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The most interesting revelation in the poll was that a very small proportion of people knew or understood what the constituent assembly demand of the Maoists entailed and only ten percent actually wanted it (see box, p2). Restoring parlia-

middle east and north africa

DAILY FLIGHTS
As well as twice daily to Dubai and Cairo

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Deuba's democratic delusions

Let’s not be too hard on the man

February 14, 2005

F or three hours on 13 March, a group of Nepalis in America gathered in solidarity to voice their concerns on the plight of their homeland and make a united declaration in support of peace, democracy and national pride.

GUEST COLUMN

Dipta Shah

There were several striking features of the gathering in Lafayette Park in Washington DC. The ethnic, economic and cultural diversity was evident. There was no single dominant ideology or group and therefore no ulterior motives exclusively upheld.

Various groups respectfully acknowledged different opinions of their compatriots. There were some with unconditional support for the monarchy, others voice cautious optimism regarding the royal move and still others expressed outright disapproval of the suspension of the democratic process in Nepal. For once, it seemed, the existence of such varied opinions served to galvanise (instead of weaken) the Nepali community’s collective resolve.

A petition with over 1,200 Nepali signatories was submitted to US Senator Jesse Helms and Condoleezza Rice who was on a visit to the South Asian region this week. The petition sought the ‘middle ground’ in Lafayette Park that sunny afternoon with the emergence of a united and democratic measure – majority representation, a varied range of opinions and inclusive, tolerant and respectful cooperation.

All participants hoped in their hearts that similar freedoms would exist in their motherland and so all Nepalis could exercise their democratic rights in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence. The Washington demonstration followed meetings held by a group of prominent Nepali intellectuals at the offices of American senators.

The combined effect of these separate initiatives resulted in precisely what Nepalis here have sought since February First: the galvanisation of a non-partisan ‘middle ground’ which serves as a forum for the majority of Nepalis living in the US to voice their aspirations for a peaceful and democratically vibrant Nepal.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of this exercise was the further marginalisation of a group of opportunistic parties fanning the flames of extremism. These parties are spreading extremist propaganda within the Nepali community in the US. The frustration experienced by these radical elements was apparent in attempts at character assassination of members of the coordination committee of the demonstration in Lafayette Park.

Following the demonstration, they engaged in what they do best – lie, deceive, fabricate and divide. The natural tendency of those who have volunteered time and effort to mobilise the community in support of peace and democracy has been to deflect the same radicals may believe that the tactics of their contemporaries in Nepal (which coincide significantly to the demise of democracy) may help boost their egos in America but this is hardly the case. By stooping to such levels, they have irreparably undermined their own agenda and exposed themselves to deriding intolerance and jealousy.

It is hoped that a similar exercise will be replicated in Nepal so a peaceful and sustainable democratic polity may grace the homeland at the earliest. The sooner the better.

Despite differences, there are common issues and sentiments regarding US policy on Nepal. Many also expressed hope that the demonstrations in Lafayette Park will trigger similar actions in the US. The frustration within the Nepali community is spreading extremist propaganda.

Nepalis living in the US to voice their aspirations for a peaceful and democratically vibrant Nepal.

The middle ground

A rally on Lafayette Park struck chords of tolerance and democracy

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NOTHING TO HIDE

Apropos your editorial (‘Something to hide?’ #238) in which you advocate a return to the old system. The political parties have always failed, and are still failing, to demonstrate to the Nepali people that they have a roadmap for the way ahead. They have missed goals and objectives the whole time. As much I have to say this, dear politicians, you have failed yourselves and failed the Nepali people. Before you ask the people to join you once more to protest the king’s move, perhaps some introspection is in order? Do you have answers? I am a Nepali currently residing outside the country and here to attend an academic program. I follow political developments in Nepal daily, hoping that someday a leader will emerge to steer the country to a peaceful solution. Hope is a big word, and for now that’s all we can do. If you lead a street protest, meet your demand is an end unto itself…a goal. On the other hand to the people your protest is just one of many reasons for censorship.

Do the politicians know what the goal is?
Shish Bhattachary, email

Thanks for your polite yet clear editorial opinion. While freedom of speech is the single biggest good, it is also the single biggest bane in many periods (especially in wartime) speech may tip the balance. If we do not use it wisely. I think it is true of all societies. It is apparent that the censorship being imposed is a direct result of the anxiety, cautiousness and fear on the part of the new dispensation, which wants to use democracy and its tool to break the multiparty system and various political institutions in Nepal. The media treated people. A legitimate force like the Royal Nepal Army is indirectly controlled by India with its double standards on democracy. We have nothing to hide.

But the right against censorship is not the privilege of just people who support democracy. It is a fundamental human right, a right of all citizens like me and thousands of others who are worried about our future. We also had the right to express myself without being censored by you when you dropped the following line in your editorial opinion (‘Fair deal’, #238) in your last issue: Does India want democracy in Nepal? The multiparty system and various political institutions in Nepal failed not because the king was bad or the parties were worse, or Nepal was so uneducated to live with democracy but because India massively used all its resources to mould the fibres of our society, economy and nationalism. Have you ever noted the issues that democracy in Nepal has confronted in its 14 years of democratic existence? The contrast from the Tanakpur to the last extraction treaty forced on Nepal? This is what India is doing, this time unified with the US and the United Kingdom.

Can you explain your hypocrisy about the freedom of speech?
Dibya Gurung, New York

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Thanks for the interview of the Indian author, Kaushik (‘Nepal’s other half’, #238), his opinions are clear and he must be appreciated for being so straightforward. But I think you may have missed the point. India stands for democracy and freedom in Nepal when it has a history of intervention: in its 14 years of democratic existence. Nepal had the largest number of police force in the world. The Madivkees. Bhutan is the most vivid example of Indian intervention in turning the crisis to New Delhi’s advantage. All this talk of supporting democracy in Nepal rings a bit hollow. Even in today’s Nepal, the Maithis, both ideologically since all their claims about the nature of the ‘regressive state’ seem to have been realised, and practically, since so much of the RNA’s human resources have been diverted away from its duties engaging with the Maithis? Unless the king knows something significant he’s not telling us? I am at a loss to see a rational strategy behind what he claims to be doing?

P Lockwood, email

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

I am writing this letter to show my love for democracy, multiparty system and political freedoms. That’s why I can conceive of a Nepali, Sri Lankan, Bangladesh or a Bhutan ambassador in New Delhi talking about the relevance of the values of democracy in our country. Can I assimilate, Mizoram, Nagaland, Khalistan and so on in an interview with the Times of India? Will India let me if these authors started talking about approximately 90,000 men and women killed in Kashmir over the last 17 years and the widespread human rights violations committed by the Indian army on these communities? Why the double standard? India should come clean and tell us what it wants. Hypocrisy isn’t helpful.

Saroj Lamichhane Magar, Hong Kong

TWO SIDES

Kanak Mani Dixit’s Southasia Beat column, ‘Bhutan’s Lhoksukhang cashsheet’ (#238) is one-sided and does not give a balanced view. You read any of the articles on Bhutan and many of the international organisations have high regard for its governance and incorruptible government. Sadly, Nepal is a very corrupt country and your mind too has been greatly influenced by its environment.

Dixit should take a holiday for about a month in Bhutan, perhaps your impure mind will be purified and you will be able to give just and fair inputs in your articles so readers can appreciate them.

Ugyen Tawhawang, email

Thanks to Kanak Mani Dixit for once more drawing the world’s attention to the plight of us Bhutanis. My forefathers came to Bhutan when the country had a history of intervention: in the late 1950s, the Indian army in the heart of the capital city in Thimphu and all along the Chinese border.

Name withheld, email

HYPER EMPIRE

I appreciate the cynicism with which Sashshaya Sha writes in his Guest Column (‘Hyper Empire and Hindu Kingdom’, #238) about the hegemony of powerful states and global institutions and the strategic rather than purely principled games they play with demarcating states (such a politieuphism). However, I’m still rather baffled by the implication of his claim that it doesn’t matter which political agent comes to Nepal’s rescue, so long as they can liberate the Nepalese people from tension and fear. This is clearly intended to suggest that the king’s assumption of power can do just this. I wonder if such a hopeful analysis can be sustained. One has to ask how dismantling the institution of democracy and human rights will assist in the conflict with an anti-democratic, totalitarian Maoist insurgency. There is a grave risk of blaming all the Maithis and the Maithis, both ideologically since all their claims about the nature of the ‘regressive state’ seem to have been realised, and practically, since so much of the RNA’s human resources have been diverted away from its duties engaging with the Maithis? Unless the king knows something significant he’s not telling us? I am at a loss to see a rational strategy behind what he claims to be doing?

P Lockwood, email

READING

I defend my writing on the Nepali diaspora in the UK and Reading (‘Nepalis go underground in Britain’, #238) about the hegemony of powerful states and global institutions and the strategic rather than purely principled games they play with demarcating states (such a politieuphism). However, I’m still rather baffled by the implication of his claim that it doesn’t matter which political agent comes to Nepal’s rescue, so long as they can liberate the Nepalese people from tension and fear. This is clearly intended to suggest that the king’s assumption of power can do just this. I wonder if such a hopeful analysis can be sustained. One has to ask how dismantling the institution of democracy and human rights will assist in the conflict with an anti-democratic, totalitarian Maoist insurgency. There is a grave risk of blaming all the Maithis and the Maithis, both ideologically since all their claims about the nature of the ‘regressive state’ seem to have been realised, and practically, since so much of the RNA’s human resources have been diverted away from its duties engaging with the Maithis? Unless the king knows something significant he’s not telling us? I am at a loss to see a rational strategy behind what he claims to be doing?

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CORRECTION

The picture of Kevin Burburki in ‘Kevin’s eye’ (#236) was by Charles Gay.
Conclusions of past public opinion surveys in this country (Nepali Times, no. 1109, 2005) have made it clear that when the time and again the people have a great deal more wisdom than they are given credit for. They are pragmatic, not swayed by slogans and extremism, they have their priorities well figured out, and they know who the crooks are.

An overwhelming majority of Nepalis still favour a democratic government. In spite of everything that has gone wrong in the past 15 years, they don’t blame the system. They do identify specific disadvantages of democracy, and in order of priority, they: are: misuse of power by those who wield it, corruption, politicians forgetting constituencies after being elected, politicisation of the administration and continuous protests by opposition parties. Despite these drawbacks, they say the two most important advantages of democracy are freedom of expression and the right to elect rulers. The people overwhelmingly reject republicanism and an absolute monarchy, and if the proportion of those undecided on the role of the monarchy (14 percent) is excluded, support for constitutional monarchy becomes 63 percent. However, there is an age and education factor in responses. People above 56 and the less educated seem to be the one ones most in favour of a more active monarchy. Most with college education or higher favour a fully constitutional monarchy, although it is in this age group that republicanism has the most adherents.

On the Maoist insurgency, most respondents felt the priority should be for negotiations. They reject options like suppressing the Maoists militarily and strongly believe that a lasting conflict can’t be resolved by military means. They blame the failure of past negotiations on the lack of flexibility on the part of the government and the Maoists. Three-fourths of the respondents believe the conflict can be settled through negotiations. A significant number of people in favour third party mediation by the UN (20 percent) human rights organizations (25 percent).

Sudhindra Sharma and Pawan Kumar Sen

The nationwide Contemporary Political Situation in Nepal opinion poll was conducted by Interdisciplinary Analysts and ANHEL and funded by the Asia Foundation. A closed-ended questionnaire was administered on 3,005 respondents in 35 sample districts in November and December 2005. Seven field supervisors and 48 enumerators took part.

Full report will be available after 30 March
dita@wlink.com.np

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Nepali Times: It’s been half a century since Nepal and China established diplomatic relations, how would you describe the present state of relations?

Sun Heping: China and Nepal are traditionally amicable states. China and Nepal have always maintained friendly relations. We maintain close and friendly ties and consultations. The current state of relations between China and Nepal is excellent.

Do you also see a role for the proposed Kosi-Lhasa Highway between us.

We believe it is important to maintain cordial ties with our neighbours and the present bilateral relations are excellent. There is no outstanding problem but friendship between our two countries. Both can take pride in the peaceful trustworthy conduct of bilateral relations on the basis of equality. In recent years, the exchange of high-level visits has been frequent and cooperation in various fields has expanded. Crown Prince Paras’s visit to China last year further strengthened China-Nepal friendship and neighbourly partnership. This year marks the golden jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between us.

What is your government’s position on the February First changes here?

China regards the current situation in Nepal as essentially Nepal’s internal affair. As a friendly neighbour, we sincerely hope that Nepal can realise social stability, economic development and national reconciliation. Meanwhile, we encourage the choice of the Nepali people for their social and economic development. Nepal in line with the wishes of the Nepali people for.

How seriously does the Chinese government regard the anti-government insurgency in Nepal?

As Nepal’s close neighbour, China is concerned about the issue of anti-government insurgency in Nepal. We strongly condemn any violent activities against civilians and civil infrastructures. Peace and stability in Nepal are not only in the interests of Nepal and its people, but is also conducive to regional peace and stability. We hope that the peace process can be restarted as soon as possible so lasting peace can be realised at an earlier date.

What would you say are China’s main foreign policy and economic concerns vis-a-vis Nepal?

China always maintains an independent foreign policy of peace and its policy towards its neighbours can be summarised as being a friend and partner, living in harmony and sharing security to help them prosper. I should say that to promote friendly relations and cooperation with Nepal in all fields is the priority of China’s foreign policy towards Nepal.

Is there any geopolitical sensitivity about Nepal’s location as far as China is concerned?

You can change a neighbour but you can’t change a neighbouring country. Bordering the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China, Nepal is very important to the stability and prosperity of Tibet. We feel very lucky and happy to have a friendly neighbour like Nepal. We appreciate the friendly policy towards China that the king of Nepal and the Nepali government have always adopted, and that they do not allow any anti-China activities on Nepali soil.
The king said in his proclamation the government is keen to democracy. Only to respect what is actually done. Some of the people actions and not words, we have heard again and again what the right direction. And in some cases they have been Some senior politicians have been released. Do you think your pressure tactics are working? conflict. Development space is getting restricted by both sides in the planned action. Implications for development co-operation posed by the human rights situation in Nepal, restrictions on civil liberties and the Basic Operating Guidelines to ensure development access to the poor. The donors agreed to share strategies and plan for the continuation of support to Nepal's NHRC, and to continue constructuve interaction with the WIB and the ADB on the development effectiveness of their portfolio for support for Nepal.

What is your current policy on development and humanitarian aid? They are under review. There are parts of it which were dependent on the continuation of the IMF/World Bank program and since these are not going to be submitted to the IMF/World Bank boards for the moment, it follows that those programs can't proceed. There are some projects which no longer make sense and are no longer justifiable in parliamentary terms. But of course we continue to want to deliver real assistance to the poor including those in the remote areas of the country. We will be assessing those programs under a number of criteria including the quality of our staff and practical realities. The development space is getting restricted by both sides in the conflict.

Do you think your pressure tactics are working? The king has said to us that he needs a bit of time in order to work out a plan about what he is going to do during the next three years. While we would like to see some hint of action on many of the demands that I put forward, we will wait and see what he comes up with before taking our thinking process further. The same is true for the political parties if they come up with a plan in order to produce a coherent and structured platform, which we can then support.

Some senior politicians have been released. We would see those measures as being very limited steps in the right direction. And in some cases they have been countered by further arrests, they release some with one hand and arrest others with the other hand. We would be looking at actions and not words, we have heard again and again what different governments are intending to do but we do not have only to respect what is actually done. Some of the people the king has surrounded himself with do not encourage us to believe him when he says he's interested in returning to democracy.

Are you satisfied with the moves here to fulfill human rights commitments ahead of the Geneva conference this month? The king said in his proclamation the government is keen to respect human rights yet at the same time there has been intimidation of human rights activists many of them not allowed to leave the Valley. There is no effective monitoring allowed, access to detainees is restricted, UN observers who've come here have found a record number of disappearances, there is question marks about the future of an independent human rights commission, these are all issues that will be raised in Geneva.

But I don't want you to get the impression we are not as worried about Maoist violations, they have been behaving pretty appallingly themselves, extorting money, recruiting child soldiers and so on. We believe the democratic space, and I include in that the civil liberties and respect of human rights, has to be an essential part of the solution to the conflict. Democracy does much more widely than the political leaders but you don't encourage the emergence of a mature democracy by locking up party leaders. Civil liberties and media leaders sink low when they accepted the government's largest last October, even when the accompanying 3-point media policy was aimed at countering attacks from their own media, they said they would continue to support the government's policies. Few doubt the energy of our human rights organisations. But their tenuous alliances have rubbed them of opportunities to build systems to safeguard rights. Almost a decade after civilians started disappearing in Nepal, we still don't have a basic legal framework to base our account for them. Likewise, those who have lost loved ones to atrocities committed by both parties have yet to find legal and humanitarian recourse for sustained assistance. With so many rights organisations around, one would think that each would specialise on an aspect of the problem. But all that they appear to agree on is the lowest-common denominator: repeated street rallies, trite calls for peace and dramatic arrest scenes played to the gallery of donors. All these have left them with little time for unglamorous and dirty-fingered perseverance to help make our imperfect legal system start taking the rights of victims seriously.

It is time for all to do some serious soul-searching. It is time for all to do some serious soul-searching. It is time for all to do some serious soul-searching.
Interview with First Vice-chairman Tulsi Giri
BBC Nepal Service

Tulsi Giri: (Laughs) It’s not about what I want. It’s the king who wants certain things achieved and I’m here to help him to the best of my ability for the country’s sake.

But you’ve been away a long time. How familiar are you still with Nepal’s ground reality?

Even if I was away I used to keep in touch. People are surprised that you came back. How can I answer that? It’s not for me to say why they are surprised.

Were you aware that the February First move was being planned?

No.

You are now a senior official, what is your priority?

That is a government policy question.

You are a senior official now. What do you think about the king?

He is a great leader and so much is expected of him. I am trying to rescue the country.

What I can say is that, as the king said in his proclamation, everyone has to work together. Since then, the king has repeatedly expressed his commitment towards the country is in a big crisis because of terrorism and there is interdependence. But we can’t force any country to do anything. It just doesn’t work.

The people have misgivings that the Panchayat like you and Mr Bista have brought back.

How can I help it if people have misgivings? I have clear instructions from the king about what I have to do. I will start visiting people who have misgivings and get anywhere.

Tulsi Giri speaks out
Deuba blames messengers

Kantipur, 13 March

Former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba lashed out at reporters during a press conference at his Budhanilkahara residence on Saturday, the day after his release. “I warned you that a time would come when there would be censorship but you didn’t listen did you?” said the visibly angry Deuba. “Today I am deliberately toning down my words so it will be possible for you to publish them.”

Asked to compare the current state of emergency with that during his tenure (in 2003) Deuba replied, “In my time, you criticised me, wrote nonsense against me, blasted me, can you do that now? All you can report is jindabad this and jindabad that.” Adding, “I am a person who wants the best for monarchy. I want democracy to work with monarchy. But you always called me a palace puppet, didn’t you say such nonsensical things?” As Deuba got more and more worked up, his wife Arzu, Prakash Sharan Mahat and Minendra Rijal had to calm him down. But Deuba went on to accuse the press of politically motivated criticism against him. He said he told the king: “I am not the problem, why should I resign?”

Deuba said he had given the Royal Nepali Army everything it wanted. “What the army said, I did, I increased the defence budget, bought four helicopters, recruited 11,000 soldiers. And the king does this after the army had been strengthened and if it hadn’t been strengthened, Maoist violence would have escalated,” he said. As the journalists were leaving Deuba said: “Publish what I’ve said and I’ll consider you all bahadurs.”


The United Nations and bilateral donors are reminding the Security Forces and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPNM) that they have a duty to protect civilians caught up in the conflict, that every effort should be made to ensure that civilians have access to essential humanitarian supplies, and that medical emergencies are given free passage at all times.

The United Nations and bilateral donor agencies in Nepal urge all parties to ensure that movement of supplies and vehicles intended to alleviate the suffering of civilian populations are not restricted.

Common Article III of the Geneva Conventions says that civilians shall in all circumstances be treated humanely and not be subject to violence towards life and person or other cruel treatment.

Within the past few weeks there have been credible reports of women dying in childbirth because they could not reach medical treatment. In addition there have been incidents throughout Nepal of humanitarian and development activities being restricted, stopped or threatened by parties to the conflict.

The conflict in Nepal has impacted significantly on some of the poorest and most marginalized people in the country. It is the duty of those who are in a position to control civilians to ensure their safety and their rights. There is particular concern for 100,000 Bhutanese refugees in the east of Nepal who are entirely dependent on the regular arrival of relief supplies.

Insecurity, armed activity and CPNM blockades are pushing Nepal toward the abyss of a humanitarian crisis. Children are especially threatened; supplies of vaccines, Vitamin A capsules, de-worming tablets and essential drugs must reach rural areas over the coming months to prevent wholly avoidable deaths.

The United Nations and bilateral donors call on all parties to allow free, safe and unhindered access for all groups providing emergency, humanitarian and development assistance to people at risk, and to provide the necessary protection for aid workers.
A visitor peers at photographs of inmates executed at the Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh (above). Classrooms were divided into hundreds of cells or torture chambers (below).

After 30 years, the Khmer Rouge’s reign of terror in Cambodia 30th YEARS LATER IN CAMBODIA

FROM SCHOOL TO CONCENTRATION CAMP TO MUSEUM: A visitor peers at photographs of inmates executed at the Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh (above). Classrooms were divided into hundreds of cells or torture chambers (below).

A longer version of this article appeared in Anil Kharavela.
of terror still haunts cambodia

books on cambodian history

Getting Away With Genocide: Cambodia’s Long Struggle Against the Khmer Rouge
Tom Fawthrop, Helen Jarvis

Voices from S-21: Terror and History in Pol Pot’s Secret Prison
David Chandler

Brother Number One: A Political Biography
David P. Chandler

How Pol Pot Came to Power: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Communism in Cambodia, 1930-1975
Ben Kiernan

When the War Was over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution
Elizabeth Becker

Children of Cambodia’s Killing Fields: Memoirs by Survivors
Dith Pran

A History of Cambodia
David Chandler

Dancing in Cambodia, at large in Burma
Amitav Ghosh

DIGITAL IMAGING A REALITY FOR EVERYONE

These photo printers from an integral component of the Epson Printers. The initiative and premiere location of Epson Printers, Scanners, Ink and Paper that make the long promised dream of simple, fast and high quality digital imaging a reality for everyone.
Nepal figures in Condi’s trip

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice may not have included Nepal in her Asian tour this week but the kingdom loomed large in her discussions in New Delhi and Beijing.

At a joint press conference with Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh in New Delhi on Wednesday, she spoke of the need for King Gyanendra to restore the democratic process in Nepal. “There needs to be a return to democracy in Nepal and that must happen very, very soon. As a great democracy India along with the United States, really must stand for exactly that,” she said adding that the United States and India have had excellent cooperation in addressing the Nepali situation.

“I do not expect democracy, whether in South Asia or the Middle East, to be ‘American style’. The important thing is that there be systems that respect human dignity, that respect the rule of law, that respect the right to say what you wish and worship as you please. And that can take many different forms,” she said. Indian envoy to Nepal Shiv Shankar Mukherjee was in India then for consultations.

Rice also discussed issues such as Indo-Pak ties, Afghanistan, Iraq, west Asia and other issues of mutual interest with India’s Foreign Minister Natwar Singh. Marking her tenure early with suitcase diplomacy, Rice is in Asia this week with stops in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, before turning to China, South Korea and Japan to take up the thorny issues of North Korea and China-Taiwan relations. She praised the progress that India and Pakistan have made toward peace. Improved relations between the two countries have resulted in a bus service across the disputed territory of Kashmir, which is to begin this April.

Rice also said that India and the United States would enhance their defence cooperation. Both she and Singh said no announcements would be made on arms sales however. Singh added that the two had discussed defence issues and supplies, including the sale of F16 jet fighters to Pakistan. Pakistan has been requesting the United States to sell F16s to its military but India is opposed to the move and says the planes could be used against India in a conflict. Rice also made it clear to India that the United States had some reservations on India’s permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

In Pakistan, later on the same day, Rice met with President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. She said that the two had discussed defence issues and supplies, including the sale of F16 jet fighters to Pakistan. Pakistan has been requesting the United States to sell F16s to its military but India is opposed to the move and says the planes could be used against India in a conflict. Rice also made it clear to India that the United States had some reservations on India’s permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

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have failed to create growth and have exacerbated poverty across the globe," said Neel Kashkari, national co-ordinator for the anti-debt campaigning group Jubilee USA Network.

"Paul Wolfowitz is the most controversial choice Bush could have made," said Nijik Njoro Njiju, director of the 50 Years Is Enough Network.

"Wolfowitz brings no apparent development experience to the job but offers a record ofabbrasion with environmentalists and unilateralism that represents exactly the wrong direction for the World Bank," said Robert Weissman, director of Essential Action.

"His term as an ambassador to Indonesia taught him a lot about development," said Peter Tatchell, who followed the Centre for Global Development in Washington, who compares Wolfowitz's antipathy towards the World Bank to that of Robert McNamara, a former secretary of defence during the Vietnam War. McNamara's departure as the longest-serving president of the World Bank, instituting substantial changes.

Those against Wolfowitz are placing their hopes on a strong European opposition. Europeans together account for a substantial enough bloc that they could reject the US action. The US persuaded the Nine to keep the president of the World Bank. The managing director of the IMF has traditionally been a European, handpicked by European governments.

By Jody Lofgren (IPS)

In June 1995, James Wolfensohn became the ninth president of the World Bank. Four years later, he became the third president in World Bank history to be reappointed to a second, five-year term.

A naturalised American citizen, he announced in December that he would step down, when his term expired. On 1 June 2005, a new president will take over.

Wolfensohn's record is not all positive. Like most newcomers, he believed that a management shake-up could make the bank as efficient as a private company. As a public institution, the bank is answerable to a board of directors and representing shareholder governments, that meets twice a year to pose nitpicking questions about projects, forcing managers to spend days chasing answers. Then they complain that the bank is slow and bureaucratic.

At the same time, the bank's rich-country shareholders feel free to pile more mandates—do something about AIDS, promote primary education, sanitation, the environment and so on—and then feel equally free to excoriate the bank for lacking focus. Perhaps because his early tenure coincided with the stock market bubble, which was accompanied by a bubble in the risks of management guru, Wolfensohn overestimated the magic that private sector took for. Instead, he created a board of private sector CEOs to launch a management shake-up that alienated his staff and burned up $250 million. This cost and disruption, together with Wolfensohn's tendency to drive the bank into new areas such as cultural preservation, explain the damn near press commentary around the mid-point of his tenure.

Wolfensohn overestimated what his outreach to NGO critics was likely to accomplish. But none of it insulated the bank from the anti-globalisation protests of 2000 or from some vociferous campaigns to block particular bank projects. The intimidating effect on the bank's lending was profound. For much of Wolfensohn's tenure, the bank shielded away from controversial infrastructure projects that might incure the wrath of environmentalists.

In 2002, the bank's stunned managers were treated to a presentation on how far this trend had gone. In each of the three previous years, project lending by the bank's unheralded arm had been lower than in any of the previous 20. This retreat might have been indefensible if it had won the bank peace with its activist critics but critics are as vociferous as ever. It might have been defensible if infrastructure were somehow unimportant to development. But without power projects, there can be no industry and little growth, without water projects there can be few gains in public health, but without roads, commerce will be non-existent.

As Wolfensohn's decade at the bank draws to a close, the institution finds itself in a position depressingly like that of 1995. It remains indispensable: no other institution can rival its sophistication in dealing with development and development seems even more important to the rich world after 9/11. But the bank remains vulnerable. To the old attacks from left and right, the bank must add two new challenges.

The first comes from debt relief. If the World Bank is to forgive 100 percent of some borrowers' debt, what happens to the resulting hole in its balance sheet?

The second challenge stems from the uncertain state of the bank's theory of development. The biggest development successes of recent times—China, Vietnam and to a certain extent, India—have taken the World Bank's advice only selectively. The bank has reacted by acknowledging that a competent state which can implement policies consistently may matter more than the policy choices—meaning that its own role as policy adviser is of secondary importance. This new humility is admirable if it involves a risk. Can the bank continue to solicit money for its soft-loan window while acknowledging that it cannot determine development outcomes?

The bank's future cannot be taken for granted and the character of the institution's next leader may have a big impact on its stance. The names circulating in Washington, like Paul Wolfowitz, are alarming. At a time when the salience of transnational threats has become conventional wisdom, we may be about to squander the best tool we have to manage them.

(Prospect)

lead the World Bank

One disabled person—one Indian, one Pakistani, devote their lives to peace.

Two disabled people—one Indian, one Pakistani, devote their lives to peace.

T two stories, one from the shores of the Arabian Sea and the other from the Kashmir Valley. A diving accident, a land mine, two lives from Pakistan and India transformed.

Umar, the engineering student from Karachi in his wheelchair and Khurram, the peace activist from Srinagar with his plastic leg, are driven by far more than the urge to

"When I was an engineering student from Karachi, I decided I could do it on my own," he explained. "I stumbled upon the website of the Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy, now in its 10th year. He became a member and the organisation sponsored his visa application but the Indian government kept his passport for six months before returning it with regrets citing ‘security reasons’."

"He should make a symbolic crossing at Wagah on his wheelchair and then take the bus to Delhi," commented a senior Indian foreign ministry official at Foreign Minister Natwar Singh's residence in Delhi for the forum delegates. That is what Umar did, on his first visit to India along with his parents and 300 other Pakistani delegates, to attend the conference.

The authorities are still not willing to allow him to travel to Delhi on his own. But his brief meeting with Foreign Minister Natwar Singh at Singh's reception yielded a ray of hope. Singh directed officials to arrange an appointment for Umar at the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, in New Delhi. His visa has been extended and he has undergone a preliminary examination at the centre.

Khurram was an activist coordinator of the Jammu & Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (www.jkccs.org), an independent organisation devoted to covering human rights abuses, with particular focus on youth, students and women. Last January, their volunteers acted as bodyguards for the Pakistani leader Yasin Malik, who was wandering at the World Social Forum in Mumbai as though he hadn’t an enemy in the world. Although not affiliated with any political party, activists were only too aware of the possible repercussions of any attack on Malik.

Among them was Khurram, who also found time to liaise with media, providing independent insights into the human rights situation in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

In April, Khurram was among those injured in a landmine blast at Kupwara in north Kashmir during an election monitoring round. Fellow activist, Aasiya Jeetani, 29 and the 34-year old driver of the vehicle, Ghulam Nabi Sheikh, died in the blast.

The mine was planted by aosomal military organisation. "They called up later to say sorry, and that they had not meant to target us," Khurram wants peace in the region—not the peace of a graveyard but a just and lasting peace. This would mean providing equal opportunities to both young men and women.

Beena Sarwar is the op-ed editor of The News in Karachi.
The magic move

Just some simple steps could make you king of the green

T
e the smiles on the faces of your students when you are trying to teach them golf is the most satisfying moment. Their faces just light up when after a few lessons, they start hitting the ball solo and score well. Every now and then, some of the beginners that I coach give me the opportunity that makes everything worthwhile.

Most recreational golfers work hard on improvising long games rather than honing short ones. Almost every one of them tries to whack the ball a few yards long and straight. I have looked into the importance of the mind to produce better results. Every sport needs a combination of various things to achieve the best results. Let us look into the other more important aspect that contributes to better performance on the golf course—the sound technique. It is the best way to swing the club to hit the ball straight and long or just perform better in general.

Recently, I have been working with many golfers and found that most had common problems: no shoulder turn on the back swing, not dropping the right shoulder on the start of the downswing and not rotating the hips through the shot. Golf professionals can usually hit the ball up to 100 yards longer than most club golfers without much effort. They use their shoulders and hips to help hit the ball whereas the club golfers just use their hands.

For consistent results, one must turn the shoulders at least 90 degrees especially after reaching the top of the back swing. This magic move is dropping the right shoulder, then turning the hip to allow the club to come from the inside path increasing the chances of hitting the ball more solidly.

The down swing, right hand golfers should drop their right shoulder. To create a solid angle of attack in order to hit the ball, the shaft of the club needs to be parallel to the target at this point. Then turn the hip to bring the club head back to square position at impact. The hip turn can be crucial in hitting the target and remember to keep both hands straight before taking the swing up to the finishing position. This is the magic move that can help you generate more power and swing speed.

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

SURYA NEPAL GOLF

Bowed over by girls

Who says cricket is only for boys?

Last month, when the Regional Cricket Development Committee of Nepal Cricket Association planned to launch a female cricket tournament, they were laughed at and ridiculed.

Not anymore. In a short time, the committee was able to find a large number of girls interested in playing the game. Committee members went school-to-school and handpicked aspiring players. They were given a crash course in the game and what has surprised everyone is the extent of this hidden talent of female cricketers in our schools.

In March, scores of high school girls with virtually no game experience participated in an inter-school tournament. And, beat this, they played pretty well, too. The number of participants exceeded the expectation of the organisers. “The enthusiasm for the game and their participation has thrilled cricket lovers,” says Lekh Bahadur Chhettri, chairman of the committee.

Mangal Pundit High School (picture), best Suryodaya High School with eight wickets during the finals on 5 March. The team captain Nairi Thapa alone scored 37 runs for two wickets.

Suryodaya lost all wickets during the first batting in 18.5 overs and managed to score 74 runs. Mostly beginners, the girls had to be taught how to hold the bat for the first time only a month ago. But they learned quickly and pretty soon were scoring runs and shattering wickets. The spectators were encouraging and no one booed or teased them. Birun Buraamagar of Angelo High School was declared the Best Player while Mangal’s captain Nairi won the Man of the Match award.

Encouraged and ready-to-go, the girls are now bubbling with enthusiasm. They are even demanding a national level female-only cricket tournament. “We are eager to make this happen,” says Birun who is now thinking of turning to cricket for a career. “Until a month ago, I had no clue about cricket. Now I’m obsessed with it,” she adds. “I want to participate in the national championship.”

Jay Kumar Neel Shah, president of Nepal Cricket Association can hardly believe his eyes. “This is amazing. We should be working towards making this national,” says Shah. And why not let them play the boys and perhaps even beat them at their own game.

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

SURYA NEPAL GOLF
**Outlines**

These drawings trace not just the advancement of art but also Nepal’s changing times

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**Fox hunt**

George Orwell is alive and kicking in the double speak world of an unfair and unbalanced news channel

Given the subject matter it is perhaps understandable why Outfoxed is one documentary going straight to DVD rather than to the cinemais. After all, it is one thing to upset George Bush and McDonalds but a whole more dangerous business risk to court Rupert Murdoch’s displeasure.

Directed by Robert Greenwald, it is a shamelessly partisan expose of the way in which Murdoch’s Fox News Channel has become little more than a Republican mouthpiece, brow-beating interviewees who don’t subscribe to the party line, firing staff of the wrong political persuasion and, more than a Republican mouthpiece, brow-beating interviewees who don’t subscribe to the party line, firing staff of the wrong political persuasion and, more than a Republican mouthpiece, brow-beating interviewees who don’t subscribe to the party line, firing staff of the wrong political persuasion and, more than a Republican mouthpiece, brow-beating interviewees who don’t subscribe to the party line, firing staff of the wrong political persuasion and, more than a Republican mouthpiece, brow-beating interviewees who don’t subscribe to the party line.

Even-handed either. It may not be even-handed either. It may even have made and illustrated its point long before the end credits roll but it’s a fascinating, and at times, a grimly funny piece of work which, if nothing else, goes a long way to explain why 67 percent of Americas connected the 9/11 conspiracy theory to George Bush and Osama bin Laden even though the evidence for such a conspiracy is flimsy at best. And there are no examples of practice from Murdoch’s vast empire of print and TV media.

Greenwald focuses solely on Fox News, balanced probably isn’t exactly a term you’d apply to the documentary either.

But, then you wouldn’t expect a documentary on Goebbels to be particularly even-handed either. It may have made and illustrated its point long before the end credits roll but it’s a fascinating, and at times, a grimly funny piece of work which, if nothing else, goes a long way to explain why 67 percent of Fox viewers believed Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda to be connected.
A Nepali first

At a time when the country and its armed forces are under the human rights spotlight, there are som
times stories of bravery, humanity and sensitivity to suffering. It is a messy war, Nepalis and killing Nepalis, and
deadly battles like Bardiya on 6 March shouldn’t be seen as a victory or defeat.

That is the message from Maj Gen Deepak Bikram Rana (pictured) who took media and
human rights activists to the site. There were dozens of bodies of
Maoists along the sides of the road, captured weapons were
lined up. But Maj Gen Rana wore a pained look on his face as he
showed the visitors the bodies. “I can’t say I feel happy about this,
in fact I am filled with sorrow, after all they are all Nepalis,” he
said, “in war time you either kill or get killed, but I wish it wasn’t
like that.”

The Maoists ambushed an
army convoy on the Nepalganj-
Gulelia road near the Indian
border and killed four security
personnel. The soldiers radioed for reinforcements and the
Rangers soon arrived. Some 48 Maoists were killed, and there
were dozens of wounded Maoists who had been evacuated to the
surrounding villages. Maj Gen Rana’s instructions to his troops
were clear: “Our wounded Maoist brothers should be given proper
care, we don’t kill anyone who is unarmed. We are all Nepalis
first.”

If only there were more like
Maj Gen Rana on both sides, the
war perhaps would be fought
by the rules and it
would be easier to
find a resolution.

Rameswor Bohara
Karn" is the story of one man's retribution dealt to him by life, retribution born out of his dark past. John (John Abraham) is an assassin who for kids at Buddha Gallery. 4441689

Rugby Practice Every Saturday. 4439593
Sanubar Meta Every Saturday at the Dharamra
Bakery Cafe, 12AM-PM.

The God Dance of Kathmandu Valley Tuesdays at Hotel Vajra.

MUSIC
Night for Tsunami: Kohir Gauri live at Shanker Hotel. Lalitpur on
19 March, 7PM. Tickets Rs 50 to 1400, 4410151, 5021136.
Live Jazz by JCS trio and Peter McTwister, Thursdays at Full Moon Bar.
Mondays at Jalan Jalan Restaurant, Lajimpat, 7PM. 4410438

Garage sale, pet practices & more.
Every Saturday. 4435939

Paintings by Pradip K Bajracharya at Buddha Gallery,
until 24 March. 4441689
Artworks by Britain's best children's illustrators at the
British Council, Lainchor. Until 6 May. 4410798

Interior Exhibition at BICC, 16-20 March.

EVENTS
Just Divine Jack Daniel's Chill Out Night at Latin Quarter. Baber Mahal
residents on 18 March. BPM onwards. Rs. 500.
Alumni Day of St Xavier's School on 19 March at St Xavier's School,
Jawalakhel. 10AM-5PM. Contact 4417467. psga.org.np
Gyanyadans Festival live with 1974 AD on 19 March, 12-5PM at Gyanyadans Residential School, Khokana, Lalitpur.
Outlooked Documentary by Robert Greenwald at The Film Club, Bagghanara, Patan Dhokha on 20 March. BPM Tickets Rs 50, 5542544
Francoines Week with French food at the Alliance Française, Trispuresen, 2-24March. 4421163
Annual Peace Ride Nepal on 24 March, Kathmandu-Chitwan/Pokhara.
Rs 5,500, includes three-nights lodging and food. 4440462
French Speakers Evening at the Alliance Française, Trispuresen on
3-4March. BPM onwards. 4421163
KICCI Good Friday Service on 25 March at The Norwegian School,
Jawalakhel. 6:30 AM. 5522116
KICCI Easter Sunday Service at 27 March at The Church of the Assumption, Obhobhat, 11AM.

Jati Sundays Garage sale, pet practices & more.
Jat Siddhu Ji Ko Ji Play directed by Anup Baral at Garukas, Setpott, 7PM till 10 April. 4466056
Fun in the Sun at Hotel Shangri-la. 41399. Rs 499 for adults, Rs 299 for children. 4412999
Art workshop for kids at Buddha Gallery. 4441689
Rugby Practice Every Saturday. 4439593
Sanubar Meta Every Saturday at the Dharamra
Bakery Cafe, 12AM-PM.

KATHMANDU VALLEY
Fri 21 22 23 24 25 26 1 2 3 4
Sat 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
Sun 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
Mon 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
Tues 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 1 2 3
Wed 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Thu 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
Fri 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
Sat 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
Sun 29 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY
by MAUSAM BEED
Two storm systems have moved through Nepal in the past week, bringing moisture that has regenerated into local convective over the mountains. What it did was keep the maximum temperatures from going as high as we had predicted last week. We are now going into uncharted territory as the westerly fronts are superceded by local thunderstorms. Being a wet winter-spring expects more of these isolated storms along the ridhith and mountains. This satellite picture taken on Thursday morning shows another fresh moisture front heading our way but its advance may be thwarted by a high pressure system over northern India. Conclusion: the mercury level of the valley will fluctuate due to sunny intervals during the wakening sun that will raise thereafter. Aftersnoons will be breezy.

NERALI WEATHER
by MAUSAM BEED

Good < 60
Ok 61 to 120
Unhealthy 121 to 350
Harmful 351 to 425
Hazardous >425

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Stop complaining, or else

Despite all the efforts emergency personnel have taken on a war-footing these days to ensure everyone sings hosannas, there are still some naysayers out there who are moaning and groaning. They should be ashamed of themselves. Here we are, trying to liberate the public from having to listen to boring FM discussions that used to go on forever and forcing them to broadcast 24-hour music and the nabobs of negativism aren’t satisfied with the song selection. We got rid of those irritating mobile phones that always got cut off in mid-conversation, and the fusspots want their darling little vibrators back. Pampered brats! Let’s spank them.

We started collecting garbage at 8PM and now the neighbourhood dingo pack is complaining that we have deprived them of their midnight snack. We patched the potholes along the main thoroughfares and shopkeepers are now whining about speeding motorcycles. We made Sunday a working day to make the workforce more productive and they want democracy reinstated. You give them an arm, and they want a leg.

Complain, complain, complain, that’s all they ever did around here. That’s why we had to threaten editors to make them shut up, and now they’re complaining that they can’t complain anymore. I’ll tell you what was wrong with this country: there were just too many civilian liberties. How soothing it has been for the past two months not to have to listen to the media telling us how bad things are. Now we can pretend everything is hunkydory in the boondocks. What a relief we can’t hear the grumbling, it was getting unbearable.

One thing us yesmen are definitely not complaining about these days is the ban on mobile phones. An average Nepali used to spend two hours on theirs cells every day, multiplied by the number of users all over the country we have already saved 13.2 million manhours (which is equivalent to 5 million horsepowers in the metric system) to be channeled into much more productive activities such as re-registering everything in sight.

Stop complaining, or else