Bamboo curtain

Bhutani refugees wait for their fate to be decided

A Bhutan’s celebration of its UN-sanctioned concept of Gross National Happiness in Canada next week will coincide with World Refugee Day on 20 June. It will have to answer for the misery of nearly 110,000 Bhutani refugees in Nepal.

Canada is one of the western countries pushing a new formula to resolve the refugee crisis with third country resettlement. Under the proposal, Bhutan takes back a proportion of refugees, a majority will be ‘locally integrated’ in Nepal and the rest will be given citizenship by some western governments.

There is compassion fatigue after 15 years, and also concern that frustration among refugees in camps in eastern Nepal could easily be exploited by extremists. Hence the hurry to find a quick solution.

Weeky Internet Poll #252
Q. Is the continued crackdown on the media by the state justified?
Total votes: 549
Yes: 61%
No: 39%

Weeky Internet Poll #253. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com
Q. Is it now time for the Maoists to give up violence and join the political mainstream?

---

NARESH NEWAR

Where is your business moving? Travel today is about much more than where your travellers are going, it’s about where is your business headed using your strategic objectives as a starting point. President Travel & Tours as partner of CWI for Nepal delivers not only the reliable, hi quality services your travellers need, we focus on the larger goals of your senior management: cost optimisation and the highest possible return on your travel investment.

President Travel & Tours (P) Ltd.
Dhulikhel Bhairab, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel. 4230925.
TRIAL AND TERROR

Past cruelty is always eclipsed by headlines of more recent brutality. Time blunts the jagged edges of pain. We have to keep reminding ourselves of the horrific new year massacre of villagers in Nawaparai by Maoist hunting vigilantes, the murder of popular preacher Pandit Narayan Prasad Pokhrel last month, the recent abductions of children and teachers in Kaski, Dadeldhura and Dang. Unjustified these attacks were stepped up by news of the deliberate and pre-meditated terrorist attack on civilians in Madh and Kabhre in the past week, the senseless murder of Campus Chief Ganeshman Palikhe in Pokhara and on Tuesday the slaughter of six family members of two policemen in Dhangadi that included a year-old baby.

Here are the signs the revolution is now using terror for terror’s sake. It has lost what remained of its social and political reform agenda and has degenerated into criminality. Even by the terrible standards of its own past cruelty these recent killings can only be described as crimes against humanity. Yes, 12 armed soldiers in mult were travelling in the Madh bus but anyone (especially the comrades with his finger on the detonator trigger) could have seen from a mile away that the bus was piled high with civilians.

An elderly Madam said it all for all the Nepalis. “You can’t ask people to die for something that they did not do. Jonathan as a Great Helmsman himself intended, support for the movement now comes mainly from the barrel of the gun—no more a genuine espousal of the cause of revolution. The political base of the cadre has ended the chain of command is in disarray and the leadership riff is shifting fissures right down to the grassroots.

To be fair, the comrades are in a dilemma. Moderate elements within the movement that now see the futility of further violence are incapable of braking or steering this runaway juggernaut. And there is every sign the hardliners are dominant. Indian and Nepali politicians tried in New Delhi last week to convince Maoist leaders to join the mainstream through a constitutional compromise. But the political parties at stake do it not because it is the best course of action but because they will be chased out of the villages.

While we wait for the broader political agreement necessary for restoring the peace process. Maoists would do well to reclaim their political agenda by unilaterally宣布ing a moratorium on use of landmines, booby traps, assassinations of unarmed civilians and abandonment of atrocities. The security forces could respond with a reciprocal freeze on offensive action. You don’t need to agree on a ceasefire to begin such confidence-building measures. And sooner or later they’ll have to talk.

Such gestures will build the trust necessary to begin the more challenging work of sustainable peace-building. But it needs visionaries.

Frequent felicitation syndrome is a social disease. The more_starved a society is for achievers, the more felicitation ceremonies it holds. From the neighbourhood kid who makes a robot to a mountaineer who climbs to the summit at 60 years old to the 16’th class, we really owe the gowning and veneration.

Given our collective addiction for affirmation, all 83,747 students who passed the SLC this year are being feted. Private sector Plus Two schools who graduate, distinction holders are showered with scholarships, there are full pages from the local newspapers to the effect: ‘First in the country’.

Cases and implications this same person in a scam, the body as well as the move to control corruption becomes unconstitutional.

Prime Minister Deuba used his constitutional prerogative to dissolve the house in 2002, a move validated by the Supreme Court. That same person was charge-sheeted on corruption charges his followers have taken to the streets demanding restoration of the house that he himself dissolved.

The political parties oppose the inclusion of the NHRC members because their candidates have not been included as they were in the previous commission. Why should the NBR take a bunch of political appointees?

Professionals such as lawyers are expected to function without bias or prejudice. But legal practitioners are taking political issues to the streets even on matters on which the Supreme Court had previously given its verdict. Ditto for journalists. They are demanding the right to fire expression. What we see are signs of greater objectivity and ethical responsibility in the media. Whether media’s rights come responsibilities.

All this, of course, doesn’t absolve the state from blame. And even if the state is to blame, symbolic is the way: Maoists are being treated, allowing them to be politically exploited. The government has not been able to refute, deny or correct the negative press the country is receiving domestically and internationally. The ground reality is far removed from what appears in the media, yet the administration makes effort to set the record straight. Why is the state only talking to a handful of sympathetic state media?

There is no point preaching to the converted. The government seems to be dihethering on the media ordinance. Why is it hesitant?

The RCCC sets the original bail amount in the Melamchi case at Rs 570 million. A few months later, the bail amount is reduced to five million. Has the quantum of corruption suddenly shrunk?

India has been up its peak in the region’s crises. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan. The Asian Development Bank have now given it the lead role in solving the situation in Nepal even though New Delhi is implicated in destabilising activities here and elsewhere.

It is the state’s responsibility to give those who didn’t make another chance a working facility with language and arithmetic but not the ability to memorise articles and literature to studies and social laws. There is no time for secondary candidates for trade courses and since they are the majority, we must invest in them rather than on those that passed with other options. Current donor-funded programmes have been limited to wearing the national dress, speaking our language and boasting of the fact that we have never been a British colony. Is this all there is to it? •

How about those who didn’t pass?

It is the state’s responsibility to give those who didn’t make another chance an option that has failed to grab the nation’s attention: employable skills. Nepal society is unfair to the unprivileged. Dramatic improvements in national education aren’t possible in the short-term. It will be unrealistic to do away with the entire examination system immediately. We need to tinkering with the structure and introduce gradual changes to maximise returns from investments in the public school infrastructure.

The first thing to do is discard the ‘failed’ tag. Certification should be awarded on the basis of strengths and weaknesses of a student. Based on test performance, for example, the examining authority can say that Indra’s competence in English is excellent while he needs to improve his math. Chandra did well in science but must work harder to improve her Nepali.

Rehabilitating ‘SLC failed’ school dropouts is much more challenging. Lured by the promise of a better life after school, many students who drop out of school or other options. Current donor-funded programmes have been limited to wearing the national dress, speaking our language and boasting of the fact that we have never been a British colony. Is this all there is to it? •

GUEST COLUMN

Bijen Jonche

There is a limit to which you can bend logic. Take this example. When a leader-appointed twice as prime minister under certain situations prevailing in this country it is considered constitutional. Under the same set of conditions when an anti-corruption body is formed to investigate corruption

There are signs of greater objectivity and ethical responsibility in the media. Whether media’s rights come responsibilities.

All this, of course, doesn’t absolve the state from blame. And even if the state is to blame, symbolic is the way: Maoists are being treated, allowing them to be politically exploited. The government has not been able to refute, deny or correct the negative press the country is receiving domestically and internationally. The ground reality is far removed from what appears in the media, yet the administration makes effort to set the record straight. Why is the state only talking to a handful of sympathetic state media?

There is no point preaching to the converted. The government seems to be dihethering on the media ordinance. Why is it hesitant?

The RCCC sets the original bail amount in the Melamchi case at Rs 570 million. A few months later, the bail amount is reduced to five million. Has the quantum of corruption suddenly shrunk?

India has been up its peak in the region’s crises. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan. The Asian Development Bank have now given it the lead role in solving the situation in Nepal even though New Delhi is implicated in destabilising activities here and elsewhere.

It is the state’s responsibility to give those who didn’t make another chance a working facility with language and arithmetic but not the ability to memorise articles and literature to studies and social laws. There is no time for secondary candidates for trade courses and since they are the majority, we must invest in them rather than on those that passed with other options. Current donor-funded programmes have been limited to wearing the national dress, speaking our language and boasting of the fact that we have never been a British colony. Is this all there is to it? •

How about those who didn’t pass?

It is the state’s responsibility to give those who didn’t make another chance an option that has failed to grab the nation’s attention: employable skills. Nepal society is unfair to the unprivileged. Dramatic improvements in national education aren’t possible in the short-term. It will be unrealistic to do away with the entire examination system immediately. We need to tinkering with the structure and introduce gradual changes to maximise returns from investments in the public school infrastructure.

The first thing to do is discard the ‘failed’ tag. Certification should be awarded on the basis of strengths and weaknesses of a student. Based on test performance, for example, the examining authority can say that Indra’s competence in English is excellent while he needs to improve his math. Chandra did well in science but must work harder to improve her Nepali.

Rehabilitating ‘SLC failed’ school dropouts is much more challenging. Lured by the promise of a better life after school, many students who drop out of school or other options. Current donor-funded programmes have been limited to wearing the national dress, speaking our language and boasting of the fact that we have never been a British colony. Is this all there is to it? •
SORRY!

Kanak Mani Dixit’s piece on Madí’s mass murder (‘Sorry’. #251) made me emotional, angry and frustrated at the same time. Being a strong believer of the idea of social justice and having suffered from the same woes of ‘anti-feudalism’ and ‘egalitarianism’ that most of our intellectuals suffer, I extended my ‘moral’ support to the Maoist movement from the very beginning. Finally, there was emerging a force capable of sheltering the very foundations of feudal institutions including the autocratic monarchy. Against the backdrop of what the mainstream political parties were doing in Kathmandu, the Maoists appeared to be genuinely fighting for a just cause. I took them as a part of our political evolution. But then just like their counterparts, the Maoists gradually became dacoits, murderers, kidnappers or plain terrorists. BP Koirala has eloquently written about this phenomenon of the degradation of revolution’ in his memoir. Today I mourn not only the death of the innocent victims of the horrid crime in Madi but also the Maoist revolution that seemed so promising at one point in our history. I feel embarrassed to have associated my dreams of an egalitarian society with them. Like hundreds of Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s militants, I was young and I was naïve.

Dr Jugal Bhutel, Moscow

- Thanks to Kanak Mani Dixit’s description of the aftermath of the Madi bomb. It saddened and angered me to think that we have come to this state where we can’t speak street讲话 without the carnage. I agree with Dixit’s conclusion that the Maoists should ‘first, stop killing innocent civilians and next, drop the guns’. Giving up violence is the only solution to the chronic barbarity of the past nine years. These four words lie the solution to this bloody conflict. Prachanda’s ‘sorry’ is ridiculous. Thanks indeed for the coverage.

Name withheld

- After killing innocent people in Madi, the Maoists have exposed that they don’t have a political agenda. By killing people who did nothing wrong, they prove that on those who couldn’t fight back, the Maoists showed they are just assassins. The mass murder in Madi was a heinous crime and the Maoists are indeed terrorists.

Kapped Joshi, Seattle, USA

- As a Nepali citizen living abroad, it is very humilitating to see and hear about all the political parties heading for India to solve our problems instead of sitting together at home to find a solution. It is a shame that our leaders have to rush to India. What do they think we are, Sikki? As long as Nepal is politely ruled by self-centred, short-sighted and uneducated leaders, democracy in Nepal is just like a coconut in a monkey’s hand. By now, we all know that the Maoist is not a political party. It is a terrorist group. The Americans, British, and Europeans want to look at Nepal through India’s perspective, they would move their embassies to New Delhi. You have no right to sit in our territory and play God with Nepal’s independence. We have to save this country from cowardly leaders, unlawful friends and terrorists.

Usha Sharma, email

- Prachanda said sorry for the Madi bombing. The people of Madi have replied by saying that is not enough. It’s no use saying sorry; the Maoists should stop this madness and find a way to put the genie back into the bottle.

Pravin Lama, Kathmandu

Your paper has published articles blaming the king, parties, Maoists, Americans, Britain, India, Who’s left? What has dishonored citizens like us is the endless cycle of blame and criticism. We should all analyse our past mistakes but not paralyse ourselves with inaction for fear that they might be repeated. Developed countries have objected to the erosion of democratic norms but are they not trying to lose their own values on us, fashion us in their image? Why don’t they first see how the people are suffering from violence before lecturing us on giving the reins back to the political parties who messed it all up in the first place? Our party leaders all deserve Oscars for being such good actors, pretending they are not responsible and putting all the blame on the king’s court. They better wake up otherwise they won’t even know their time is up.

Sujata Upetry, email

TB

In reply to Ian Harper’s letter (#250), we wish to bring to the notice of readers that there is evidence and research produced by the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) to support conclusions in Naresh Newar’s article (TB or not TB, #248). We would like to respond to the three central comments of Ian Harper. First, the NTP has presented strong empirical evidence (from individual patient data) that during the last few years the program has grown in conflict affected mid-western districts at least as fast as in the rest of the country. So far the program has had minimal difficulties operating and expanding in conflict affected areas although the conflict is threatening to impede logistical challenges, and we need, and are preparing for an even more challenging context. We appreciate Ian Harper’s argument that the operating context requires quality monitoring, which NTP will endeavour to provide whilst remaining confident with the evidence and analysis provided to date. Ian Harper’s assertion that ‘many health posts are closed or are understaffed as a consequence of the current conflict’ is probably true—but the evidence of this (that Ian Harper would agree is needed) is small scale and largely anecdotal. A deeper appreciation of the conflict’s impact on health service functioning is needed.

Second, Ian Harper writes about ‘a truly prolific growth of TB control in the private sector. There is evidence that suggests the contrary’. Research carried out recently in Lalitpur by the NTP and Nuffield, Leeds University, suggests that where the TB program is working well, the private sector treatment of tuberculosis diminishes rapidly and TB drugs become much less available in private pharmacies. The NTP is notable, in relation to other areas of the national health program, for its active engagement with the private sector. A mature, and ever-growing, partnership is established resulting in the private sector partners adhering to NTP’s diagnostic and treatment protocols.

Third, DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment strategy piloted in Nepal in the 1990s) has proved to produce better cure rates than the unsupervised model. The current NTP patient cure rates of over 85 percent suggest that this supervised model. The current NTP patient cure rates of over 85 percent suggest that this unsupervised model. The current NTP patient cure rates of over 85 percent suggest that this unsupervised model. The current NTP patient cure rates of over 85 percent suggest that this unsupervised model. The current NTP patient cure rates of over 85 percent suggest that this unsupervised model.
Local integration, repatriation to Bhutan or third country resettlement?

The refugee leaders, led by leading Bhutanese dissident Tek Nath Rizal, are not so keen on the plan saying it will divide his exiled community. But given the intransigence of Thimphu and its main backer, India, they really don’t have any other option. The Nepal-Bhutan ministerial talks went through 15 rounds but with Kathmandu distracted by conflict, there have been no meetings since 2003.

Diplomats in Kathmandu say pressure is building on Thimphu to make the first gesture of repatriating at least the first group of refugees classified as Bhutani in the aborted joint verification process and follow that up with more returnees.

“We are planning our last hope on the international community,” Rizal told us in Kathmandu this week, expressing disappointment that western governments have allowed the Bhutanese king to get away with one of the world’s largest ethnic evictions in per capita terms.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been running the camps but has been criticised by human rights groups for not pushing repatriation hard enough. Lately, Bhutanese leaders in exile say UNHCR is cutting back on aid to the camps.

“Relief support like food, shelter, health, education and other basic needs have been significantly cut back,” says Bhutanese human rights activist Ratan Gazmere. UNHCR’s Executive Committee decided in 2003 to phase out activities in the camps in favour of promoting assimilation in Nepal and third country settlement for refugees.

“The so-called phase out plan to slash the size of UNHCR’s refugee program in Nepal is unacceptable,” the rights group Asian Legal Resource Centre said in a recent statement. In an interview UNHCR’s Nepal representative, Abraham Abraham, denied there had been a cut (see interview) saying aid had actually increased by $6 million this year. But activists believe the UNHCR has emergency crises in Africa to attend to and plans to gradually hand over the Bhutanese refugee assistance to other agencies. But that isn’t easy.

The UN’s own World Food Program (WFP) has been solely responsible for supplying food to the camps, but supplies are running low and unless new commitments are made there will be no food after September. “There are signals that donor support may come but there is no 100 percent guarantee,” says WFP’s Deputy Director JF Demurgerie.

Morale is low among Bhutanese exiles and they are worried that the western plan for resettlement and repatriation is already dividing the refugees. Local integration in Nepal is the last resort but Kathmandu is opposed to it saying it will set a precedence for countries to evict citizens and get away with it.

Both the refugees and UNHCR see mediation by third party, especially India, as the solution. After all, India is the first country the refugees entered when they were driven out of Bhutan. “India cannot indefinitely say it won’t get involved,” says Ratan Gazmere. There is said to be American pressure on New Delhi to mediate on repatriation and it is using the danger of militancy spreading to India’s northeastern states as an argument.

Rizal has no doubt where the final responsibility lies: “The one country that is not bearing its share of the burden for having chased out its own citizens is Bhutan itself.”

The Maoist problem has overshadowed the refugee issue in Nepal. Are there concerns?

I don’t think that the government is not paying attention. We work with them on a daily basis. The national unit for refugee affairs coordinates a lot of work for this to be done. We have no problems in accessing the government. There is no problem in the lack of government interest. I’m sure that government has a lot of priorities but that does not in any way diminish its interest in refugees neither does it restrict me to go to the government when I need support.

UNHCR is also said to be pushing the Nepal government to agree to local integration. We recommend that we have to find a comprehensive solution to the problem simply because all refugees can’t go back or may not wish to go back. Therefore what do you do with those who are unable to go back? In that context, the UNHCR applies its traditional approach of seeking possible solutions for local integration. To that extent we have mentioned this to the government as we do in most cases of protection.

But the government is said to be against it. The government of course wants to see repatriation of refugees first and to see what other possible solutions there could be such as third country resettlement before it considers local integration.

What is the status of third country resettlement?

We are in dialogue with resettlement countries but they too are waiting for repatriation (to Bhutan) before taking up third country resettlement.

Refugee leaders want India to intervene. We would like India to play a role but at the same time we can’t insist on the kind of role they can play. What we would like is for the two countries to be able to move forward on the issue of repatriation of the refugees. And if there is any difficulty of resuming the dialogue, perhaps it could also help the Maoists.

Are Nepal and Bhutan doing enough?

When you think of 15 years where refugees have been in the camps, I don’t think enough is being done. There is need to move forward firmly and with greater commitment and resolve because you can’t just keep the refugees in the camps for another underdetermined period. This would be both inhuman and criminal.
Looking east

The west wants a piece of the action in the east, do we?

Less than two months ago this Beed dwelt on ‘Action Asia’ (244, http://www.artha.beed.net/articles/article_detai.php?id=166) and is tempted to discuss it again. People keep asking about the potentials in India, China and Southeast Asia, and will Nepal not benefit from their growth?

ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

The rejection of the European constitution by France and Netherlands is a pre-cursor to the rejection wave, which means even economic integration will be jeopardised. This will make Europe think ahead. The integration of east European countries in the Eurozone will become more difficult. There are a few core competencies at making the European state a potential leader of the future.

The US is still trying to push its growth in terms of GDP but their knowledge base is becoming an issue. Foreign student inflow is decreasing due to stringent screening norms but American universities are suffering along with the potential loss of skilled manpower for the future. In the next 10 years, it would be interesting to see how many people from countries like China still send their students to the US. Highly educated global workers are already heading for home where they can earn at par and enjoy equal lifestyles.

United States’ biggest insurance has been innovation. It is not selling the dreamland. It is not selling the seventh pair of sneakers or the fourth tv set to a household. It is selling to households that are yet to have a tv or the first pair of sneakers to an individual. The combined middle-class potential of the two countries alone surpass the total population of Europe and the US. So does India or China need to look beyond their own territories?

With highly populated countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia also unleshcing their own purchasing power, the focus will definitely be on this side of the world.

Everybody is watching to see who will emerge the leader: democratically governed India with its known problems or centralised China with its unknown pitfalls.

And here we are in Nepal, wallowing in the muck of our own making, not seeing beyond the Himalaya in the north or the tarai in the south. We have two powerful locomotives right next to us, let’s take our wagons out of sidings and hitch ourselves to them. They will pull us out but we first have to set our political house in order.

FOR THOSE WHO DARE

Business Age

June Issue on the Stands

For advertising
New Business Age (P) Ltd.
19, Shree Bhagwati Marg
Kathmandu, Kathmandu
Tel: 4425933, 4426116
Fax: 4426116
E-mail: bizagc@nexa.com.np, subs@nexus.com.np
Crying wolf again

Editorial in Himal Khubarpatrika, 15-19 June

If the foolish shepherd in the folktale had not cried wolf the villagers would have come to his rescue when the wolf really appeared. After 4 October 2002, the political parties have announced one ‘decisive’ uprising after another against autocracy. During this period common strategies and programs were charted out to rise up in the name of democracy. There has been no less than three times. Obviously, it’s not working. The effort to roll back the king has in fact labelled the parties’ protest ‘the politics of intimidation’. Nothing is stopping the parties from doing anything to find a solution—pressuring the king, threatening an uprising or shaking hands with the king. The pro-democracy agitation is itself a threat: if a non-violent agitation opens the doors for talks between the king and the parties and a sustainable solution can be found for the country’s political, social and constitutional problems, nobody would oppose it. But to use party faithful and the people to serve selfish ends in the name of democracy is dishonest.

If the parties feel that the interest of the people in their rebellion is waning, it is because they have cried wolf too often. But unlike what some members of阳台 say, the people have not taken to the streets because they are fed-up with democracy. When the parties prove that their solidarity can be trusted, more people than they ever imagined will gather in the streets. The people want to be asked about the parties’ real intentions: what do the parties and their leaders really want? Are they fearlessly, selflessly and honestly committed to democracy? Will any future agitation save the country from violence and autocracy?

A half-hearted job is never successful. For the king to be able to dismiss the parties’ decisional agitation as yet another intimidation tactic is because the parties have given him reason to say so. In fact, many Nepalics would agree. The leaders of the parties need to take this to heart. To announce a new agitation just for the sake of having one is harmful not just for the parties and their politicians but for the country. The leadership has to ask itself why. Congress and UML leaders announced the protests and then promptly left on foreign visits. This has raised questions about the commitment of the political leaders: is democracy just a slogan for them to get back to power? The king has in fact labelled the parties’ protest ‘the politics of intimidation’.

In-house

NC General Secretary Sushil Koirala in Deshantar, 5 June

National consensus needs work. We need to gather in a legitimate parliament, and this is why we have been stressing it. That demand is not for state power, parliament is the place where the king is present and so are the representatives of the people. It is a place where we can meet, talk and create an environment for consensus. It is a parliament that will prepare an agenda to try and bring the Maoists into the mainstream. Parliament can bring together all the forces in the country that have remained divided so far. That the parliament is a springboard for the parties to climb the power saddle and to pocket money is distortion. Those who claim that nothing happened in the last 12 years are out of their minds. The consciousness is in the people, revolution in media, activities of non-government organisations, construction of infrastructures like roads, irrigation, hydropower and the establishment of universities and technical institutes, these are the achievements of the parliamentary system. It is true that we parties remained divided, but we need to look forward now. The Maoists said they would not speak to an illegitimate government. It is only the parliament that can form a legitimate government capable of holding a round table conference to bring the Maoists in. The constitution has clearly stated that the government must remain accountable to parliament. By blaming the parties and suspending democratic rights, one will only close the doors for peace. It is for peace that the seven parties have kept the option of a constituent assembly open. At a time when new elections cannot take place, parliament has to be reinstated. Even parties that opposed the idea are now all for it.

Double standards

Nispakshya, 7 June

Some ministers in this cabinet have been working really hard to execute their duties but there are some who are still knocking the doors of opposition parties like the NC, UML, RSP and NSP. These ministers feel they need to remain in the parties’ good books to ensure they have jobs in the future. They are fork-tongued: when speaking to the king, they say, “Your Majesty, I am the only political figure in the cabinet, it is only I who can break these parties and get their leaders to join the government.” And when they are with Girija Prasad Koirala, Madhav Nepal or Pushpashrit Rana, they say, “I have joined the cabinet to save it from being labelled Maoists. I have been speaking the parties’ language in the cabinet and alerting the king as well.”

Even more worrying is that secretaries and other bureaucrats have been just as non-cooperative with the king and his government. They have been leaking information to the opposition and in some ministries, the bureaucracy has bypassed ministers. If this continues, the country will never attain the goals set by the king on February First. They need to be confronted, reprimanded or replaced with new faces.

Hide, quick

Drishti, 14 June

Vice-chairman Tulshi Giri, will not be repaying the loan he took from the bank in the name of his wife, but it’s just Dr Giri, his wife Sara Giri isn’t really to repay the loan she took for General Electricity either. After Dr Giri first published the news about Dr Giri being blacklisted because he didn’t pay the Rs 300,000 loan taken from Nepal Bank, it has been learnt that the bank administration received several threats. Dr Giri then desperately tried to hide the evidence. Once the news spread, Dr Giri ordered the Finance Ministry to call a meeting with the working committees of the bank on 12 June. Giri told them to hide all files and ministry officials were seriously reprimanded working committee members of the bank for leaking the news. Bank officials say they had no choice. They had to reach Dr Giri many times and had even sent several letters to that effect before finally blacklisting him in 2001. Officials of the loan department say the head of the working committee now has all papers relating to the loan. Dr Giri has now halted the proceedings.

A four-member team of the IMF led by Nepal Desk Chief CC Doko who was here on 13 June met Finance MinisterMadhusudan Shumsher Rana and pressured him to make sure that all borrowers paid back and to take action against the donors. On 13 June, the Ministry sent details regarding the meeting of 12 June to the IMF.

Maoist meetings

Jana Astha, 15 June

A Maoist delegation under the leadership of Krishna Bahadur Mahana and Baburam Bhattarai has been busy meeting Indian political party leaders in Delhi and Nepali politicians currently in Delhi. Most were face-to-face, while a source said Girija Prasad Koirala spoke to the Maoists on the phone. But the Maoist met UML leader Ram Chandra Gautam who reached Delhi via Lucknow. Among others that the Maoists met are: NC Leader Pradeep Girin, Chandru Deb-Joshi and Krishna Prasad Sthitlerna from the NC, Unity Centre Manab Prakash. However, the Maoists did not meet Maoist’s Chief Mohan Birkam Singh but his Spokesperson Chinta Bahadur
KC who reportedly poured his angst against the Maoists. The rebel group leaders also had informal sessions with diplomatic representatives of India, America and Britain. The political leaders who met the Maoist duo told them the crisis could not be solved through violence but only by working with the king to bring the army under jurisdiction of parliament. According to one leader present at the talks, the Maoists were not sure that the Indians trusted them.

Not royal
Nepal Samacharpatra, 13 June

Gorkhapatra, 14 June

Secretary of the Ministry of Communication and Information Lokman Singh Karki has specified that the government is not trying to obstruct press freedom. At a press meet he assured journalists that the communication bill being prepared by the government would not affect the freedom of the press “even an inch”. He dismissed reports to the contrary as “rumours”. He added: “Everything will be clear once the bill comes out.” He promised to discuss clauses in the bill with the press. Karki also denied the government had prevented FM radio stations from broadcasting information related to social awareness. However, political news, false accusations and defamation would not be allowed. Secretary Karki said he had not seen FM stations broadcasting news anywhere in the world during his travels. He added that the government was only trying to make the main purpose of FM radio stations was entertainment. “We are trying to give FM radio the same freedom they have all over the world,” he said.

HM on FM
Jhapa, 14 June

Secretary of the Ministry of Communication and Information Lokman Singh Karki has specified that the government is not trying to obstruct press freedom. At a press meet he assured journalists that the communication bill being prepared by the government would not affect the freedom of the press “even an inch”. He dismissed reports to the contrary as “rumours”. He added: “Everything will be clear once the bill comes out.” He promised to discuss clauses in the bill with the press. Karki also denied the government had prevented FM radio stations from broadcasting information related to social awareness. However, political news, false accusations and defamation would not be allowed. Secretary Karki said he had not seen FM stations broadcasting news anywhere in the world during his travels. He added that the government was only trying to make the main purpose of FM radio stations was entertainment. “We are trying to give FM radio the same freedom they have all over the world,” he said.

Not royal
Nepal Samacharpatra, 13 June

JHAPA—The debate on the king and queen’s photographs in textbooks has disrupted schooling in eastern Nepal. The Maoists have ordered schools to tear out the pages containing the photographs of King Gyanendra and Queen Komal in the new curriculum. In Jhapa, Morung, illam, Panchthar and other districts, Maoists burst into classrooms while in session, snatched away books and tore out the pages bearing the portraits. This has terrified many students and teachers. According to Nepal National Teachers’ Association’s Jhapa district President Bonidananda Jha, the Maoists have used the portraits of the royal couple as an excuse to terrorise the schools. Teachers say that the Maoists have threatened to take action against them if the rebels find any book with the photos of the king and queen still intact. They have also threatened any teacher who uses the books and have locked four bookshops.

WWF for a living planet

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Himalayas Program and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) invites applications to fill the following full time position for a period of 5 years.

Regional CEPF Coordinator

The incumbent will carry out a variety of duties, including coordination and oversight of CEPF grants in Bhutan, India and Nepal, ensure proposal review and recommendations, networking with civil society, government and donors, communicate conservation success stories and monitor CEPF funded projects.

Minimum qualifications: A masters degree in conservation biology or appropriate field with at least five years professional experience in conservation or environmental issues. Additional experience of developing partnerships between a wide variety of organizations and individuals for achieving common goals, is strongly preferred. The candidate should have excellent communication skills (verbal and written), highly organized, familiar with Himalayan region especially north eastern India, willingness and ability to undertake travel throughout the region.

The incumbent will be based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Application marked “For the post of CEPF Coordinator” on the envelope should be submitted by June 24, 2005 with a letter outlining your interest and a C.V. or resume, work experience, and contact information for three references to:

WWF Nepal Program
PO Box 7660
Kathmandu, Nepal

Email applications to pwwf nepal.org will also be entertained.

For further information on CEPF please visit www.cepf.net

A detailed TOR is available on our website at www.wfwfnepal.org

Perspectives

Somehow, people with the least time, always have time for Perspectives

Every successful corporate follows a path that is distinctly theirs. Most will however, admit to deriving spontaneous inspiration from what they read. With leading writers, professionals, gurus and journalists contributing, Perspectives offers a fresh take on issues that matter most to the corporate world.
These are the faces of children who have never been to Bhutan. Children of parents who were thrown out of Bhutan in 1991-92, transported across India to refugee camps in eastern Nepal. They were born in refugee camps and have never seen the country that they still regard as their motherland. Some of them are now 11 years old.

On 20 June, World Refugee Day, let us try to imagine what life is like for the 100,000 Bhutanis who can’t return to the homes, fields and villages of their ancestors. Let us imagine what it is like never to have seen your homeland. Imagine what it is like to live in someone else’s country, forced to depend on charity for survival. Imagine that citizenship is a luxury. ‘Exile’ is a word. ‘Outsider’ is a word. Both are just words. When you have to live those words every day you learn not to take small things for granted. Every smile on a school girl’s face gives you hope. The alert eyes of a young girl watching her mother on the loom, the deft fingerwork of a grandfather weaving a bamboo mat and passing that skill to the next generation, children peeping out of the bamboo window of their classroom. The abundant bamboo of verdant Bhutan is replicated in the camp setting, everything here is bamboo. This is life behind the bamboo curtain in the refugee camps of Jhapa and Morang. The rest of the world may have given up on them, their own government in Thimphu may hope they will be forgotten. But the Bhutanis here haven’t given up and they haven’t forgotten. What is surprising to a visitor is the lack of overt frustration or visible signs of despair.

As a photographer, I toured the camps in search of sadness but found hope. I searched for photogenic misery but found bright eyes and easy smiles. I searched for fatalism but found a vibrant community that is forgiving towards its tormentors. I looked for loneliness but found friendship. In Beldangi, I came across a wedding, life carried on here. They still look back at Bhutan as the promised land they will one day return to. If they don’t their children will, of this they are sure.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS by ASHOK R SHAKYA
Sultans of salsa

“If I didn’t dance, I’d be on double prozac”

DIANE SUMMERS

The heat is on. The beat is on. Salsa is happening and growing all over the world. Even in Kathmandu at the latest happening place, the Latin Quarter.

Hot orange. Electric blue. Sunshine yellow. Margaritas, blue as the Tibetan sky. Bodies dance to the beat on the smooth floor. Friday nights, dancers flock to this salsa club inside the white walls of Baber Mahal Revisited. Aged 18-60, it is a united nations at the Latin Quarter but why are they all here?

Katia 28, dressed from head-to-toe in skintight black, dances to perfection. Slim and lithe, she slips as easy as grease on the floor. French-Canadian, she spends most of her life here — dancing, teaching, cooking, salsa. Her answer is straightforward. “If I didn’t dance I would be on double prozac.”

A cool breeze wafts through French windows. Binayak in trainers and a baggy t-shirt and pants spirals Salima in multiple spins and she glides to a controlled drop on her back, raises herself on her heel and flips upright, never missing a beat. Over a fresh lemu pani, Binayak, 24, a web designer and a radio jockey explains why he dances. “On the dance floor I can be myself, Dance breaks all the barriers: age, cultural, male-female.” He wipes the beads of perspiration from his face, a solitary diamond earring glimmers in the light. “Dancing is all about connection, communication and respect for your partner.”

Raksha Lama draws up a chair and sits with us. She greets every guest, knows most by first names and radiates non-stop energy. Raksha is the powerhouse behind the Latin Quarter with her husband, the versatile pilot, singer, actor Vijay Lama. Why a salsa club? “It was a decision of the heart. I had taken a few salsa classes and enjoyed it. I love to cook and I had always wanted to open a restaurant. So I thought, why not mix the two: a place to dance salsa and eat. It was a natural fit.”

Most of Binayak Shrestha’s friends can’t believe he is a salsa instructor, Nepal’s first. He was an RJ at HBC 94FM when he switched. “I was really inspired by the movie ‘Dance with Me’,” recalls Binayak.

Step by step

Most of Binayak Shrestha’s friends can’t believe he is a salsa instructor, Nepal’s first. He was an RJ at HBC 94FM when he switched. “I was really inspired by the movie ‘Dance with Me’,” recalls Binayak.

He learnt the basics from Andreas Lehrke, a German who taught salsa in Kathmandu then went to Spain for nearly two months to learn various dance techniques. Binayak was soon researching on the Internet, downloading videos and instructions on various steps and practicing them. He had caught the salsa bug.

It wasn’t long before his expert moves were noticed and he was offered a job teaching salsa at the Latin Quarter. It was a dream come true and Binayak was soon grooving to the beat and teaching people to do the same.

Binayak has one complaint though: “Last year, there were a lot of women in my class and no men to lead them. Now I have a lot of men and no women. It is easier to teach women because this is a dance where the man leads and he needs to know the signals to manoeuvre his partner, it’s talking with your hands.”

Shrestha believes in making his classes fun and has flexible timings to suit his students, who range from eight to 68-year-olds. And he finds it inspiring to have people of such an age range wanting to learn salsa.

A cool breeze wafts through French windows. Binayak in trainers and a baggy t-shirt and pants spirals Salima in multiple spins and she glides to a controlled drop on her back, raises herself on her heel and flips upright, never missing a beat. Over a fresh lemu pani, Binayak, 24, a web designer and a radio jockey explains why he dances. “On the dance floor I can be myself, Dance breaks all the barriers: age, cultural, male-female.” He wipes the beads of perspiration from his face, a solitary diamond earring glimmers in the light. “Dancing is all about connection, communication and respect for your partner.”

Raksha Lama draws up a chair and sits with us. She greets every guest, knows most by first names and radiates non-stop energy. Raksha is the powerhouse behind the Latin Quarter with her husband, the versatile pilot, singer, actor Vijay Lama. Why a salsa club? “It was a decision of the heart. I had taken a few salsa classes and enjoyed it. I love to cook and I had always wanted to open a restaurant. So I thought, why not mix the two: a place to dance salsa and eat. It was a natural fit.”

And the guys don’t seem to think that dancing salsa is for sissies. “For men dancing salsa is a challenge,” explains Binayak. “Men have to lead—so we are thinking what is the next step. How are you going to impress her with the next step? You don’t have to talk, it’s all about communication through your steps and the music.”

Isn’t dance still regarded as risqué in the conservative family circles in Kathmandu?

“Dancing builds confidence,” explains Raksha. “Dancing in front of others, dancing with men other than your husband and brother is still unusual but times are changing. Young people want to be friends together. Dancing gives them the confidence.”

There’s nothing sleazy about it, young people come here in a safe environment and build their confidence.

At the Latin Quarter: Dance classes by Binayak at Latin Quarter, Rs 1,500 for beginners. Salsa practice on Wednesday and Sunday evenings from 8PM, Friday nights after 7.30 PM Salsa Sizzler. 4254260

DIANE SUMMERS

Step by step

Most of Binayak Shrestha’s friends can’t believe he is a salsa instructor, Nepal’s first. He was an RJ at HBC 94FM when he switched. “I was really inspired by the movie ‘Dance with Me’,” recalls Binayak.

He learnt the basics from Andreas Lehrke, a German who taught salsa in Kathmandu then went to Spain for nearly two months to learn various dance techniques. Binayak was soon researching on the Internet, downloading videos and instructions on various steps and practicing them. He had caught the salsa bug.

It wasn’t long before his expert moves were noticed and he was offered a job teaching salsa at the Latin Quarter. It was a dream come true and Binayak was soon grooving to the beat and teaching people to do the same.

Binayak has one complaint though: “Last year, there were a lot of women in my class and no men to lead them. Now I have a lot of men and no women. It is easier to teach women because this is a dance where the man leads and he needs to know the signals to manoeuvre his partner, it’s talking with your hands.”

Shrestha believes in making his classes fun and has flexible timings to suit his students, who range from eight to 68-year-olds. And he finds it inspiring to have people of such an age range wanting to learn salsa.

A cool breeze wafts through French windows. Binayak in trainers and a baggy t-shirt and pants spirals Salima in multiple spins and she glides to a controlled drop on her back, raises herself on her heel and flips upright, never missing a beat. Over a fresh lemu pani, Binayak, 24, a web designer and a radio jockey explains why he dances. “On the dance floor I can be myself, Dance breaks all the barriers: age, cultural, male-female.” He wipes the beads of perspiration from his face, a solitary diamond earring glimmers in the light. “Dancing is all about connection, communication and respect for your partner.”

Raksha Lama draws up a chair and sits with us. She greets every guest, knows most by first names and radiates non-stop energy. Raksha is the powerhouse behind the Latin Quarter with her husband, the versatile pilot, singer, actor Vijay Lama. Why a salsa club? “It was a decision of the heart. I had taken a few salsa classes and enjoyed it. I love to cook and I had always wanted to open a restaurant. So I thought, why not mix the two: a place to dance salsa and eat. It was a natural fit.”

And the guys don’t seem to think that dancing salsa is for sissies. “For men dancing salsa is a challenge,” explains Binayak. “Men have to lead—so we are thinking what is the next step. How are you going to impress her with the next step? You don’t have to talk, it’s all about communication through your steps and the music.”

Isn’t dance still regarded as risqué in the conservative family circles in Kathmandu?

“Dancing builds confidence,” explains Raksha. “Dancing in front of others, dancing with men other than your husband and brother is still unusual but times are changing. Young people want to be friends together. Dancing gives them the confidence.”

There’s nothing sleazy about it, young people come here in a safe environment and build their confidence.

At the Latin Quarter: Dance classes by Binayak at Latin Quarter, Rs 1,500 for beginners. Salsa practice on Wednesday and Sunday evenings from 8PM, Friday nights after 7.30 PM Salsa Sizzler. 4254260
Nepal’s last hunter-gatherers

Time is running out for the Raute and their gathering lifestyle

SAGUN S LAWOTI

All over the world, hunter-gatherer societies are disappearing and a similar fate awaits Nepal’s Raute. As with other hunter-gatherers, the Raute have been divided about preserving their old ways or assimilating into mainstream society. And it has been a subject of much debate among the Raute ever since the first anthropological study on the tribe was done more than 30 years ago.

“We would rather die than give up our nomadic way of life,” says Bir Bahadur Shahi, one of the three Raute mukhiyas. What is surprising is that the Raute have adapted to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in.

In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.

According to the 2001 census, the tribe totalled just 658. They live in the forest, hunt with nets and axes, forage for tubers and grains, and barter or sell fruits, and woodwares that they make in order to survive and preserve their way of life despite inroads made by modernity into their world that they live in. In his 1974 seminal study, anthropologist Johan Reinhard says the reason is the Raute’s early exposure to outsiders which was founded on unshakeable religious beliefs. Reinhard also credits the communal hunting technique for the survival of the Raute culture.
An open letter to Aung San Suu Kyi:

As the only inhabitant of the third millennium, and global citizen in the truest sense, I have an audience to speak the truth. I am the only one who dares to speak challenging words against the world's most repressive government: a regime which has acted with great disregard and disregard for human life, the world over, and the world's goodwill.

Aung San Suu Kyi, the only one who dares to speak the truth, has been the focus of the world's attention for decades. Her speeches, her writings, her activism, have all earned her the title of a human rights heroine, and have made her a symbol of resistance against oppression.

Suu Kyi's message resonates with the world, and her words continue to inspire those who stand against tyranny and tyranny. Her courage and determination are an example for all of us, and her legacy will continue to be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

In conclusion, Suu Kyi's message is a call to action for all of us to stand up against oppression and to fight for the rights of all humans. Her words continue to resonate with the world, and her legacy will continue to inspire those who stand against tyranny.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]
Swinging by

The perfect swing is a myth, it’s the basics that matter

A

golfers know that a good golf swing is vital to playing golf well. I come across many good players who constantly strive to perfect their swing. Interestingly, most golf instructors agree that the perfect golf swing is a myth. Just look at all the golf professionals who perform so well with lousy swings. What, then, is the secret?

Having the basics right is most important. Those professionals with lousy swings have good basics: the grip, their set-up and aim. They also have great timing and rhythm on every swing, which allows the club to travel on the same plane at the same speed. TheInternet, they have tremendous confidence and faith in their swing. Finally, they have a swing that they can consistently repeat.

Let us be realistic though, practicing at the professionals’ level is not practical for weekenders. That is why, even with all the right attitudes and beliefs, they just can’t produce the same result. Taking this into account, I decided to share some thoughts that I believe will help give you an advantage in advancing your golfing abilities.

A good golf swing starts with a good rhythm. You cannot make a good forward swing unless you take your time going back. Going back slowly sets up proper rhythm and motion. A back swing that is too fast almost always has the club and body working against each other; inviting poor shots. The object of the golf swing is to create speed on the down swing, not on the back swing.

A fast back swing leads to bad movement. A good back swing starts with the arms and shoulders, not the hands. You don’t want to pick up the club at the beginning of the takeaway. You want to draw away in one smooth motion. As the club starts backward, the left shoulder and hips turn naturally to allow your weight to transfer to the right side. Once the shoulder stops turning, that is the end of your backswing. If you try to swing the club even after the shoulder has stopped turning, you are over swinging creating a negative club speed and inconsistent swing.

To complete the swing you must have a good finish. The finish in golf is to allow the club to travel on the same plane at the same speed.

A good finish has the centre of shots and having difficulty getting the ball airborne. In the finish, the beginners find it more natural to finish low and left, causing topped the golf swing, unlike baseball, needs to be high, not left. I see most hip) by dropping the hands (using the left hand) on an inner path most players who think about clearing the left side (left shoulder and hips turn naturally to allow your weight to transfer to the right side. Once the shoulder stops turning, that is the end of your backswing. If you try to swing the club even after the shoulder has stopped turning, you are over swinging creating a negative club speed and inconsistent swing.

The perfect swing is a myth, it’s the basics that matter

The object of the down swing is to return the club head to the ball with maximum controllable speed. Just as a back swing that is too fast is not good, a down swing that is too hard will cause bad golf shots. There are many theories on what should start the down swing. Most players who think about clearing the left side (left shoulder and hip) by dropping the hands (using the left hand) on an inner path create a more consistent swing with smooth body motion.

To complete the swing you must have a good finish. The finish in the golf swing, unlike baseball, needs to be high, not left. I see most beginners find it more natural to finish low and left, causing topped shots and having difficulty getting the ball airborne. In the finish, the weight that was transferred to the right side in the back swing must now be transferred to the left side. A good finish has the centre of your chest facing the target and your hands are high, close to your left ear.

The golf swing can be considered simple but is often complicated by too much thinking. Understanding the proper technique, don’t engairie bad habits and you will have a lot more fun playing. On another note, don’t forget to sign in for the Seventh Gokarna Open, which will be played on 25 June at Gokarna Golf Club. Details are available at 4450444, 4451212. And the first prize is a Star Cruise sponsored cruise holiday! Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu, prodeepak@hotmail.com.

Chopper on Chomolungma

Government says the highest helicopter landing never happened. Why?

A

I was a mystery from the start: a helicopter sets a world record by touching down on the summit of the world’s highest mountain but its manufacturer doesn’t bring about it till nearly a month later. No press conferences, no victory bash, no announcements, no major international media blitz. It is now clear that Eurocopter test pilot Didier Delsalle did land his specially-fitted Ecureuil Astar 350 B3 helicopter on top of Chomolungma on 14 May but the first under-stated announcement came only on 24 May on the company’s website without the summit pictures.

Now, a month later, the plot thickens. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) which gave a month-long permission to Eurocopter to conduct ‘test flights’ in the Everest region says Delsalle has submitted a written statement saying he landed on the South Col. 1,000m below the summit.

“The pilot wrote to us saying he did not land on the summit at the top of Mt Everest. He landed on the South Col,” said CAAN spokesperson Keshab Raj Khanal. “The object of the down swing is to return the club head to the ball with maximum controllable speed. Just as a back swing that is too fast is not good, a down swing that is too hard will cause bad golf shots. There are many theories on what should start the down swing. Most players who think about clearing the left side (left shoulder and hip) by dropping the hands (using the left hand) on an inner path create a more consistent swing with smooth body motion.

To complete the swing you must have a good finish. The finish in the golf swing, unlike baseball, needs to be high, not left. I see most beginners find it more natural to finish low and left, causing topped shots and having difficulty getting the ball airborne. In the finish, the weight that was transferred to the right side in the back swing must now be transferred to the left side. A good finish has the centre of your chest facing the target and your hands are high, close to your left ear.

The golf swing can be considered simple but is often complicated by too much thinking. Understanding the proper technique, don’t engairie bad habits and you will have a lot more fun playing. On another note, don’t forget to sign in for the Seventh Gokarna Open, which will be played on 25 June at Gokarna Golf Club. Details are available at 4450444, 4451212. And the first prize is a Star Cruise sponsored cruise holiday! Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu, prodeepak@hotmail.com.

Chopper on Chomolungma

Government says the highest helicopter landing never happened. Why?

A

I was a mystery from the start: a helicopter sets a world record by touching down on the summit of the world’s highest mountain but its manufacturer doesn’t bring about it till nearly a month later. No press conferences, no victory bash, no announcements, no major international media blitz. It is now clear that Eurocopter test pilot Didier Delsalle did land his specially-fitted Ecureuil Astar 350 B3 helicopter on top of Chomolungma on 14 May but the first under-stated announcement came only on 24 May on the company’s website without the summit pictures.

Now, a month later, the plot thickens. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) which gave a month-long permission to Eurocopter to conduct ‘test flights’ in the Everest region says Delsalle has submitted a written statement saying he landed on the South Col. 1,000m below the summit.

“The pilot wrote to us saying he did not land on the summit at the top of Mt Everest. He landed on the South Col,” said CAAN spokesperson Keshab Raj Khanal. “The object of the down swing is to return the club head to the ball with maximum controllable speed. Just as a back swing that is too fast is not good, a down swing that is too hard will cause bad golf shots. There are many theories on what should start the down swing. Most players who think about clearing the left side (left shoulder and hip) by dropping the hands (using the left hand) on an inner path create a more consistent swing with smooth body motion.

To complete the swing you must have a good finish. The finish in the golf swing, unlike baseball, needs to be high, not left. I see most beginners find it more natural to finish low and left, causing topped shots and having difficulty getting the ball airborne. In the finish, the weight that was transferred to the right side in the back swing must now be transferred to the left side. A good finish has the centre of your chest facing the target and your hands are high, close to your left ear.

The golf swing can be considered simple but is often complicated by too much thinking. Understanding the proper technique, don’t engairie bad habits and you will have a lot more fun playing. On another note, don’t forget to sign in for the Seventh Gokarna Open, which will be played on 25 June at Gokarna Golf Club. Details are available at 4450444, 4451212. And the first prize is a Star Cruise sponsored cruise holiday! Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu, prodeepak@hotmail.com.
NEPALI WEATHER by MAUSAM BEED

The Indians who have their own weather satellite and computer modeling to forecast weather have said the Arab Sea branch of the southwestern monsoon is stuck over the Western Ghats but the Bay of Bengal arm is active and has advanced into eastern Nepal as can be seen in this satellite picture taken on 24 June.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

Thursday 21

Saturday 23

Putalisadak   Patan H        Thamel          Kirtipur       Bhaktapur  Matsyagaun

Fri  Sat Sun Mon Tue

Source: www.mope.gov.np

Nepali specialty at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488

Asian and Indian cuisine at Lajimpat. 9851083806

Photos by Prajwal Pradhan at Bluestar Gallery Café. 4428549

Photos by Kishor Kayastha, until 9 July at Lajimpat Gallery Shop, Rs 2,000-Rs 3,000. 4428549

Film poem by Fernando Pérez at NTB, Bhrikuti Mandap on 19 June, 5.30 PM. 4256239

Party Night by Dj Cabu on 18 June, 8.30 PM, Rs 150 at Moksh. 4428549

Symphony Day at 1905, Kantipath. 4413580

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.

5-11 June 2005 in microparticles per cubic meter. Source: www.mopa.gov.np

The occasional showers that Kathmandu received last week helped lower the pollution in the Valley. Although the concentration of PM10 particles that are small enough to enter the human respiratory system still exceeded the national standards near busy streets, in residential areas they were within standards most of the days.
RESURRECTION: The stumps of gum trees along Pulchok that were cut down last month have refused to give up and prove there is life after death.

KIRAN PANDAY

JOURNALISTS’ JAM: Journalists blocked the main airport road for nearly 30 minutes in front of the CDO’s office on Tuesday to protest the arrest of 50 journalists on Monday who were released overnight.

KIRAN PANDAY

DON’T MESS WITH US: Ranju Lamichhaney, Loonibha Tuladhar and Deepanjali Lama.

Hen-pecked

They didn’t set out to be radical but perhaps it is the name of the program (Pothi Basyo on Kantipur Television) that has given people the impression that Loonibha Tuladhar and Deepanjali Lama are fire-breathing feminists.

“We were given the afternoon musical slot but we thought why not try a packaged program,” says Loonibha with the same bubbly exuberance as her TV persona. In the beginning, the duo was nervous but people in the editing room started laughing while watching the first episode. “That is when we knew it worked,” recalls Deepanjali. Pothi Basyo soon got a weekly slot with the two playing different characters in every episode. The stories are a light-hearted and self-deprecating look at Nepali gender relations with both women and men ending up as the butt of jokes.

“We opted for a sitcom format, we love improvisation and have lots of fun doing what we do,” says Deepanjali. And it shows. The on-screen energy flows easily to viewers who have rewarded the program with high ratings. Often working within a rough outline, the duo used to wrap up shooting an episode in 15-30 minutes but since the cast and crew have grown bigger, it now takes two days. “But we still have a blast on the sets,” says Loonibha. Fame comes at a price. Loonibha and Deepanjali are teased when seen in public. “It is difficult sometimes. People call me thulo pothi and her sano pothi or broiler kukhura and local kukhura,” shrugs Loonibha, “we’ve learnt to take it.” Deepanjali never expected such instant recognition and says she is now ready to take a backseat from all the limelight. This season on, she plans to let Ranju Lamichhaney take her place in Pothi Basyo. Ranju has acted in serials including Tito Satya and Nepali feature films Basai and Ko Hola Mero Mayalu. But she is still nervous about filling Deepanjali’s shoes as she says, “it’ll be difficult because I know people will begin comparing me with her and she’s been doing such a great job.”

Abhia Eli Phoboo

Pothi Basyo on Kantipur tv on Saturdays, 7.30 PM.
This is Not the Ten O’clock News

This is Radio Nepal. This is not the ten o’clock news read by Sarah Yonzon. [Fifteen minutes of various instrumental numbers based on patriotic songs from a bygone era.] Welcome back, now, we will entertain you with the headlines which today is sung to the tune of The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Music.

The Underfinanced Ministry has rejected reports in the anti-national private media that the country is bankrupt. “This is categorically and completely false,” the Ministry spokesperson said, “it hasn’t happened yet, we are still working on it.”

In a pre-budget statement he added that the economy had never been more robust, it was growing at five percent per annum, poverty had been reduced by ten percent points and the Rastri Bank was using airliners to fly out Nepal’s dollar reserves to Patna to buy 35 tons of Indian currency in IRS 100 denomination notes. “The problem is just that we can’t boast about all these things since they were all achievements of the previous democratic governments,” the spokesperson said on condition that we cover his eyes with a black strip.

He denied the ministry didn’t have money to meet the military’s growing demands saying all ploughshares were being converted into swords. “We must look at military spending as an investment with a very high rate of returns,” the spokesman added.

Girija Prasad Koirala returned from New Delhi on Wednesday amidst a tumultuous welcome that snarled traffic on the Ring Road for an hour while he waited to be arrested, but no one bothered. A visibly miffed Koirala said he had gone to India for medical reasons to have his head examined, and this also gave him the opportunity to pick the brains of various Indian leaders. “We saw eye-to-eye on almost everything,” Koirala said, “they are just as short-sighted as us.”

A pilot for the French aviation company, Eurocopter, is embroiled in controversy over his first-ever solo ascent of the world’s highest mountain without Sherpas, without crampons, without muesli and in a heavier-than-air machine. The Ministry of Mountaineering and Profiteering has refused to recognise the feat because the expedition did not pay the $60,000 royalty for Everest expeditions composed of less than six members and did not go through the correct Red Channel at airport customs to declare his chopper.

The Loyal Commission on Corruption Control has charge-sheeted God for a series of misdemeanours and remanded Him in custody for another week while the prosecution investigates if He broke some of His own Commandments. The list of charges against God include breach of trust for letting the country go to pot despite repeated assurances to the contrary, not answering the peoples’ prayers, not keeping proper accounts of cash and kind offered to His representatives at Pashupatinath and for willfully defaulting on the borrowed time that He is on. In a hearing at the LCCC Tuesday, the Holy Ghost argued that He did not recognise the temporal tribunal and besides, as Supreme Omnipresent Being, He enjoyed divine immunity from prosecution. He said he would take it up in person with the IMF Rep. The presiding judge rejected this saying the court’s jurisdiction in this case was set by the principles of Supernatural Justice. Whereupon the Almighty threw a tantrum and unleashed a thunderbolt on Harihar Bhaban which was safely absorbed by several lightning rods from the state media. God was later mobbed by reporters outside the LCCC’s premises and was asked if He would resign. “That’s a thought,” He is reported to have said in His infinite wisdom.