area takes the major chunk of the budget allotment, is there going to be money left for the others?" says Pandey.

The government has also committed to fund Rs 75,000 for locally-built hydropower plants upto 500KW. So far, the NEA has received only three applicants but if the number goes up, the fund crunch will be hardest on the government. Guided by the idea of unbundling its generation, transmission and distribution components, the NEA came up with the idea of involving communities into getting power from the national grid and taking care of the system by themselves.

That way, they reasoned, distribution would expand rapidly and once villagers took over management, overhead expenses and a whopping 23 percent leakage rate would decrease. Also, with the bulk distribution price fixed at a minimum of Rs 3.60 per unit, NEA could make money off the rural networks.

But for that to happen, we come back to the same issue: the government first has to keep its promise of paying out the 80 percent matching fund. ●

Excellence is our name



Godavari
Village Resort



Back to Nature

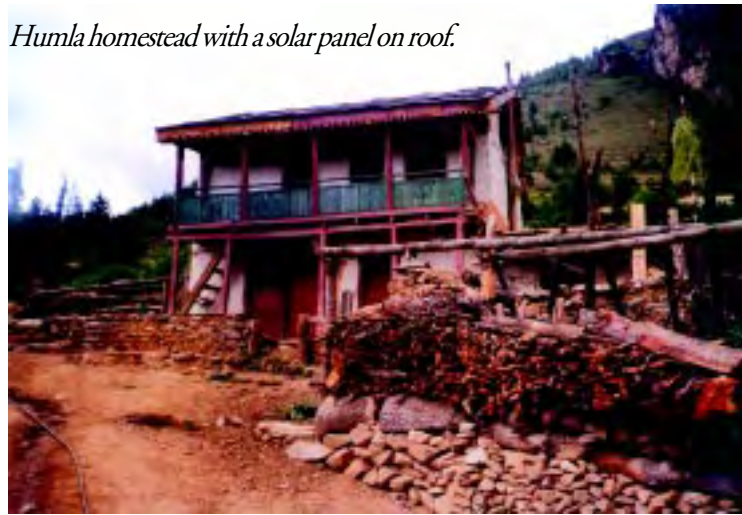
Overnite Package
\$30,BB + tax for Single,
\$50,BB + tax for Double.
Additional night at 50%
discount. Discounts
on other facilities
extended. Offer valid
until 30th August, 2004.

Resident expatriates in Nepal searching for a tranquil natural getaway.

Tel: 977-1-5560675, 5560775-E-mail: gvrsales@mail.com.np

Electrifying Humla

Humla homestead with a solar panel on roof.



If there is one district in Nepal that can be said to be literally and figuratively in the dark, then it is Humla. Neglected for decades, this northwestern-most district has always been a backwater.

Most Humlis use pine leaves for lighting, since even kerosene is too rare and precious. The child mortality rate in Humla is up to three times the national average and this is because of respiratory ailments in infants caused by indoor firewood smoke.

Now, the Humlis are getting together to start a unique program to bring the light of development to their homes through a project for solar-powered electricity kit for mountain homes.

"If we can at least get lights into the home, the children can study, and don't have to destroy their eyes or get sick, and their mothers can do household chores more comfortably," says Jiwan Shahi, the DDC chairman of Humla who is trying to get the solar electricity project started. An elected official, Shahi was recently reappointed to the district council and has bigger projects like linking Simikot to the Tibetan border and a scheme to improve irrigation and agriculture in his district.

Each home will have a lighting kit with an 18-watt solar panel on the roof that will charge a 12-volt battery to light homes at night. The manufacturer, Laser Sun, has subsidised the Rs 10,000 cost of the equipment to Rs 4,000. However, even that is beyond the reach of Humlis.

"It costs only \$58 to electrify each home, this is why we are appealing to individual and institutional donors to set aside some money to bring a ray of hope to our people," says Shahi, who says each recipient family has pledged to do Rs 1,000 worth of community service in the district for getting the light system.

Laser Sun's offer is timebound and expires in two months.

For further information: jiwanshahi@yahoo.com

This is IT

There are potholes on Nepal's information highway.

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA



At a time when only one percent of Nepal's total population has access to telecommunications, maximising the general mass' access to the Internet seems a Herculean task. More so when 90 percent of around 25,000 Internet account holders use the dial-up system that needs a telephone connection. This is perhaps one of the foremost reasons why only 0.1 percent of Nepal has access to what information technology (IT) is available in the country.

On average, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) charge a little above 20 paisa per minute for access to the net but Nepal Telecommunication Corporation's (NTC) normal charges are Rs 3 per call. This adds up to consumers shelling out more money to cruise the information highway. So, even among those who have dial-up connections, most keep their time on the net to a minimum because of expensive phone bills.

Despite the costs, there would be more users if the services were problem-free but more and more users are having difficulties while logged on. ISPs say the backbone of the problem lies in telephone networks and availability and complain that NTC has not given them additional phone lines to cope

with the increasing demand of Internet users. "Getting new telephone lines is the real hassle," says Worldlink's Dileep Aggrawal. "We run the business and they (NTC) determine how many telephone lines we need, which is impractical."

A representative of an established Kathamndu-based ISP told us that NTC views them as rivals since the corporation also offers internet services, which unfortunately has been unsuccessful. "It couldn't run its business and it doesn't allow other ISPs to grow," he said. "That is why it does not let us have even the adequate number of phone lines."

Plagued ISPs have begun to resort to means to bypass NTC's telephone service. The new hi-tech option is wireless access. It's catching on slowly but comes with its own problem—the possibility of snags between operators and the government. Wireless ISPs need to get radio frequencies from the Ministry of Information and Communication. They say that their greatest hurdle is importing required equipment because three different ministries must approve it: the Nepal Telecommunication Authority, the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Information and Communication. Additionally, the law requires wireless providers to get an annual license that costs around Rs 10,000. Some ISPs have skipped that step and jumped straight to delivering wireless service—to those that can afford it.

While ISPs have managed to ease their way out of NTC's grasp, they run the risk of the

government clamping down and declaring wireless service illegal in Nepal. "We are left in confusion," says Binay Bohara of Vianet Communications. "Given the circumstances, we need to have the wireless system, but if we start using it the government may confiscate our equipment because the laws are still unclear."

The answer could lie in fibre optic connections—a promising medium that could maximise the reach of IT. Several companies are eager to begin, waiting only for the government to formally give permission. The task of installation will take ISPs back to where they began—with the government owned NTC that will have the monopoly in distribution and tariffs, just as it does with coaxial cable telephone lines.

NTC officials admit their policy has created an adverse atmosphere to certain degree, but accuse the private sector of being lax with delivering quality service to consumers, stating the narrow bandwidths require Internet users to stay logged on for longer. "If they are there to give better service, they should increase their bandwidth by linking with the satellites they use," an NTC official told us.

IT experts underline the dearth of local content in Nepali on the Internet is a deterrent. ISPs spend around \$2,500 for the international circuit where as the price could be much cheaper if the content was local and distributed by a server in Nepal (see 'For the people'). They believe the Internet would then truly be accessible—even grocers would surf the net for information and price comparisons. The prolific cybercafes around Nepal would see a diverse and increased number of users, apart from the current breed of young urban youth.

For the digital divide to narrow, policies and cyberlaws—for example on the issue of copyright—must be examined and implemented. "We are making the review and trying to make the IT policy timely," says Sharad Chandra Shah, Vice Chairman at the newly formed High Level IT Commission. "If necessary, we will even bypass bureaucratic red tape." ●

For the people

If the people do not come to technology, then technology must be taken to them.

AMAR GURUNG

The biggest problem with Nepal benefiting from information technology is affordability and accessibility. Computers, internet fees, or telephone fees are too expensive and convergence applications need the English language. No one has done an accurate study, but it is estimated about one million Nepalis read or speak English. That is roughly five percent of the population. This keeps 95 percent of Nepal's 24 million people away from computers, solely because they don't know its primary language of use.

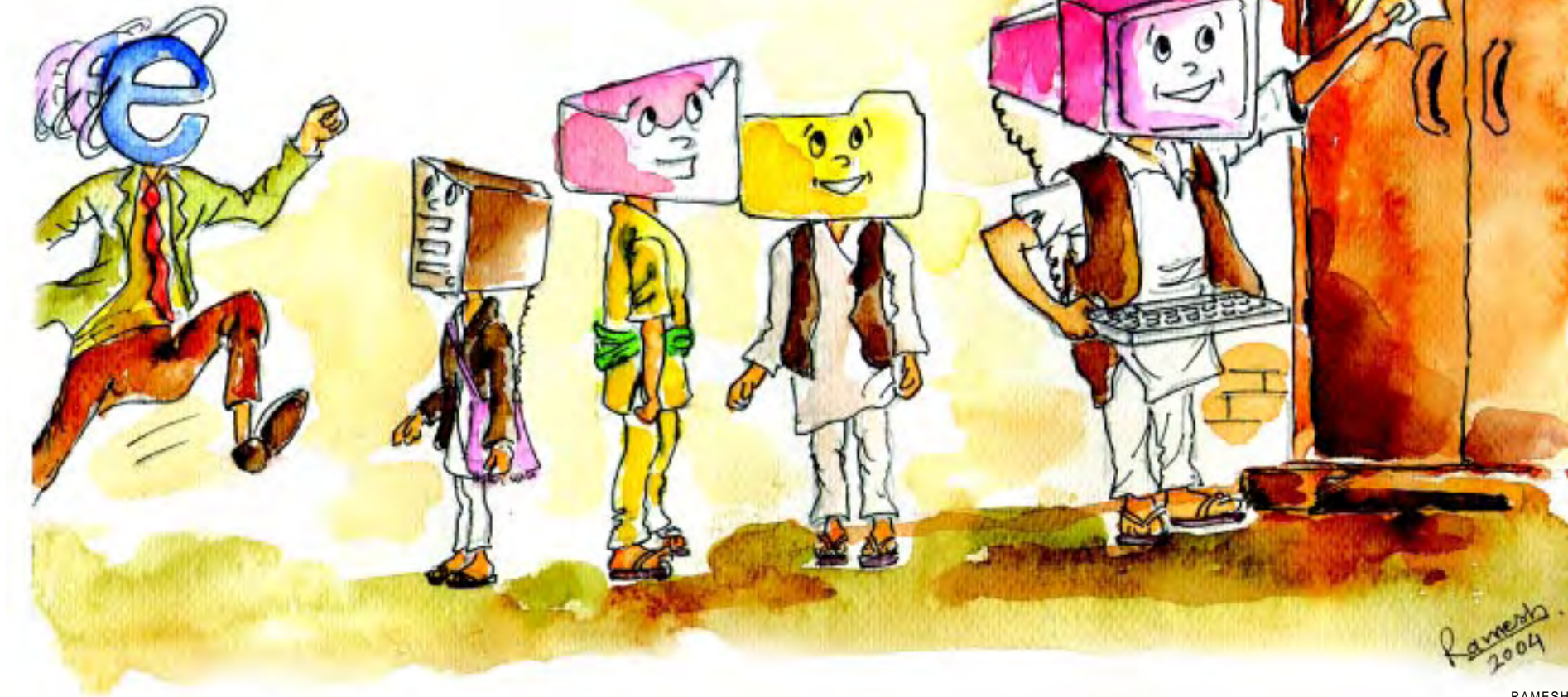
There's more: Nepal's literacy rate is estimated at 42 percent. This means that even if the computer with all its applications was available in Nepali, more than half would not be able to use it. This is where those involved in computer literacy and applications in Nepal must get out of their *ke garne* attitude and make computers at least accessible to literate Nepalis to start with. There is no point saying, oh well, Nepalis will never be able to afford computers and it is only for the rich countries. With that kind of fatalistic attitude we will just be left further and further behind. If only we broaden our horizon and see the real possibilities with information and communications technologies, computers will not only be relevant but may even allow us to leapfrog in education, governance and commerce.

So far, we in Nepal have defined literacy along very narrow terms: reading and writing. Leaving aside the fact that what we read may not be relevant to our daily needs, and there may be no reason to write, it leaves half the population out of the loop. Can technology address the needs of that segment of the population? Reading is only a medium through which one learns new things. If the text books are old-fashioned, and carry wrong or inappropriate values, then literacy (as is conceived in Nepal) can actually be a liability to the nation. Can we still learn without having to learn reading or writing? What are the possibilities?

Contrary to popular views, it is not the 'technical expertise' that's stopping people from learning and using computers. Learning how to drive requires a lot of coordination between hand, eyes and feet. Yet, thousands of Nepalis have mastered driving. Not all of them drive responsibly, it must be said, but that technology did not faze them. Then why should computer technology? People learn best when they find a technology and find out about its real usage. Maybe more Nepalis aren't into computers because they can not think of enough good reasons to use them. So how about letting people know the benefits of computers first in the way they understand it: by showing practical benefits of using the computers for various purposes in their lives.

As often is the case, we (the technocrats) tend to decide how the people will benefit from ICT without even considering—or asking—what their real needs are. Rather than emotionalising the issues, we have to be clear that not everybody would benefit from ICT. The option would be to provide accessibility to those who can benefit from it. Accessibility here means a lot of things. It means providing the content and interface of the technology in the local language for those who are literate in the local language. It also means providing multi-modal approaches to those who are illiterate. Speech recognition in the local language would surely make ICT accessible to those illiterate. Similarly visual interface with touch-screen facility would go beyond the language barrier.

Professor Kenneth Keniston said at a recent meeting in Kathmandu: "The role of language and localization vis-à-vis the digital divide, while not denying the technological component, is primarily a matter of cultural and ultimately political significance." It is the desire and commitment to providing accessibility of ICT to the people that is important. People are not stupid. Once they have the access, they will decide for themselves the ways of using ICT and harnessing benefits from it. So let's seriously start about taking technology to the people rather than the other way round. ●



RAMESH

Star tech

The brightest gadgets in the market

SAURAV BHATTARAI and MILAN WAGLE

Keeping up with the latest gadgets in Nepal is a bit of a joke for dedicated techies—by the time new models arrive in Kathmandu, they are usually on the edge of being old hat everywhere else. Still, technological innovations are always capable of making us go slightly wide-eyed with wonder. *Nepali Times* presents the new pick of the technology pack currently available in the market. Prices are almost always negotiable, so shop around.

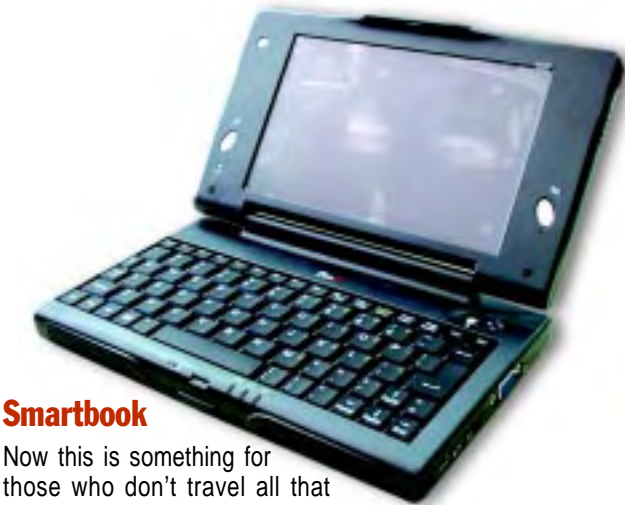
Compaq Tablet Pro

Move over laptops, Tablet PCs are the future: the powers of pen and paper combined with those of a laptop. The Compaq Tablet PC TC1000 has so many features that it is hard to believe that this is a first generation device. From a wireless LAN card to voice recognition, this slick machine has it all. It runs on Microsoft Windows XP Tablet PC Edition and is 100 percent compatible with the Windows operating systems. Weighing in at 1.36kg, the Compaq Tablet PC TC1000 is ideal for those on the move.

The thing that sets tablets apart is handwriting recognition. Scribble on the monitor with the PC Pen (included) and the Compaq Tablet will decipher your scrawls. It's a great way of quickly adding notes, corrections and highlights to your documents and spreadsheets. As this is a fairly new technology there are still some bugs and so if you have an awful writing—say, a doctor's scrawl—than the tablet may have trouble separating words. On the other hand, it could force you to improve your handwriting.

The screen can be rotated around from portrait to landscape, removing the need to turn one's head to look at a huge picture or fumble with buttons. The keyboard can be detached, and the screen *becomes* the entire computer, which is very impressive for business presentations or, alternatively, to show off to other gadget freaks.

Price: Rs 1,75,000.



Smartbook

Now this is something for those who don't travel all that often and whose requirements don't extend further than cleaning out the email inbox while on the road. The Smartbook is a perfect blend between price and technology. This 785g machine comes with an inbuilt network adapter, runs on Microsoft Windows CE.NET operating system and offers basic internet services like browsing and sending emails to instant messaging and even SMS. You can also work with Microsoft Office, and with a USB interface you can connect your printer, external CD drive or your digital camera. The monitor is a 7-inch touch panel so if you're tired of typing, you can just scribble on the monitor. But with only an 800 x 480 resolution, and a max of 16-bit colour, you'd be better off not watching Star Wars on Smartbook.

Our two main problems with the Smartbook were that connecting to the Internet requires a GPRS enabled SIM card (you'll need to fill in an application and pay a little extra every month to Nepal Telecommunication to enable GPRS on your SIM card) and the mouse. This is a miniature joystick on the keyboard with two buttons on the monitor's side. Not only is the joystick difficult to use but the placement of the buttons needs hands to be constantly taken off the keyboard.

With no huge brand backing it up, pass this one up if you regularly rely on support. But if price is the main consideration, then this hybrid between a PDA and a notebook might be just the thing.

Price: Rs. 65,000

Philips 200P

Bigger is better when it comes to this liquid crystal display (LCD) monitor—it's huge. Think of the Philips 200P as your TV on the desktop. This 20-inch monster of a monitor is ideal for playing games or for those working on 3D designing programs such as AutoCAD or 3D Studio Max. It is also perfect for presentations because it can be swivelled. This stylish monitor also hangs up pretty as a picture on the wall, making it the practical option for those whose desks barely have enough room for an extra pencil. For the indecisive, the Philips 200P has is Picture in Picture (PIP) technology—you can now watch a movie from a DVD or directly from a TV channel while working on a Word document. While this sounds similar to multitasking—having two programs open, sharing system resources between them—in PIP the monitor provides the resources to watch two different windows, leaving the computer's RAM free.



SJ22 CLIE

There are enough Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) in the market to confuse any prospective buyer—which is why we've picked the mid-range Sony SJ22 CLIE as the best value for money. Although considered an "entry-level" PDA because of its features and plastic casing, the SJ22 CLIE has a 320 x 320 resolution pixel screen plus the usual frills. It connects to the Internet via infrared or a mobile phone. The operating system is Palm OS, Microsoft's main competitor in the handheld device segment. Along with the expected bits, the CLIE also offers CLIE Paint, a painting software and PictureGear, software for viewing pictures and a lot of games. Added to the CLIE is the Kinoma Viewer, third party software to view movies directly on the PDA. While this maybe a way of passing time when you are stuck in traffic or whiling away time during a particularly long meeting, this won't replace your home-theatre system any time soon. The main problem with the SJ-22 is that it doesn't offer any way to edit Word documents. While not exactly a requisite, Word support is common enough that its absence on the SJ-22 is worth a mention.

Price: Rs. 20,000



Sony DRU-530A

Serious backup for your mp3 tune collection. That's Sony's new ultra high performance DRU-530A Dual RW DVD burner. This internal burner burns DVD-Rs, DVD-RWs, CD-Rs and CD-RWs and does it fast. It burns DVD-Rs at 8x speed, everything else in the market is comparatively sluggish at a mere 4x. For the brave, Sony provides a step-by-step guide for installation with all hardware included. And thoughtfully,



there's the all-essential jumper—a small plastic box, ten square millimetres in size, which is necessary to make the burner work—often missing from more generic brands. Bundled with the DRU-530A is a collection of different software so you don't need to pay extra to get more: Sonic's software bundle, which includes the easy-to-use MyDVD 5.0 LE movie-authoring program, RecordNow CD/DVD mastering program and DLA (Drive Letter Access) packet-writing software. Also included are CyberLink's PowerDVD 5.0 for DVD-movie playback and MusicMatch for ripping, cataloguing, and burning audio tracks. Once you have the burner installed, you are ready to make gigabytes of backup. Happy burning!

Price: Rs 20,000

Mercury Classic Cam

This digital camera is a wonder. The market price is only Rs 6,000, and it comes with web cam support, a voice recorder and also doubles up as a digital camcorder! If you have been saving for a digital camera then this is the one to get. It definitely is one of the most user-friendly—not only does it redefine point and click, it is also very simple to email photos. In high resolution mode (1600 x 1200), the Mercury Classic Cam can save only 16 images, however on a reasonable resolution of 640 x 480 you will get 79 photos. This may seem too little for



some of you camera freaks out there but then the camera only has 8 MB of RAM. This doesn't mean that those who need more pictures should shop around for something else, an External SD Memory Card of up to 512 MB RAM can be attached, letting you save as many pictures as you could possibly want.

Mercury has made sure that the software is as easy to use as the camera itself. MGI Photosuite, one of the top digital imaging software available is included free.

Price: Rs 6,000

Thuraya Hughes Phone

Out of all the gadgets reviewed here, the Thuraya Hughes Phone is probably the most interesting. It's definitely not your basic mobile set. While NTC boasts connectivity in many Nepali cities, Thuraya Hughes allows you to dial anywhere in Asia, Africa and Europe—unfortunately, not yet the US and Australia. That's right, you can talk to friends in England en route to Namche Bazar and with their GPS tracking, you'll know you're always on the right track. A mobile connects to a receiving station within its cell, and from there the call is forwarded to the proper number. But Thuraya Hughes has a direct satellite connection and your call is relayed through a routing station that forwards it to the number you dialed. The main problem with the Thuraya Hughes is its size because we're all used to small and sleek mobile phones. But we say, so what if this satellite phone looks chunky in comparison? It's a small price to pay for out-of-this-world technology! The Thuraya Hughes phone is available exclusively at Constellation Pvt Ltd, Pulchok.

Price: Rs 81,000



Silicon Valley to Kathmandu Valley



Let us not underestimate Nepal's potential for foreign investments in information technology.

MIN BAJARACHARYA

SURESH OJHA

When I first arrived in Nepal I met an expatriate drifting about Kathmandu. While I was raised in America, he grew up here. I told him of the ambitious cutting-edge wireless engineering program that I was helping develop at the Institute of Engineering at Tribhuvan University, and how I quit my job in the Silicon Valley to begin this program, and that this was the first time I had been in Nepal in 25 years. He greeted me with a strange look. Apart from being skeptical about my chances of promoting wireless here, he seemed to doubt my sanity.

Eight months later, I am still here. It hasn't always been easy, running around frantically through government offices for two-and-a-half months just to get a visa, enduring the periodic bandhs, being stuck in traffic because of protests organised by both politicians and students, and facing the bureaucracy to pass the telecommunication instruments for my laboratory through customs.

But I still feel the same way about Nepal's information communication technology (ICT) future ("cautiously optimistic") as I did eight months ago. ICT in Nepal is a broad area ranging from transfer of knowledge of the latest technologies, rural development, e-governance, development of private industry and much more.

Of all these, the one that shows the greatest promise is the development of private industry. Two of the largest markets in the world, China and India, lie on either side. The cost of labour in Nepal is one of the lowest in the world and it has sufficient numbers of educated English-speaking people who can serve as agents in remote call centres. But this is not new.

What most of my friends in America

want to know is: "Is it realistic, under present circumstances, to expect Nepal's ICT industry to grow?" They ask with an eye towards investing here.

Rediscovering this place after being away for so long, I realise that it's impossible to say any one thing about Nepal without finding something equally true that completely contradicts it. However, it is possible to make substantial and meaningful gains, as well as make a profit, with the right approach. Moreover, the Nepali diaspora can play a vital role.

Nepal has exceptionally bright technical people. What is generally missing is the ability to consistently deliver products and services to meet total quality standards as swiftly as demanded by the global economy. This is not so much due to a lack of technical capability, but a lack of management vision and commitment.

Though the ICT industry here is small and inexperienced compared to more developed countries, there are clusters of bright spots in the Valley. There are ICT companies managed by visionary leaders who are successfully providing products and services consistent with international norms. I was stunned one day to find an electronics manufacturing plant in Nepal producing products used in wireless applications.

As a designer of wireless electronics I have routinely visited plants all over the world on behalf of Silicon Valley-based manufacturers. But walking through the assembly line of Nepal Bayren Electric in Patan, I felt a sense of pride. This plant uses quality control processes identical to and superior to plants even in Silicon Valley.

Thamel dot com is a web portal that provides numerous services both to NRN's and Nepalis. It is headed by visionary CEO Bal Krishna Joshi who was recently awarded the prestigious Tony Zeiton ("The Cyber Oscars")

award for its innovative and successful business model as well as its commitment to socially conscious business development.

There are other young Nepali ICT experts, especially in software, that have the same commitment to quality and timely service. Many of these are young people who have been educated abroad and have for various reasons decided to return to Nepal. In addition, there are many ICT schools in Kathmandu that graduate a large number of skilled software engineers.

However, the components missing presently are skilled program management and quality control processes. But both can be done from remote locations anywhere in the world. This vast talent pool presents a money-making opportunity for enterprising people who can connect Nepal's relatively large software manpower with outsourcing opportunities. The East-West optical highway scheduled to be complete in July 2004 should greatly enhance accessing these resources.

There is a small but growing ICT industry with the "Made in Nepal" brand name. But the CEOs of many of these emerging companies say they need to spend a lot of time convincing their international clients to take Nepal seriously as an outsourcing destination. This is where non-resident Nepalis can help the ICT industry here and make a profit at the same time.

Non-resident Indians helped ICT development in India not so much through personal financing, but by providing visibility in international companies of the emerging capabilities in India as an outsourcing destination. This cheerleading was critical in the growth of ICT in India. Nepalis are not yet present in the middle-rungs of large companies, which means we have to network much more effectively to replicate India's success.

and information about the ICT industry here. The Everest Information and Communication Technology Journal (www.eictj.org) can serve as that forum. This web-based technical journal published by the Kathmandu School of Management is free of politics and provides a focused forum where ICT professionals can exchange ideas.

Obviously, Nepal is in turmoil. Soldiers with guns are always eyeing my laptop bag. While student protestors burn tyres outside the university, undergraduates inside organised the Locus 2003 international technical conference with papers on robotics and distributed computing. To see Nepalis routinely performing professionally at the highest levels under such difficult circumstances is a humbling experience for pampered engineers with the resources and back-up in Silicon Valley.

We have reason for hope, for pride, and for cautious optimism. We are the only ones who can help ourselves, and we can only do it together. ●

Suresh Ojha is working at the Institute of Engineering in Pulchowk to develop a wireless program.
spojha2000@yahoo.com

DIAL-UP INTERNET UPTO 5 TIMES FASTER! *Launching Today*

Now get in high gear!

A new internet service which is upto 5 times faster than normal dial-up connection. It's easy to install and so cost effective.

ZOOM
BREAK THE SPEED LIMIT!

Brought to you for the first time in Nepal by:

WORLDLINK
Jawalakhe, Lalitpur
Phone: 5523050
Email: zoom@wlink.com.np
Website: www.wlink.com.np/zoom

Visit our stall at CAN INFOTECH 2004, KOSHI HALL, BICC

Scholarship Guaranteed for Computer Education In USA

Minimum 50%

www.orbitedu.com

Programs:

- Computer Information Science
- Computer Information Systems
- Computer Science
- Computer Engineering
- Information Technology

Scholarship also available for Credit Transfer student.

U.S. News Best Colleges 2004

Orbit INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Pulali Sadaik (Way to Dillibazar), Kathmandu
Tel: 4430677, 4430742, E-mail: orbit@info.com.np

Visit CAN

FREE CAMERA*

FREE DOMAIN REGISTRATION & HOSTING*

FREE HIMALAYAN TIMES+ANNA POST FOR ONE YEAR*

vianet communications

Stall No: F38 and F39
Tel: 5522532/5530017

*Conditions apply

MERCANTILE group of companies

Mercantile Building, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu
Tel: 4220773, 4243566 Fax: 977-1-4225407

**2 Years
Warranty**

**FREE
EPSON**
STYLUS COLOR
C43 UX PRINTER



NEPAL'S ONLY BRANDED PC



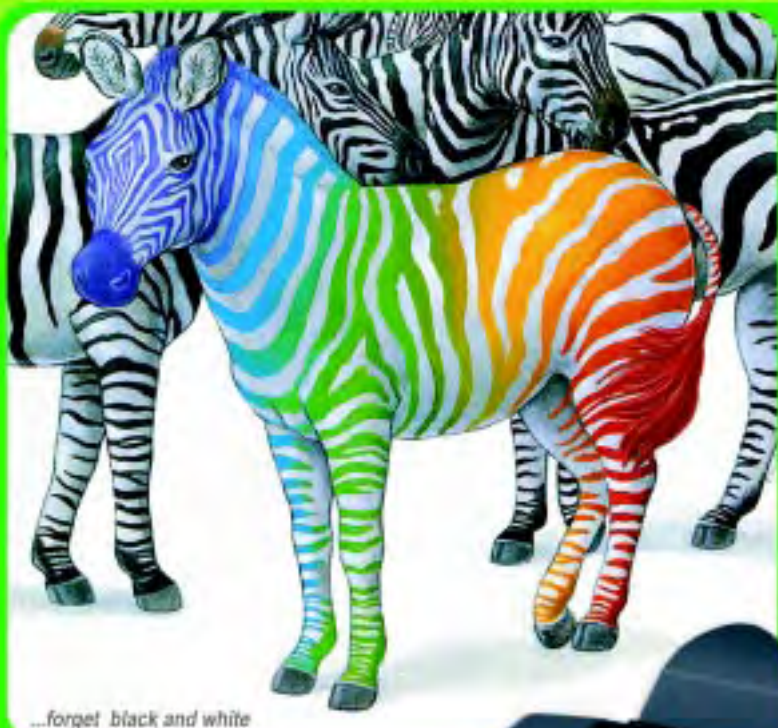
ISO 9001



ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFIED FOR ASSEMBLY,
SALES AND SUPPORT OF MERCANTILE PC

*'25 hrs Internet FREE for all our valued customers
who brings the warranty card and register in our stall'*

**NOW AT
DREAM PRICE**



...forget black and white

EPSON
THE POWER TO CREATE

PHOTO PRINTER
EPSON STYLUS PHOTO



**HOW HEALTHY
IS YOUR PRINTER?**

**WIN
DAILY LUCKY DRAW
BUMPER PRIZES !!**



**BRING ANY EPSON PRINTER TO OUR
FREE EPSON PRINTER SERVICE CLINIC**

Mercantile Communications

LAUNCHES...

“CONSUMER BROADBAND SERVICE”



**FREEDOM TO BROWSE
AT UNBELIEVABLE PRICE AND SPEED**



NRS. 3000*
PER MONTH

- Available in 3 plans
 - Consumer Broadband Volume
 - Consumer Broadband Infinity
 - Consumer Broadband Cybertrail
- Best for Individuals, Home Users and Small Offices
- No telephone cost involved.
- High Speed and Stable link 64/ 128/ 256 kbps
- 24 x 7 Internet Connection
- 24 hrs customer support service through
“CALL CENTER”
- The best internet service available

* 64kbps bandwidth with 500MB free traffic. For extra traffic, additional charge will be applicable

- The rate is exclusive of VAT
- Applied in Kathmandu only
- Not applicable to the internet service resellers
- The scheme is Valid till 31st march, 2004

A
COLOURFUL
moment
you
can
share
with...

**FREE EXTRA
BLACK INK
CARTRIDGE**

worth Rs. 770/-
Offer valid till CAN InfoTech

EPSON STYLUS..
C43UX



For further information
Visit our stall at CAN InfoTech, BICC Hall, New Baneshwor



Since the mid-1990s, China's government has promoted the rapid growth of the Internet for its economic benefits. But it has also been developing a sophisticated political and technological system to control online information. It employs a host of new legal regulations, a shadowy Internet police force and a powerful hardware-based national information filtering system. Control also relies

After two-and-a-half decades of market-oriented economic reform, Chinese citizens are increasingly aware of how to protect their economic and social interests by using the language of rights. When confronting abuses of power, people are increasingly using a new term, “*weiquan*” (defending rights), to challenge the system. Another new term, “*zhiqing quan*” (right to

Ordinary internet users can also write about events they witness and broadcast their reports online, making the suppression of important breaking news almost impossible. Moreover, the authorities have a difficult time tracking down and punishing people who spread this kind of “subversive” information—a term frequently used by the government to suppress political dissent—online. China’s conventional media now feel pressure from the public to cover events that they might

When college student Sun Zhiqiang was beaten to death by the police in the southern city of Guangzhou this spring, for example, it inspired a storm of online calls for “*weiquan*”, and provoked debates over the

(© Project Syndicate)

Xiao Qiang is the Director of Human Rights Watch China.

DANIEL B HABER in DARJEELING

the 1950s and 60s the Indian planters took over but India's tea boom eventually turned to bust. After a glut in the world tea market and six months of bad business during which

Sandeep Gaushal, assistant manager of the estate's ethnically diverse workforce, says the plan includes turning Happy Valley into an organic tea plantation and raising money for the estate by making it a tourist resort. "We want visitors to experience the friendly atmosphere here," Gaushal says. The average salary for a tea plucker is only about \$1 a day for collecting six to eight kilograms of leaf—less than the price of a pot of tea at Darjeeling's posh Windamere resort. If the estate cannot feed its workers simply by producing tea, the game plan is to turn the bungalow into a guesthouse and to build some additional rustic cottages for paying tourists. With the unstable political situation in neighbouring Nepal, many backpackers are turning to the Darjeeling hills instead. ● (IPS)

Democracy without democrats



About 100,000 protesters marched through Baghdad shouting “Yes to elections” and “No to occupation”.

The philosopher Karl Popper had ample reason to propose a precise definition of democracy. Democracy, he said, is a means to remove those in power without bloodshed. Popper’s preferred method, of course, was the ballot box.

Popper’s definition avoids theological disputes about the “rule of the people,” and

COMMENT
Ralf Dahrendorf



whether such a thing can actually exist. It also spares us the attempt to stick all kinds of possibly desirable objectives into the definition, like equality in social as well as technical terms, a general theory of the actual process of “democratisation,” or even a set of civic virtues of participation.

But Popper’s definition of democracy does not help when it comes to a question that has become topical in many parts of the world: what if those removed from power believe in democracy, whereas those who replace them do not? What in other words, if the “wrong”

people are elected? There is no shortage of examples. In Europe, parties of dubious democratic pedigree have done well in recent years: Jörg Haider in Austria, Christoph Blocher in Switzerland, Umberto Bossi in Italy, Jean-Marie LePen in France—the list is long. At best, the electoral victories of such groups make the formation of responsible governments difficult. At worst, they foreshadow actively antidemocratic movements capable of getting a majority by election.

This is what has happened or is happening in many parts of the world. Two recent examples stand out. One is found in the postcommunist countries of East and Southeast Europe, a surprising number of which have elected members of the old nomenklatura under a new guise. The most extreme current case is Serbia, where a big part of the electorate gave their votes to men standing trial for war crimes in The Hague. The other example is Iraq. What if the American dream of bringing democracy to that

troubled country ends in its citizens electing a fundamentalist movement to power?

The mere thought of such examples leads to the clear conclusion that democracy is not just about elections. In fact, of course, the early advocates of democracy had all kinds of things in mind. John Stuart Mill, for example, regarded “nationality,” a cohesive society within national boundaries, as a precondition for democracy.

Another precondition for Mill was the ability and desire of citizens to make considered choices. Today we no longer take such virtues as given. They were probably exercised by only a minority of people even at the time when Mill wrote on representative government. Today democracy has to mean “elections plus”—but plus what? There may be some technical measures that can be taken, like banning parties and candidates who campaign against democracy, or whose democratic credentials are weak.

One can easily see the problems: who judges the eligibility of candidates and how are

The rule of law is not the same as democracy, nor does one necessarily guarantee the other.

such judgements enforced? What if the groundswell of support for an antidemocratic movement is so strong that the suppression of its organisation leads to violence? In a sense it might be better to let such movements have a go at government and hope that they will fail—as have most of the current European groups of an antidemocratic ilk. But that too is risky. When Hitler came to power in January 1933, many if not most German democrats thought: “Let him! He will soon be exposed for what he is and above all for what he is not.” But time is relative: “soon” came to mean 12 years that included a savage war and the Holocaust.

Active citizens who defend the liberal order must thus be its safeguard. But there is another, and a more important element to safeguard, which is the rule of law. The rule of law is not the same as democracy, nor does one necessarily guarantee the other. The rule of law is the acceptance that laws given not by some supreme authority, but by the citizenry, govern all—those in power, those in opposition, and those outside the power game. It is something that must be defended: so-called “enabling laws” that suspend the rule of law are the first weapon of dictators. But it is harder to use the rule of law to undermine law than it is to use popular elections against democracy.

“Elections plus” must mean, therefore, democracy plus the rule of law. At the risk of offending many friends of a democratic persuasion, I have now concluded that the rule of law should come first when constitutionalism is brought to an ex-dictatorship and democracy second. Incorrupt independent judges are even more influential than politicians elected with massive majorities. Lucky are those countries that have both, and that nurture and protect them. ●

(© Project Syndicate)

Ralf Dahrendorf is a former Rector of the London School of Economics and an author.

The richest get richer

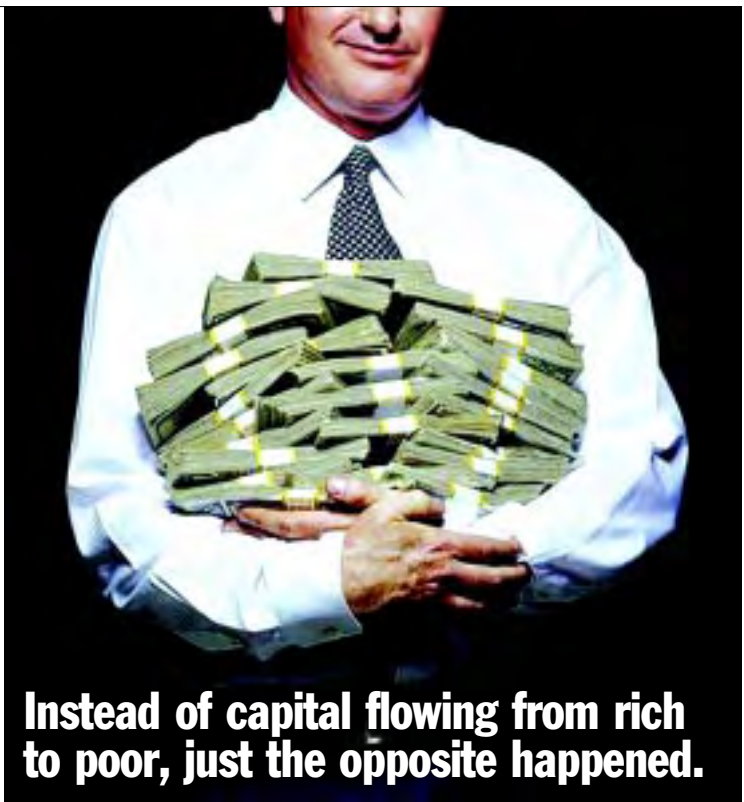
COMMENT
J Bradford DeLong



Card-carrying neo-liberals like me, who pushed for opening capital flows in the early 1990s, had a particular vision in mind. We looked at how extraordinarily strongly the world’s system of relative prices was tilted against the poor: how cheap were the products they exported, and how expensive were the capital goods that they needed to import in order to industrialise and develop. “Why not free up capital flows and so encourage large-scale lending from the rich to the poor?” we asked. Such large-scale lending might cut a generation off the time it would take economies where people were poor to converge with the industrial structures and living standards of rich countries. Certainly such large-scale borrowing and lending had played a key role in the late-19th century. But things didn’t turn out that way this time around. Instead of capital

flowing from rich to poor, just the opposite happened—it flowed from poor to rich, the overwhelmingly largest stream going to the US, whose rate of capital inflow is now the largest of any country, anywhere, anytime. What has fed these inflows? One source is central banks seeking to keep the value of their home currencies down so that their workers can gain valuable experience from exporting to the rich world. Another source is investors who feared losing their money after the various emerging market meltdowns of the 1990s, techno-enthusiasts chasing the pot of gold that the American technology boom seemed to offer, and the third-world rich, who think a Deutsche Bank account is good to have in case they need to flee their countries. All of these sources contributed to the flow of money into the US, which was thus enabled to invest much more than it had managed to save. America’s economy became—and remains—a giant vacuum cleaner, soaking up the world’s spare investment cash. So those of us who

still wish to be flag-waving advocates for international capital mobility are reduced to two arguments. First, and most important, capital controls create ideal conditions for large-scale corruption. An effective market economy needs to minimise the incentives and opportunities for corruption, or it will turn into something worse. Second, perhaps the inflow of capital into America was and remains justified: perhaps there is something uniquely valuable about investments in America today. The years 1960 to 1985 formed the era in which development was to be financed by public institutions like the World Bank, because market failures and distrust of governments made it hard for poor countries to borrow privately. The years 1985 to 2000 were the era in which development was to be financed by private lending to countries that adopted the market-friendly and market-conforming policies that were supposed to lead to high returns and rapid growth. The first era was not an unqualified success. Looking at the



Instead of capital flowing from rich to poor, just the opposite happened.

capital flow reversal into the US, I cannot argue that the second era has been an unqualified success either. It is not possible for a card-carrying neo-liberal like me to wish for anything but the most minor of controls to curb speculative capital flows. Capital markets can get the allocation of investment badly wrong, but governments are likely to get it wrong even worse. But the hope

for a repetition of the late 19th century experience has proved vain. Money from the world’s rich countries simply is not going to give peripheral economies the priceless gift of rapid, successful development. ● (© Project Syndicate)

J Bradford DeLong is Professor of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley.

Scott Wallsten



Scott Wallsten is a fellow at the AEI-Brookings Joint Center and a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.



Republic: “A logical end”

Baburam Bhattarai, CPN (Maoist) standing committee member in *Janadesh*, 13 January



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Divide and rule has been the policy of autocrats since the time of Chanakya. I am not surprised to see the self-declared King Gyanendra offering greener grass to some of the parliamentary parties in a bid to create a rift in their movement, which is moving towards a republic. But his seven-point meadow is so stale that we believe no one will take it. In fact, the tri-polar political tension of yesterday is slowly transforming into a bipolar equation

It looks like the parliamentary parties, including the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) have learnt their bitter lessons after being repeatedly betrayed by the autocratic and tyrannical king. But if these parties get enticed by the king's offers again, it will be a suicidal move for them. The Nepali people can rest assured that even if the parties join hands with the king, nothing will stop such a coalition. Much water and blood has flown down Koshi, Gandaki and Karnali rivers.

In the history of Nepali people's movement, the roles of the youth and the students have always been important. The movements of 1951, 1980 and 1990 proved that. Whatever appears on the outside, the bottom line is that all these movements have been anti-monarchy and pro-republic. The present student movement to permanently get rid of the monarchy, which has always tried to strangle democracy, is praiseworthy. The move is more relevant considering the ugly and duplicate form of monarchy after the royal palace massacre.

It is the students' and young people's duty and rights to reject a criminal as a future king—a man who killed others including Praveen Gurung and raped many Nepali sisters. Just like in the fairytale “The emperor's new clothes”, the parties hesitate to speak up, but the youth have spoken the truth like the child in the story, saying the emperor is not clothed in finery, he is naked.

By amplifying the slogan for a republic, the students have contributed significantly to Nepali history. We hope they will remain in this fort of struggle until the movement reaches the logical end of a republican state. The rural areas that once were the traditional foundation of the autocratic monarchy have now become the epicentre of the revolution. Every house, cowshed and public place in these areas fly republican flags. The other traditional energy source of the monarchy, foreign power is diminishing. There are indications that even those who believed monarchy was the base for stability are compelled to change their views. Under these circumstances, if the political parties do not draw back, chances are high that the present movement will be able to sweep away the autocratic monarchy and usher in a Nepali republic.

Maoist's odd guards

Sanghu, 19 January

सोँघु

KALIKOT – The Maoists have started using young mothers to work as sentry guards. Their job is to maintain strict vigilance for army patrols and immediately inform the rebels if security personnel are seen. A student who just returned from Surkhet spoke to us on condition of anonymity. He spoke of women placed as lookouts with newborn infants in their arms. He also saw the Maoists forcing young girls and boys to patrol villages with guns. A few were lucky to escape forced recruitment but most of the youth and men are forced to carry arms and join the Maoists. The old and these young mothers are trained to take on sentry detail. The student said some of the guards were given guns and grenades. “If we don't follow their orders, they will punish us severely,” said a 60-year-old woman on a break. “The armed militants will have an easy escape. The ones who will die are innocent people like us.” The villages of this district are clearly aware of Maoist tactics that don't hesitate to use old people and women as human shields. Mao Tse-Tung, whom the Nepali Maoists look up to, had given clear directives to his workers to “protect the women and children and treat them with respect”.

Relief needed

Rajdhani, 19 January

राजधानी

BIRENDRANAGAR – A large number of displaced families here are living under difficult circumstances because the government has not extended any vital relief. Forced to leave home due to the ‘People's War’, they have not been given any compensation or monthly allowance promised to them. “Since we were chased out of the village by the Maoists, we can't return home. Why is the government unable to help us?” ask refugees of the insurgency from remote areas of Jajarkot, Kalikot, Jumla, Dailekh and Surkhet districts. The number of families displaced by the Maoists has already

crossed 5,000 in Birendranagar alone.

“The real Maoist victims have not received anything. Those who benefitted left home voluntarily without being harmed by the Maoists,” says Prithvi Bahadur Singh, a villager whose family has been living in extreme poverty for the last 18 months. “There was news on the radio for two days about the Maoists forcing us out of our village but the government hasn't helped us with a single paisa.” Singh's family is among the two dozen who abandoned their homes in Kalikot as the rebels' violence escalated. “The problem is that we hardly can afford one meal a day, let alone have enough to pay for our children's education. I wish there was a way for us to go back home,” adds Singh.

The government has not established any special relief program for families like Singh's. The people here are disgruntled by the government's recent move to provide immunity and rehabilitation to Maoists who surrender while nothing comes their way. There is no sign of relief despite the government's public announcement that it would provide a monthly allowance of Rs 3,000 to each displaced person.

Back to the old

Rabi Dhami in *Annapurna Post*, 13 January

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

KANCHANPUR – Over 2,000 freed kamaiyas in Kanchanpur have made up their mind to return to their old profession. They are willing to accept lifelong servitude to local feudal lords because government programs to rehabilitate them have failed. The government had pronounced all kamaiyas free five years ago, and introduced rehabilitation programs and exemption from debts taken from their ‘masters’. Two thousand of the 4,000 kamaiyas in Kanchanpur have begun to go back to their former landlords' farms. Many say they would be back where they started out from by mid-January.

“My father died before receiving compensation. The administration refused to give me the certificate of an ex-kamaiya,” says Prem Lal Choudhari. He has no other way to feed his family of five. Kamaiyas who were provided with cash and land by the government do not seem be happy. They may be free, but they say the plots are too small and the government has failed to rehabilitate them properly. (Nepalnews.com Translation Service)

Surkhet-Jumla

Rajdhani, 13 January

राजधानी

The construction of the Surkhet-Jumla Karnali Highway has been resumed amidst strict security measures by the army. The road had reached Tunitaar Bazar in Dailekh. The disrupted work resumed after a platoon was stationed at Rolgaun to provide security at the construction site. This road is looked upon as the last ray of hope by 500,000 people in Karnali. Chinese contractors are carrying out the work, and 114km of the highway was already completed. Buses and other vehicles are already plying that stretch. (Nepalnews.com Translation Service)

Working women

Annapurna Post, 13 January

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

POKHARA – Nearly 34,000 Nepali women employed in different foreign countries contribute to 11 percent of the total remittance, according to UNIFEM. Saru Joshi, country representative of UNIFEM said the rising number of women willing to go for foreign employment necessitates information centres in all districts. Most women worked as domestics and needed training and protection. (Nepalnews.com Translation Service)

Hand: Student movement
UML Roadmap.

राजधानी *Rajdhani*, 18 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The court will not look like a judiciary body if it deals with political issues
– Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, outgoing chief justice of the Supreme Court, in *Space Time*, 21 January

Same boat, different agendas

UML leader KP Oli in *Deshantar*, 18 January

देशान्तर साप्ताहिक

There is no uniformity in what the king says and what he does. The king's popularity and fame has not risen with the felicitation programs organised by those who support active monarchy. That is not the way to popularity. On the contrary, such ideas have made people more aggressive. As a result, they come out onto the streets and chant slogans for a republic.

Monarchy, as an institution, earned respect when it remained within the constitution. Its popularity eroded significantly after the king decided to be active, and the monarchy will have to face the results. The king has not toed the line that monarchs of the 21st century ought to.

While its true that the roadmap our party

publicised recently does not mention a republic, it's not something the CPN (UML) can decide on its own. But our party represents the people's desire and welfare and we are ready to work together with the monarchy—if the latter remains within constitutional boundaries. This is a stand we have maintained since 1991, it was the king who stepped out of that agreement.

The people still wish for the political parties and the king to reach an agreement. This cannot happen if autocracy continues. For such an agreement, we need to have democracy together with monarchy. If the king does not correct himself and continues on his present path, the people's anger could flare up uncontrollably.

Under these circumstances, the country may move closer toward a republic.

Our party has prepared the roadmap

taking into account both the monarchy and the Maoist rebels because it was the king who resorted to regression and the rebels who began their campaign of violence. We must resolve these problems. The UML brainstormed for a long time to prepare this roadmap. The content has been subject to discussion in different stratas of the party's meetings. We have kept all options open.

We are open to anything from a constitutional amendment to a constituent assembly. As for the charges that we have diverted ourselves from the 18-point program of the five agitating political parties, we must make clear that all these parties are independent organisations for the reestablishment of the people's rights. There is no compulsion for parties that banded together against the royal move cannot float independent ideas. Moreover, our proposal is for democracy and peace. It must not be looked upon negatively. The roadmap is something that has been brought up for discussion. If necessary, we can make some changes.



MIN BAJRACHARYA



Free tickets and great benefits for your family!



ROYAL CLUB members receive a variety of benefits after accumulating a certain number of miles. These benefits (including free tickets) can now be transferred in the name of their family members (spouse and one child).

Benefits include free tickets, free cinema tickets, free lunch and dinner, gift vouchers, great holiday packages and super discounts at over 100 partner organisations all over Nepal.

Call 5521015, ext: 114 for more information.

NOTE:

All current members are requested to send in the names of their spouse and one child as beneficiaries. You can call us up at 5521015, ext: 114 or email us at: royalclub@buddhaair.com

The information you send should include:

1. Your Name:
2. Your Membership No.:
3. Spouse Name (first name & family name):
4. Child Name (first name & family name):



PO Box: 2167, Kathmandu, Nepal | **Email:** royalclub@buddhaair.com | **Website:** www.buddhaair.com/royalclub

RESERVATION
Jawalakhet: Tel: 5542494

CITY SALES OFFICE
Hattisar: Tel: 4437025

MARKETING
Jawalakhet: Tel: 5521015. Ext: 119

KATHMANDU AIRPORT
Tel: 4491384

POKHARA
Tel: 061-534998, 528997

BHADRAPUR
Tel: 023-521218, 521219

NEPALGUNJ
Tel: 081-520745

BHAIRAHAWA
Tel: 071-526893, 522893

JANAKPUR
Tel: 041-525021, 525022

BIRATNAGAR
Tel: 021-526901, 530866

Chasing the Germans across Europe



Bharati Gurung is part of the Gurkha units with the British Army advancing across Italy into Austria and Greece. Like all soldiers from Nepal, Gurung understates the hardships and suffering. For his bravery on the siege of Monte Cassino in Italy, he was awarded the Military Cross. Bharati Gurung's story is part of the testimony of Gurkha soldiers serialised every fortnight in this space.



Gurkha soldiers in Italy, 1944

You must have noticed the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the map. When we were there, it was exceedingly cold as the ground was fully covered with snow. The goggles are a must day and night. You went blind if you didn't wear them. Rice, millet and corn do not grow there but there is wheat in the lower lands and barley in the highlands. Some buckwheat too.

We had finished fighting in Africa and had to cross a vast sea from there. The British forces had taken their position on this side of the sea and the Germans on the other. The loss of a large number of soldiers was certain. Going by plane had the hazard of being shot down. On the other hand going by sea had the peril of being sunk. As the debate on the possible course of action was going on, the British and Americans filled every corner of the sea with ships. Not all forces from the same regiment was put on one single ship for the fear that the whole lot might be wiped out. British, Negro and Gurkha soldiers were mixed and put on the ships. Thus they landed at Trento (Italy). The sky appeared covered with planes which dropped bombs the size of houses on the sea.

Each group had a strength of 18. The duties of those

assigned to carry the bombs ended there. They did not fire them. There were others to do that. They were covered by yet another machine, which revolved like an eagle. It had the capacity to strike up and down right or left. Marching onward we arrived at a place called Monte Casino in Italy. On the right side of the road leading to this place there is steep cliff with the sea to the left. In between there is road leading to a small gate. The German and British were facing each other. A single bomb blast caused thousands of stones to work very much like bombs. That caused all the stones to roll down. In that battle a Punjabi won the Victoria Cross. After some time, we took Monte Cassino.

Our victory march reached Rome. There was strict instruction not to resort to bombardment in the capital city, so we bypassed Rome. Our march led us to a place called Gothic land which was well fortified. We encountered an enormous number of German forces equipped with powerful weapons. All eyes were set on us. The problem arose whether or not we could match their firepower. We marched ahead to assess the number of enemies. Nine of our soldiers were killed in the endeavour. I, too, was seriously wounded. I won a gallantry award in that encounter The award I won was an MC or a Military

Cross. This award is second highest after Victoria Cross. I was hit twice during the skirmish.

The army action started at eight in the evening. There was fullscale bombardment by artillery. Messages were sent about the enemy troops and artillery required. That full scale army attack resulted in victory for us. Thereafter San Marino, a small town of Italy, was seized by us after a brief encounter.

Then we arrived in Austria. It is flanked by Switzerland on the left and Greece on the right. Information reached us that all German strength was concentrated in Greece. Our army went aboard the ships and arrived in Greece. There is a big harbor called Salonica in Greece which is as big as Bombay. The Germans laid mines in the sea. There are different kinds of mines for eliminating human beings and those for the destruction of ship.

We conquered Greece by reaching there in submarines and ships. A big hill, Crimea, stands on the right. The capital Athens lies on the left. The place is quite warm yet there is snowfall during the winter. The wind there is strong enough to sweep away even human beings. The moment we reached Athens, the Germans surrendered.

Hitler was defeated and the war was over.



MARK TURIN



Clockwise from top: A collection of manuscripts from a monastery near Jomsom, Mustang district, is prepared for filming, Diwakar Acharya and Ramhari Timalsina in the Nepal Research Centre, members of the NGMCP team, providing detailed catalogue information on the microfilmed manuscripts.

The *Research Scheme Nepal Himalaya* was born in 1959, exactly 100 years after the death of the brilliant German explorer, Alexander von Humboldt. Growing out of earlier German expeditions to the Himalayan region, the scheme proposed to undertake a comprehensive scientific study of all aspects of Nepal. It was funded by ministries in Bonn with the privately-managed Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

After a series of highly successful scientific expeditions, the Research Scheme ended in 1965 and was reincarnated as Thyssen House: a home for international scholars from all fields, disciplines and countries, united by an interest in Nepal. Two years later, in 1967, Thyssen House transformed itself into the *Nepal*

The centre of things

After 35 years, it is time to look back at the extraordinary accomplishments of the Kathmandu-based Nepal Research Centre.

Research Centre (NRC).

Today, the NRC offers assistance to visiting scholars from abroad who require institutional affiliation in Nepal. Language training, both in Nepali and in a range of local languages, are arranged. It also encourages visiting scholars to present or publish the results of their research findings while in Nepal. The centre has an active and high profile publishing series comprising of occasional monographs as well as the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* (JNRC), of which there have been twelve volumes to date.

Finally, the centre assists scholars by providing them working facilities, including access to a well-stocked reference library, technical equipment, facilities for viewing microfilms, a working space as well as meals and accommodation. To foster lively academic exchange, the NRC also hosts an informal daily lunch to which both local and foreign scholars are invited and encouraged to share



ideas over dal-bhat.

Over the last 30 years, the NRC has been handling the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) that microfilms every important manuscript and historical document located in Nepal. The materials photographed include various branches of Hindu and Buddhist literature in languages such as Sanskrit, Tibetan, Nepali and Newari—texts which are of significance far beyond the boundaries of Nepal. Many of these manuscripts are the oldest or last remaining copies of

important religious or historical works, and a significant number are so degraded that they are close to disintegration. Since 2002, the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP) is setting up a detailed online catalogue of the manuscripts microfilmed by the earlier project. ●

Nepal Research Centre
(01) 4420 855
nrc@wlink.com.np

Mark Turin is a Visiting Scholar in Anthropology at Cornell University.
mt272@cornell.edu



Basic golf

So you're an aspiring golfer about to embark on the endless journey of occasional joy and mostly excruciating (mental) pain. There are a few things you best be aware of to enjoy the ordeal you are intending to bestow on yourself.

Obviously, you will need some basic equipment in the form of a golf set.

What's in a golf set?

Golf clubs, usually comprising of 4 Woods, 9 Irons and a putter. Well, actually, it's a little more confusing than that. The Woods are now

TEE BREAK
Deepak Acharya



almost always made of metal, the Irons often have graphite shafts, the once simple putter now comes in previously unimaginable shapes. Besides these, tucked into

your golf bag you will find gloves, tees, ball markers, caps, golf shoes, and if you intend to play golf instead of just looking the part, you would be advised to have plenty of golf balls.

What do you actually need to start?

If you had read last weeks article, you would know that you actually just need a pair of sport shoes. Everything else is available for a beginner at the golf practice facilities.

The fundamentals

You're dressed in comfortable clothes, you have your shoes on, and you're holding a club in your hands with a ball at your feet. What next?

Every golfer, whether a beginner, a seasoned hacker, or a professional, has to be aware and take care of the fundamentals of holding the golf club and standing before the ball. Without these, you will always be fighting a losing battle.

Every top professional today constantly has the fundamentals rechecked by their chosen teacher. Why would a leading pro need lessons on such simple things? Because slowly but surely, bad habits creep into these areas. The faults cannot be "felt" or "seen" by the player. They need an outsider to point them out.

When you start playing, you will find yourself concentrating on the actual golf swing, totally forgetting that you may be developing and reinforcing a "bad swing" just because you never take time to check the fundamentals.

Actually, having a good set-up, which is how you hold the club and stand before the ball, is often the biggest key to having an excellent golf swing and striking that ball correctly.

The six important components for a good set up are:

Grip: How you hold the club is crucial. Though there are variations, the basic grip is as follows: if the left hand is hung down in a relaxed position, the angle the wrist creates should be the position of the left hand grip. The right hand should then match this same angle to complete the grip. On a good grip the pressure should be more on the fingers not on the palm. The right hand should be placed on the club from the end of the left thumb. If you unwrap your hands from a perfect grip, the hands should be parallel to each other.

Club Face: In general, the club face should be placed at right angles to the target.

Posture : Good posture allows you to swing properly, with your shoulders free to turn and your weight to shift back and forth correctly. Your spine should be at a 90° angle to the club shaft when you stand with the club behind the ball, and should return to the same position at impact. An example drill for this would be to keep the body straight, then extend both arms with the club at waist level, with the club in the air at right angles to the target. Then bend from the waist, keeping the knees straight until the club comes to the ground. The arms and body should be relaxed and the knees a little flexed.

Stance: Your stance how you place your legs and feet. A comfortable stance is usually with feet placed at the same width as the shoulders.

Alignment: To hit the ball straight, legs, shoulders, hips, and upper body have to be aligned parallel to the target. Shoulders not being parallel to the target line is one of the most common problems golfers face.

Ball position: Where the ball is placed in relation to the feet is known as the "ball position". The "normal" position is to have the ball just slightly forward of a line drawn through the centre of the feet. The shorter the golf club, the closer the ball will be to the centre. With longer clubs, the ball is closer to the forward foot.

I am sure trying to visualise all this through written words is as impossible as scoring a hole in one from your armchair in front of the TV set. So head down to your nearest golf facility with a golfing friend, have him push and pull you into every awkward position you can imagine, and mess up the fundamentals of your golf set up and swing right away.

Or be smart and have a trained professional do it right the first time round.

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Head Golf Professional at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.
prodeepak@hotmail.com

Being Baggio

Arguably the world's greatest footballer, former Italian international player and devout Buddhist Roberto Baggio will quit the game at the end of the current season. In an exclusive interview on Teletutto, a local Brescia station, the Divine Ponytail expressed his intention to retire later this year.



Roberto Baggio's remarkable career has lasted over 20 years and involved seven clubs, beginning with his hometown side Vicenza in Serie C1 to his successful yet frustrating times at Juventus and Milan through to his incredible current form with little Brescia. The greatest Italian player of the last decade, Baggio made his name at Fiorentina before being sold for a then world record £8m to Juventus, resulting in riots in the Tuscan town.

However, he will remain most famous for missing the crucial penalty in the 1994 World Cup shoot-out against Brazil having almost single-handedly guided Italy to the final in Pasadena. As much as we may regret it, his career with Italy will be symbolized by that famous penalty miss—having played barely six games for the side since that final.

Having been ignored by current Azzurri Coach Giovanni Trapattoni for the most recent World Cup in 2002 and Euro 2004, despite a virtual outcry from the nation, Baggio feels it is the right time to hang up his boots. His ultimate aim now is to reach the incredible milestone of scoring 200 goals. He is just four short.

Greatness like his is so rare it's like catching lightning in a bottle. He is the complete player—he really can do it all with a ball. It's hard to describe just how great he actually is. He transcends category. His skills are usually seen combined in five or six players, not one at once! Roby Baggio, we salute you!

This week Italian television channel Teletutto has announced

that he decided to retire from professional football on 16 May. He is not a ruthless mercenary plying his trade in Japan for Yen or England for Pounds Sterling. Baggio is a dyed-in-the-wool Serie A player who has spent his twilight years turning Brescia into a respectable side. These points aside, there is history to consider. Past events have made "The Divine Ponytail" the legend he is today. Some of the most potent images of the man come from USA 1994. He steered Italy to a stunning second round victory over Nigeria with two last gasp goals and led his side to a thrilling quarter final triumph over Spain with an 88th minute goal. Watching Baggio spray his penalty high above the crossbar in the final against Brazil, confirmed two things: 1. He is a flawed hero, and they are the best kind because they are most like us and 2. His tears softened our hearts and made us feel bad for backing Brazil to win the tournament.

Over the following years, we have watched him work his magic with Juventus, AC Milan, Bologna and Inter Milan. A troublesome knee and back injuries aside, his stints with these clubs were all characterised by excellence when he played and regular goals when he was well-served. In nearly 220 club games since USA 1994, he has scored over 85 goals. There are certainly players who have scored more often, but there are few who have scored as regularly and played as consistently as he has for so long. When things stopped working out at Inter Milan, there was talk of him

wanting to move to Napoli. If the then coach Zdenek Zemen had agreed to the transfer, Napoli would still be in Serie A. But the recalcitrant Czech said no, so Baggio moved to Brescia instead.

Watching him lead this small Italian club, football lovers learned a couple of things: first, Inter were mad to let him go and second, he is still able to turn a game and score at whim. Besides him, there are other Italian-born champions like Franco Baresi, Giuseppe Bergomi, Giuseppe Signori, Paolo Maldini and Demetrio Albertini who warrant much respect and admiration. But these players are either already retired or a little past their best. And they have not had nearly the same impact that Baggio has on and off the field.

How we shall miss him. ●



Beautiful at any age

keep a PASHMINA close to your SKIN

One stop for the Best Pashmina, Best Prices, Guaranteed Quality

NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY
Head Office & Factory: Redcross Marg Kalimati (Near Hotel Soalttee) PO Box: 1956, Kathmandu
Tel: 4273282, 4277023 Fax: 977-1-420092 Email: npipushpa@wlink.com.np n www.nepalpashminaindustry.com

"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, a man with a goatee is a hero.)



not really (c) 2003 by Jiggy Galton so if you want to print this elsewhere please send one sack of rice, care of this newspaper.

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Zen Paintings** by Korean Artist Kim Dae Kyu till 24 January at Gallery Nine, Lazimpat. 4428694
- ❖ **Japanese Prints 1950-1990** at Nepal Art Council. From 9.30 AM to 4.30 PM, till 28 January.
- ❖ **Landscapes, people and places of Ghandruk village** etchings and wood carvings by Caroline Coode and Elaine Marshall till 10 February at the Lazimpat Gallery Café, Lazimpat. 4428549

EVENTS

- ❖ **CAN Infotech** 24-28 January at BICC, Kathmandu. Entry Free.
- ❖ **Salsa** at The Piano Lounge Bar with Andreas Lehrke every Sunday 8-10PM. Hotel Yak and Yeti, Kathmandu. 4248999
- ❖ **Inter-Cultural Film Society: Fire** directed by Deepa Mehta (1996), 5.30 PM on 25 January at Nepal Tourism Board.
- ❖ **Recruitment Fair 2004** at Bhrikuti Mandap. 10AM-5.30 PM from 23-25 January. Tickets Rs 100.
- ❖ **Who let the Das out?** Comedian Vir Das back at the Hyatt Regency Kathmandu from 7PM on 24 January. 4491234

DRINK

- ❖ **Cosmic Cocktails** at Mitra Lounge Bar. Above Café Mitra, Thamel. 4259015
- ❖ **Kiwi Cocktails and Desserts** Kiwi Margaritas and Daiquiris from organically grown Kiwi fruit at the Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak and Yeti, Kathmandu. 4248999

MUSIC

- ❖ **Abhaya & The Steam Injuns** at Dwarika's every Friday from 7PM onwards. 4479488
- ❖ **Old school** best old school mixes with DJ Impact and St Yves, 8PM on 24 January at Via Via Café, Thamel. www.viaviacafe.com
- ❖ **Drummer's Circle**, percussion evening, 7PM every Tuesday. Entry Rs 150. All at Moksh, Club Hardic Pulchowk, 5528703

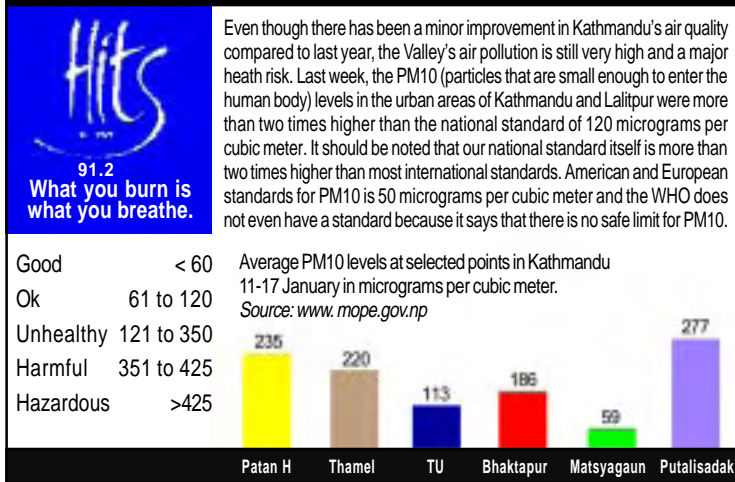
FOOD

- ❖ **Chinese New Year Festival – Year of the Monkey** Buffet dinner, 6PM onwards till 25 January at the Jazz Bar, Shangri-la Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999
- ❖ **Annapurna Garden Grill** till 31 January at the Coffee Shop, Hotel de l'Annapurna, Durbar Marg.
- ❖ **Lunch at Dhokaima Café**, Patan Dhoka. Non-vegetarian meals at Rs 220 and vegetarian at Rs 190. 5522113
- ❖ **Ban Bhoj** weekend BBQ lunch at Godavari Village Resort. Reservation recommended. 5560675

GETAWAYS

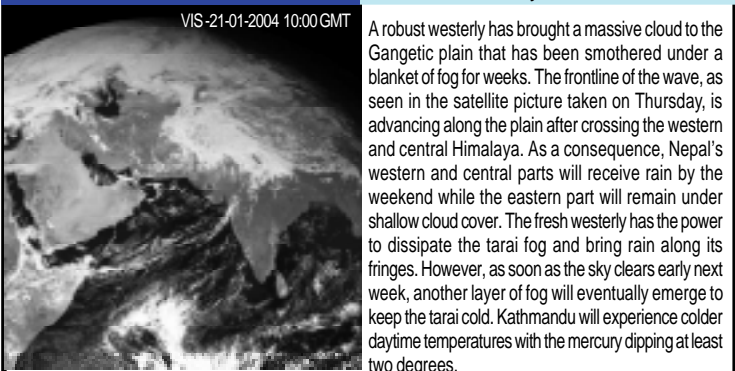
- ❖ **Thank Goodness It's Friday** Dwarika's overnight package. 4479488
- ❖ **Golf** in the Valley's last pristine forest. Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa 4451212
- ❖ **Weekend Special** for Rs 3,000 per couple, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY



NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



KATHMANDU VALLEY



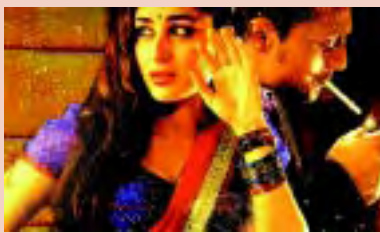
BOOKWORM

Invitation to Love: Literacy, Love Letters & Social Change in Nepal Laura M Ahearn Adarsh Books, 2004

Using a rich ethnographic style, the author discusses the implications of an emerging love letter correspondence and traces out the broader ramifications for literacy, gender, personhood and social change in Nepali society. Her close examination of marriage practices reveals the microprocesses of social transformations as this shift occurs—especially how villagers' own conceptions of their abilities and responsibilities are being affected by Western-influenced understandings and practices.



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



Chameli

JAI NEPAL CINEMA

Call 4442220 for bookings

Call for show timings.
11.30 AM, 2.30 PM, 5.30 PM
www.jainepal.com

Chameli is a new entrant in a marquee of night culture films. Directed by Sudhir Mishra, this movie revolves around a one night stand between a suave socialite (Rahul Bose) and a prostitute (Kareena Kapoor). Rahul and Kareena both need a hit to rejuvenate their sagging career. With the success of movies like *Chandni Bar*, *Chameli* could strike the right note with audiences.

CLASSIFIED

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

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

LIVE IN STYLE! Arcadia Apartments in the heart of Thamel. Centrally located, fully furnished apartments at unbelievable rates. For details: 981026903, 4260187

Renting made easy: www.21etonline.com- Looking for a place to stay- Log on to find the perfect house, apartment or even a retail space that meets all your needs. Make an easy 1000 bucks by reporting a vacant property to us. Find out how- www.21etonline.com

Get 10 % exclusive discount on the normal subscription rate of Himalmedia's publication namely; Himal Khabarpatrika, Nepali Times and Wave magazine. Only at the Grihini Department Store limited, Baluwatar, Phone: 4415186

Wanted : Nepali pilot, interested person should have experience for ultra light aircraft with Rotax 582 engine. Apply with cv, photo and contact address within 7 days to Avia Club Nepal Pvt. Ltd., P.O. Box 13680.

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

DEXO HOUSE SUPERMARKET

Opening Hour 9:00 am - 9 pm

Tridevi Marg, Opp. Himalayan Bank Thamel, Tel: 4423526, 4411800

DEXO MUSIC CENTER Thamel, Tel: 4249726

BEETLE RALLY



The 4th Great Himalayan Volkswagen Beetle Rally will happen on Saturday 28th February 2004. Great prizes to be won, great opportunity to support the production of peace stickers, cleft lip and palate surgery in Nepal, and women's health services in remote areas.

Please consider sponsoring a Beetle to support these great causes.
Contact : susan@ics.wlink.com.np or francesk@wlink.com.np or surenthami@wlink.com.np.

Rise and shine

Get ready for a brand new day with BBC World Today.
Every morning on 102.4 FM from 5:45-6:15 AM

Daily 2045-2115 BBC नेपाली सेवा
Daily 2245-2300 BBC नेपाली सेवा

BBC
on FM 102.4

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



HAPPENINGS



MIN BAJRACHARYA

NEW DIGS: Mayor Keshab Sthapit dangles the lock and key to Bagh Darbar, the new address for the Kathmandu Municipality office, as Minister Kamal Thapa hands him the official papers on Monday.



KIRAN PANDEY

MOURNING GLORY: Students agitating at Ratna Park on Wednesday, the 13th day after they cremated a mock corpse of 'regression'.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

OVERGROUND: Former underground Maoist commander, Jay Bahadur Gharti, faces the press on Thursday for the first time since his surrender under the government's new program to rehabilitate rebels.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

ALL-GIRL BAND: Tharu girls on Saturday serenade travellers on the Kohalpur Highway to raise money for Maghi, their biggest annual festival.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

MILEAGE: Qatar Airways honoured its top travel and cargo agents on Wednesday.

NEPALI SOCIETY

Doc cop

AlIG Govinda Thapa is a rare cop in Nepal. One of few male officers who deals with women's issues in the force, he is the first policeman in Nepal with a PhD. Working on his thesis while on the job, it took Govinda several years to get his doctorate in girl trafficking.

"It was hectic, but worth it," says Govinda, whose main concern was to examine existing laws to combat girl trafficking and their implementation.

Born into an army family from a small village in Gulmi, Govinda wanted to be a teacher and is still surprised by how his life took a different turn. After spending his youth in India, marriage brought him to Kathmandu. Govinda believes what he has done is not unique. He says with hard work and commitment anyone can start from humble beginnings like his to "become somebody".

Govinda still has fond memories of

his home village of Daha. "It really gives me great joy, whenever they share their happiness about my success," he says with a smile. But his face suddenly turns serious when he recalls a close friend from his village he helped enlist in the police force who was recently killed by Maoists in Rautahat.

On the job, Govinda came face to face with numerous crimes against women and children. Instead of hardening him, they made him more sensitive towards

victims. In 1996 he helped set up special women's cells in the force. There are now these special sections for women and children in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Pokhara, Biratnagar and 17 other districts. "It was a milestone for us, especially when we were often blamed by activists for neglecting women and children. We proved otherwise," says Govinda.

Women and children are most vulnerable and are reluctant to approach the police for help and Govinda wanted to change all that. With the insurgency, Govinda is aware of the growing concerns about human rights violations, particularly of those in detention. "It's not only in Nepal but across the world where police become so involved that they tend to overlook the human rights aspect," he adds.

He believes that Nepali police are gradually becoming more humanitarian in their job: "We owe it to the people to be more sensitive about respecting their rights." ●

(Naresh Newar)



MIN BAJRACHARYA



Annapurna

Garden Grill

If you can catch the appetizing aroma from Jan 22nd onwards, it might be emanating from The Coffee Shop Garden.

With specialities aplenty, served straight from the Grill - Red Snapper, Rosemary Chicken Chops, Barbecued Shrimp, Fillet Mignon, Australian Salmon..... to name a few, your penchant for a great grill on a crispy winter afternoon will be appeased many times over.

Drop in to savour the Garden Grill.

Date: 22nd Jan - 31st Jan, 2004
Time: 1pm - 8pm
Venue: The Coffee Shop Garden

Hotel de l' Annapurna
No. 1 Address in Kathmandu
Tel: 4221711 Ext. 4114

News and views from around the world

UNDER MY HAT Kunda Dixit



Not everything happening around the world these days gets into the national press because of the pressure of events back home. Yet, as messengers of tidings, we would be seriously amiss in our duty if we didn't bring them to your notice without fear or favour. It has therefore fallen upon yours truly, viz: this scribe, to once more present below another brand new episode of our regular column, 'Noose in Brief'.

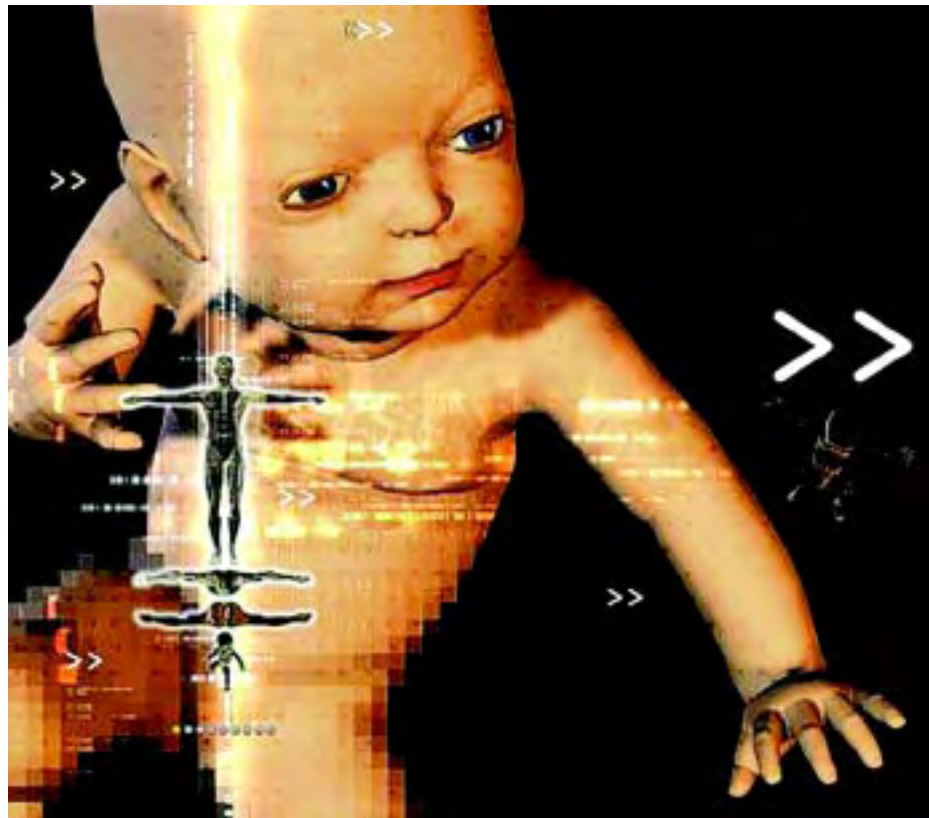
God sues Panos

BY OUR HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENT

The announcement that the first human clone may soon be born at an undisclosed location somewhere over the Western sector has been greeted with shock in Heaven, where God has announced he/she will sue Dr Panos Zavos for copyright infringement.

The American doctor announced last week that he had removed the DNA from a raw human egg and replaced it with the DNA of a cell from a man's ear lobe and planted it (egg, not ear lobe) into the embryo of the mother wherein it is reported to be in critical but stable condition.

"Human beings are my design and I have the patent on them," God told a



packed news conference at the Paradise Hotel Tuesday. "How dare this Panos fellow play me?"

God admitted his/her creation was still far from perfect, but human beings were a work in progress and he/she was working on an improved state-of-the-art model. "This guy stole my design and thinks he can get away with it," the visibly agitated Almighty said. "Doesn't he know that I had declared stealing to be a sin in the Fourth Commandment to the Constitution?"

Meanwhile in the tiny Himalayan landlocked kingdom of Nepal, the news of the breakthrough in human cloning was greeted with jubilation, and policy-makers went into an emergency meeting of the cabinet. Sources on Earth told us they were finalising a detailed plan to visit Singapore next week to extract a small bit of Lee Kuan Yew's ear lobe so that the DNA therein can be incorporated into a clone of the senior Singaporean statesman.

"It's a very simple procedure, and we don't think he will mind donating it to us for our cloning lab," said the head of the government's Cloning Our New Leader Task Force. "After all, for how many years have we been saying Nepal needs a Lee Kuan Yew. Well, now it's possible."

Body armour now mandatory

BY KATHMANDU TRAFFICKER

Pedestrians, bicyclists and other commuters on Kathmandu roads will henceforth have to wear protective body armour while going about their business, a police told us today after making us promise we wouldn't tell anyone.

The move follows a directive from the Ministry of Interior Design last week allowing all traffic policemen to bear arms. The directive did not specify what kind of traffic violation would warrant an officer on duty to open fire on transgressors, however it is reliably learnt that jay walkers, roadside vendors and motorcycles that overtake from the left will be shot on sight.

In order to protect innocent bystanders, the authorities are therefore ready to announce the rule making it mandatory for all pedestrians to wear teflon body armour, for all cars to have bulletproof windshields and all motorcyclists to wear rear-mounted machine guns to return fire.

HYUNDAI

The new

Matrix Diesel CRDi

Everything has been updated (except the price)

Hyundai Mobile Service: 981047300

Business Advisory: 981047300

The much awaited Matrix Diesel CRDi with Intercooler Turbo has finally arrived

Be the first 20 to take home the new Matrix Diesel CRDi for the price of Matrix Petrol.

Flexible financing options | For further details contact: 981047600, 981062971, 981047400

Showroom Open on Saturday | Call Showroom (Nagpokhari, Naxal) 4414634, 4428679, 4414281, 4410394, 4419690

DEALERS: KATHMANDU: CAR VART: Ph: 4230008. POKHARA: Jeonhwan Traders: Ph: 061-528589. BUTWAL: Mobly Auto Distributors: Ph: 071-550500, 546119. NARAYANGHAT: United Motors: Ph: 056-526562. BIRATNAGAR: Auto Centre: Ph: 021-530301, Fax: 021-535501. BIRGUNJ: Raj Trading: Ph: 051-528872.

*Conditions apply

Info-Tech 2004

Stall No. ETL - 1

THURAYA

THURAYA M

Satellite Mobile Phone

GIFT PACKAGE

Thuraya Handset (SAT+GPS+GSM)

+ Pre-paid Regular SIM

(with \$10 worth of FREE call)

+ Solar Charger + Car charger

+ Special Gift Package

HUGHES

For Only Rs. 79,999/- Net

(INCLUSIVE OF ALL TAXES)

Actual Value of Package:	
Thuraya Handset	Rs. 81,365/-
Pre-Paid Regular SIM	Rs. 8,464/-
Solar Charger	Rs. 13,891/-
Car Charger	Rs. 3,679/-
Total Value of Package	- Rs. 1,07,399/-

Conditions Apply

Offer valids from Jan 23rd-31st Jan, 2004

No credit facility.

Limited Stock

www.constellation.com.np

CONSTELLATION PVT. LTD.

P.O. Box 8975, EPC 2277, Pulchowk, Lalitpur - 3 Kathmandu, Nepal.

Phone: +977-1-5548836, 5549252

Fax: +977-1-5548879.

NEPAL THURAYA - 04