A Unified Command: Soldiers, armed police and a forlorn traffic cop at Putali Sadak where students, protesting the detention of Sher Bahadur Deuba, tried to block traffic on Thursday morning.

Weekly Internet Poll  # 260. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. .. .. Which alliance would be best for the country’s future?

Total votes:2485

Weekly Internet Poll  # 259

Q. .. .. How do you rate the new council of ministers with previous ones?

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As the six month ban on news on radio expires Friday, FM stations are set to resume broadcasts

MANISHA ARYAL

Six months after soldiers armed with assault rifles occupied FM newrooms, independent radio stations are preparing to resume news broadcasts as the ban expires on Friday.

The directive banning radio news was contained in a circular from the Ministry of Information and Communication (MOIC) published in the Gorkhapatra on 3 February. A followup notice the next day directed radio stations to limit themselves to broadcasting ‘pure entertainment-based programs…not to air news, information, articles/writing, thoughts/ideas and expression’.

“Unless a fresh ban is imposed we will start news again,” says Ghamaraj Luitel of the pressure group Save Independent Radio Campaign which was set up after the February royal takeover.

The public service Radio Sagarmatha 102.4 FM and the commercial Nepal FM 91.7, among others, have been defying the ban. Nepal FM airs its popular daily news program Rajdhani Khabar with social, economic and political content. Radio Sagarmatha begins its evening program Hinda Hindai with a 10-minute roundup of non-political news.

MOIC sent a letter to Nepal FM Wednesday asking why the station was violating the ban on news and why it should not be punished. The station has been given a week to respond.

“What radio listeners need is news and information,” says Nepal FM’s Managing Director Bishnu Hari Dhakal, “Providing only entertainment would be irresponsible at times like these.”

Nepal FM’s Rajdhani Khabar resumed broadcast after it received instructions from the royal palace to broadcast King Gyanendra’s cv.

“We didn’t think His Majesty’s biodata should be the content of an entertainment program,” says Dhakal, “so we decided to put it in a news format and then continued with the bulletins.”

Rajdhani Khabar, however has been leaving out sensitive news of Maoist activities, army operations and political protests.

„Inside Nepal FM’s tiny newroom in Rabi Bhaban, producers are preparing to relay its half-hour news program Nepal Khabar to eight partner stations outside the Valley from Friday.

State-owned Radio Nepal replaced its signature tune last week with one from the heydays of the Panchayat and continues to cut the first 15 minutes of the BBC World Service in English that it relays on 103 FM. The BBC’s Nepal service which was relayed by 12 FM stations all over Nepal remains suspended.

Independent radios won the right to produce and broadcast news in a landmark case in July 2001 which redefined freedom of press to also include radio. Even so, Minister Tanka Dhakal insists Nepali stations don’t have the right to broadcast news and that news is not allowed on FM anywhere in the world. Army sources have accused FM stations of needlessly causing panic among the people with news of blockades and of helping the Maoists. However, private television stations were never banned from broadcasting news.

As from the frying pan
Damned if they do, damned if they don't
Things are fast moving out of control of those in charge

Frustrated by increasing international pressure, the royal regime has begun venting anger on students on the streets. But that irritates the international community even further. The regime is damned if it prosecutes republican students and damned if it doesn't.

Unlike the middle age survivors of the Panchayat, this generation has grown up in a community even further. The regime is not just their dictatorships, but a legacy of repression. The regime is not just their dictatorships, but a legacy of repression. They are damned if they support their royal masters, and they are damned if they oppose them. The regime is not just their dictatorships, but a legacy of repression. They are damned if they support their royal masters, and they are damned if they oppose them.

STATE OF THE STATE

Our new editor, Ajaindra Singh, writes:

The ongoing debate in these pages regarding Britain's position on terrorism raises important issues in the context of the conflict in Nepal. London bombings and the IRA statement last week.

GUEST COLUMN

Ajaindra Singh

What both sides of the question need to bear in mind is that terrorism, no matter where, must be condemned. This applies at all times and whether it occurs in remote villages of Nepal or in London's melting pot. Although, as rightly pointed out by British Ambassador Keith Bloomfield (Letters, #258) there cannot be a common solution to counter the menace. Nevertheless, any attempt to control terrorism must take into account underlying causes which should then be addressed properly.

Terrorism is always a result of a constellation of social, economic, political and ideological factors. Any counter-terrorism policy based on the assumption that negotiations with terrorists are not possible is doomed to fail. Sustainable in the long term and is bound to protect human misery. The protagonists need to keep in mind that identity, power and democracy are interlinked.

The UK's own experience with IRA terrorism is testimony to this. After 36 years of violence, broken ceasefires, and talks and elections, last week the IRA announced an historic end to its armed campaign. There are important lessons that could be relevant for Nepal:

• Governments often label a rebel armed movement as terrorism without giving much consideration to the actual causes.

• Governments do hold covert talks and negotiations with groups committing 'terrorism' in order to find a sustainable solution.

• It is in the nature of long conflicts that they are punctuated by ceasefires from time to time, these require political will among all sides in the conflict.

• A temporary breakdown of such ceasefires must not discourage attempts at finding lasting peace and shouldn't be labelled as the other party's 'lack of commitment'.

• If nothing else works, the international community should be given the chance to resolve conflicts, especially since terrorism doesn't respect national boundaries and one country's national security policy can affect another country's security.

• All parties must recognise that there is no easy solution to political, social, economic or ideological differences and ignoring this leads to loss of lives and property.

All that enforces the lives of non-combatants (and thereby terrorism itself) either by the state, groups or individuals, whether by minority or majority of the population for whatever reason, must by default be classified as terrorism and their perpetrators severely punished.

FROM THE FRYPAN

Here we go again: pavements strewn with bricks, roads blocked off by burning tyres, colleges forced to close and chakka-jams—scenes reminiscent of years of unstable coalition politics in the late 1990s. An informal truce by the emasculated bystanders on overhead bridges this week showed people taking the going on below as further proof that the political parties are back to their old habits. The wall on the streets is that the unpopularity of the king does not mean there is more trust in the parties, just as the lack of support for politicians doesn’t mean people want an active king.

Desperate Nepalis need a sign that the parties have reinvigorated themselves as a credible alternative to both Maoist totalitarianism and absolute monarchy before they will come out spontaneously in support. Many still have serious misgivings about handing power back to the same people who abused it so grossly for so many years. And what they see on the streets doesn’t give them much confidence that things will be different.

But there is a difference this time: the backlash against crackdowns on democracy is rapidly gathering a republican momentum. The ball is wagging the dog, and elderly politicians who have denied democracy within their own parties are seriously worried the youth-led agitation may spin out of control.

Until recently, the royal regime ever thought this was possible. Some of the slogans on the campuses this week look 1990 like a picnic. The king’s shadowy advisers (yes, the same ones from 15 years ago) live within earshot of these demonstrations. They must by now be having a strong feeling of déjà vu. Yet, they are stirring all hornet nests on the tree at the same time: the students, the civil society, and absolute monarchy before they will come out spontaneously in support. Many still have serious misgivings about handing power back to the same people who abused it so grossly for so many years.

No attempt to control terrorism must take into account underlying causes which should then be addressed properly.

Trial and terror
In Libang or London, terrorism is terrorism
BLOOMFIELD
Keith Bloomfield’s outright denial of double standards on terrorism (Letters, #255) is as interesting as Tony Blair lying about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. How can Bloomfield say Bin Laden does not have a clear political or social demand? The United States declared Bin Laden a terrorist when he was leading 3,500 men to overthrow the Soviet occupiers in Afghanistan and branded him a terrorist when the conflict was over. Is asking British (and other) troops to loot Iraq not a political goal? If it is not, why are they being so carefully avoided by Bloomfield’s critics? Bloomfield and Blair need to be solved politically, why not also solve the Iraq war? Is the United States hiding from a foreign occupation? If Bloomfield does not recognise the Maoists rebels as terrorists, then, why did his government send weapons to crush them under the Deuba regime?

B Raj Giri, email

The dubious and patented self-defining function of terrorism offered by the British envoy exposes the western hypocrisy in their dealings with the Third World. Terrorism is simply the use of intimidation and violent methods against a legitimate state and civil population, it does not matter who the target is, the intention is or how many people are behind the attack. An evil such as the take-over of the world by such groups is not justified because ‘thousands’ of people support such killings. For example, hundreds of thousands of South-westerners were killed in the slaughter of Tutsis, does the size of support and participation make such crimes justifiable? You cannot justify the evil Deval. The contorted logic coming out of this English fellow is this: those who attack us are terrorists; those who kill terrorists are freedom fighters. My question to the English queen’s emissary is this: what was the crime of the thousands of dead Nepalis that you are going out of your way to legitimate and protect their tormentors and killers? The Broncos also challenge Bloomfield to prove his assertion that those who attack Britain are just a few individuals.

Patrick McChuine, Thamel

In response to my letter citing clear double standards of Britain in dealing with al Qaeda and the Nepali Maoists, Keith Bloomfield has given an even more double respectful performance. He says there is a difference in ‘an armed insurgence involving thousands of a country’s citizens with their foreign support’ and ‘an armed group with political and socio-economic demands mistrusted by the mainstream parties’ and al Qaeda, which is a worldwide extremist network involving a tiny minority, with no coherent goals or a formal structure. How can an extremist outfit with a worldwide network involve only a ‘tiny minority’ and without ‘formal structure’? Why look at the bombings by one extremist outfit with an outdated ideology in London and another in Chitwan with different glasses?

Pratik Koirala, Baneswor

From the perspective of a victim, it hard to understand that the bombings are caused by an armed insurrection involving thousands of a country’s citizens by or al Qaeda rather than by a lesser evil than the other. Even in Northern Ireland the British paramilitary had to kill 3,000 people, mainly civilians, in the 1960s-90s until the terrorists were forced to tone down their agenda. When will we be able to get a bloody grip? Bloomfield’s remarks can further mislead our international friends about the brutality of the terrorist groups but it does not have any social base. He still thinks that the political parties represent the popular voice in Nepal and their willingness to join the Maoists is the certificate of their political worth, then, why really wonders how Nepal’s international partners can help the Nepali people.

Dibya B Gurung, New York

When Keith Bloomfield denies having double standards on terrorism he proves precisely that he has double standards. When the bombs explode in London killing innocents it’s terrorism, when they explode in Nepal killing innocents it’s an ‘insurgency’.

M Ramesh, email

The majority of Nepalis feel and share the pain of the British people and pray for the families of the victims of the London terror attacks. We have faced similar outrages for 10 years now. But Britain must be careful not to violate civil liberties and human rights while fighting terrorism. Otherwise the UN may table a resolution under Item 9 in Geneva. Nepal may also be forced to cut some of its aid to Britain but because we have a ‘special relationship’, we may maintain our ‘non-letal aid’ to Nepal for frontline service in the British Army. Nepal stood by Britain for 189 years, putting down a mutiny in India and sacrificing our youth in two world wars. How can it cite a ‘special friendship’ while desecrating the blood of our noble ancestors who fought shoulder to shoulder as friends? Britain should be restricting the Europeans and helping the Americans in this war. As you know the Berets of a country has more ungrateful friends than you.

Rabin Rai, ex-British Gurkha

Exploiting a packed with civilian causes the deaths of more than 40 men, women and children in Nepal is not an act of terrorism for Britain. The Maoists have killed more than 800 civilians 450 soldiers, 350 policemen and 130 personnel from the armed police force over the past 18 months and yet it is hard for the British to see the Maoists as terrorists. Will it take a nexus between the culture and the state to be responsible for the London bombings on 7/7 for the Maoists to be recognised officially as terrorists? The United States State put the CPPM-FM on its terrorists list for exploiting Gurkhas for frontline service in the British Army. India stood by Britain for 94 years, putting down a mutiny in India and sacrificing our youth in two world wars. How can it cite a ‘special relationship’ while desecrating the blood of our noble ancestors who fought shoulder to shoulder as friends? Germany should be restricting the Americans and helping the Russians of this war.

Rahul Thapa, email

If it’s acceptable that innocent people are killed in the furrow of a political, religious or ideological agenda, does that still mean the difference between armed insurrection and al Qaeda somehow justifies it? How do you distinguish between the first respondent to IRA activities? Isn’t it part of the diplomatic code not to comment on the internal matters of other countries? Akshaya Maskey, email

BHARI K SHRESTHA
Bhari K Shrestha in ‘Support by default’ (Guest Column, #258) makes a veiled attempt to appear objective but still seems to have problems with political parties. He hears ‘near dearest utterances’ by the patani but is deaf to threats against him by ex-generals. He object to the international community’s demand that the parties share power. There are still the most legitimate representatives of a majority of the people in the country. Why does the issue of corruption start with 1996 and end with October 2002? What about the 30 years of Panchayati raj which is future of the greater one-horned rhinoceros lies in strengthening and introducing measures aimed at tackling the growing conflict between poachers and rhino conservation efforts in Nepal.

Chandra P Gurung, PhD

NO-HEROINED RHINO
Thank you for F Ghirme’s ‘The no-herooned Asian rhinoceros’ (#256) which succeeds in highlighting the grave plight of the greater one-horned rhinoceros in Chitwan. While it is indeed true that the current conflict has taken a toll on security in national parks like Chitwan, the onus of saving Nepal’s rhinoceros does not lie solely with the Royal Nepali Army. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation strives to address the critical issue of poaching on the ground and on the national level with support from partners like UNDP, KMFNC, ITNC and WWF. Community-based anti-poaching operations have come into being with the support of the international community.

Sanat Sharma, New Baneswor

DUNG CAKE
Re: ‘Dung cake takes the cake’, #257. While people like Amrit Bahadur Karki, Jagannath Shrestha and Sundar Bahadur deserve our appreciation and for making the program the success that it will, it only too often also remains the case that those who had a hand in getting this program off the ground. Indeed, SNV Nepal has been the main proponent of ‘Cowdung cake’. But the work of Wilma van Nes and Jan Lam at the Gobar (buffalo) Research Institute was crucial. And for making the program the success that it will, it only too often also remains the case that those who had a hand in getting this program off the ground.

Adarsha Tuladhar, email

RICE
I found interesting an article in the same issue of Nepal Times (#255) you had an article on mahanut (Underfed and underfed) and the rice internationalisation system. (#256). Isn’t it a pleasant coincidence that you have the problem and its antithete in the same country? Now, a non-governmental organisation, the government to get over its skepticism about this ‘miracle rice’ is to boost harvests and feed the children.

Ina Petersen, email

DONT GET IT
Either Kunda Dixit is being forced to be more and more incisive in his satire because of censorship or he has lost his grip. Either way, I don’t get his jives anymore. What’s so funny?

Janardhan Adhikari, email

Thanks to Kunda Dixit for providing us Nepalis who are living abroad a true picture of what is going on Nepal through your column. It is very difficult to come up with such hilarious stuff when things are so depressing. Good things the “higher ups authorities” don’t have a sense of humour otherwise they may actually not like it.

Dinesh KC, email

LETTERS
Newspapers welcome all feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms can be accepted, writers wishing to use them must provide full details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments and sent to the subject line.

Email: letters@nepalitimes.com
Fax: 997-1-5201503
Mail: Letters, Nepal Times, GPO Box 725, Kathmandu.
Chitwan's young conservation crusaders

Low on resources but big on energy, the area's youngsters fight poaching with a door-to-door campaign

PRIYA JOSHI in CHITWAN

Shahi Chitwan Ratjya Nukra Madyavart Shetra Misingkuri Upabhikshi Samiti
Dwara Ghatthi Upa-samiti Banyajantu Chori Shikar
Mrigakunj Upabhokta Samiti
Shahi Chitwan Ratriya Nikunja Madhyawarti Chetra

Against poaching and other illegal activities.

Low on resources but big on energy, the area's youngsters fight poaching with a door-to-door campaign

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Against poaching and other illegal activities.
### Storm in the tea sector

The tea gardens and factories of Jhapa and Ilam have been forced to close because of Maoist threats since 16 July, the middle of the picking season. While estate owners are worried about recouping their investment and paying back loans, thousands of tea pickers are without jobs and are struggling to survive. “I cannot even open the factory nor keep it closed, it is peak season for the leaves,” says Chandrak Praju of Dante Tea Processing in Bhadrapur.

There are 5,000 tea pickers and 35,000 labourers employed in the tea gardens of eastern Nepal. “What will we eat, how long will the strike go on?” asks Shyam Deb Urab at the Toka garden. The head of the tea worker’s union here, Dipak Tamang, says no one has made any moves to resolve the dispute. “When other industries are affected, the government acts immediately but not when the tea industry, that is propelling the economy, is hit,” he says.

Banks and creditors have invested up to Rs 300 million in the tea industry and the country was exporting some Rs 70 million worth of tea into the international market and replacing imports by providing eight million tons of tea for the domestic market. (Tirtha Sigdel)

### Le Méridien resort opens in Gokarna

The hotel is an financed by an overseas Indian, Prem Sachdev who is developing the golf resort as the first leg of a bigger project. Le Méridien Kathmandu consists of 38 deluxe rooms, one suite inspired by Malla and Rana period architecture and 16 cottages set amongst century old trees, with views across the second fairway of the golf course into the valley below. The spa offers a variety of rejuvenating treatments including Ayurvedic, massage and beauty treatments. There is an indoor temperature-controlled pool complex, sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi. The large, well-equipped gym overlooks the forest through large picture windows.

In fact, so pent-up was the demand that just in five years since the state first introduced mobile telephony in 2000, almost 250,000 new members have been distributed, at the ratio of 2.3 pre-paid lines for every post-paid connection. But the benefits of even that mediocre achievement were overshadowed when the state abruptly snatched away the right to use mobile phones six months ago. Though fixed-line connections have been restored since, the bureaucratic hurdles for reviving old mobile lines or getting new ones have gone up, more so outside of Kathmandu. As of today, almost 175,000 pre-paid mobile lines remain dead, ostensibly for security reasons.

Despite such measures, it is not clear to what extent the state has succeeded in destroying the rebels’ communication apparatus. Instead, what is increasingly clear is that by punishing ordinary subscribers, it has alienated many small businesses for whom the mobile—with an installation charge that was one-fifth of a fixed-line—was a handy tool to earn money by staying in touch with customers and information networks. Far from fuelling Maoist insurgency, the mobile phones in Nepal were seen as, to borrow the words of The Economist of London, ‘a classic-example of technology that helps people help themselves’.

Indeed, in a paper published last March, Leonard Waverman and colleagues at the London Business School make a case that ‘investment in telecoms in developing countries generates a growth dividend because the spread of telecommunications reduces cost of interaction, and expands market boundaries and information flows’. Using data from 102 low and middle-income countries, including Nepal, they calculate that, all else being equal, 10 additional mobile phones per 100 people boost the GDP growth by 0.19 percent.

Their research concluded that ‘mobile telephony has a significant impact on economic growth and this impact may be twice as large in developing countries compared to developed countries’. That Africa has had the world’s fastest growing mobile market in the last five years despite its well-publicised poverty must tell us that the poor are more likely to value how important it is to stay connected to information flows.

In Nepal, geography remains hostile. The continuing war has partitioned people into isolated pockets in the hills. Road networks were spared to begin with, but have become even more dangerous because of landmines and ambushed. Ropeway transports and postal facilities remain primitive. To add insult to injury, the state has handicapped the two most inexpensive and easy-to-spread voice-based technologies—FM radios and pre-paid mobile connections—that can leapfrog over the usual obstacles to deliver critical information to people who need it. Could the state have done anything more stupid than to allow information degenerate into rumors and heresies?

These days, when millions of vegetable farmers in Bangladesh and tea-wealths in India can afford to choose services from different and competitive phone companies, phones remain a needlessly scarce resource in Nepal. Why? Because the state controls who gets the lines and who doesn’t. And because the state doesn’t want citizens to stay connected, to share information and to help one another to be productive and aware Nepalis.

### Leapfrogging to nowhere

#### Strictly Business

**Ashutosh Tiwari**

The state is punishing the people by denying them mobile phone connectivity.
"We are moving in the right direction"

By Surya Bahadur Sen Oli

Jana Aastha

Surya Bahadur Sen Oli in the Note of Dissent column in Jana Aastha

Surya Bahadur Sen Oli was a former Zonal Commissioner for the Chitwan district. He is a member of the Nepal Communist Party and was a former member of the Nepali Congress. He has been involved in politics for many years and has held several positions in the party. He has been a strong advocate for the rights of the people and has been a vocal critic of the government.

The government of King Gyanendra has been widely criticized for its handling of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. It has been accused of using excessive force and of not being willing to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict. There have been many reports of human rights abuses, including the killing of civilians and the detention of political prisoners.

However, the government has also been praised for its efforts to improve the infrastructure and economy of the country. It has been credited with reducing poverty and improving access to education and healthcare. It has also been praised for its efforts to promote democracy and human rights.

The government has been criticized for its handling of the dispute with China over the territory of Arunachal Pradesh. It has been accused of being too soft in its approach and of not standing up to the Chinese. However, the government has also been praised for its efforts to improve relations with China and to promote economic cooperation.

In conclusion, the government has been praised and criticized for its efforts to improve the country. It has been credited with many achievements but has also been accused of many failings. The future of the country is uncertain and will depend on how the government continues to handle the challenges it faces.

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You can’t just take over, Your Majesty!

By Kiran Panday

BBC Nepal Service

Bharat Praja Parishad

When a landmine in Chitwan killed 28 bus passengers, His Majesty, who was chairing the government, didn’t even send wishes.

It is time for His Majesty to rethink and re-evaluate his perspectives. It’s for looking to the future, not to look back at old and ragged fossils. His Majesty is raising white elephants and hoping to move. Peace, justice and reformed democracy must be the goal.

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Give up violence

By Prakash Chandra Lohani

The Kathmandu-Lhasa bus service launched with much fanfare in May has been cancelled because of hassles to Nepalis in Tibet. Chinese citizens can visit Nepal easily and many feel and with dignity around the country but it is not the same for Nepalis when touring Lhasa. They are looked upon suspiciously and their tour restricted to specific places and hotels designated by government authorities. Nepalis are not even allowed to stay in standard class hotels but have to pay nearly $200, besides the visa fee. Visitors are restricted to a 10-day visa but it takes six days for the bus to travel in and out of Lhasa.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The talk of talks between the parties and Maoists is just talk. Each is trying to use the other...Good has given everyone the right to be stupid but I don’t think the political forces in the country will be so stupid."

Prakash Chandra Lohani of the Rastragri Janashakti Party

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SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

no democracy in the world tolerates such activities. The government has been criticized for making amendments to acts and laws through royal ordinances and not parliament. You need to make such amendments and ordinances when you have to run the state. And remember, parliament was dissolved by an elected government of the same parties who are protesting today. The government cannot stay with its hands tied just because there is no parliament.

Bharat Praja Parishad

When a landmine in Chitwan killed 28 bus passengers, His Majesty, who was chairing the government, didn’t even send wishes.

It is time for His Majesty to rethink and re-evaluate his perspectives. It’s for looking to the future, not to look back at old and ragged fossils. His Majesty is raising white elephants and hoping to move. Peace, justice and reformed democracy must be the goal.

Surya Bahadur Sen Oli was a former Zonal Commissioner for the Chitwan district. He is a member of the Nepal Communist Party and was a former member of the Nepali Congress. He has been involved in politics for many years and has held several positions in the party. He has been a strong advocate for the rights of the people and has been a vocal critic of the government.

The government of King Gyanendra has been widely criticized for its handling of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. It has been accused of using excessive force and of not being willing to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict. There have been many reports of human rights abuses, including the killing of civilians and the detention of political prisoners.

However, the government has also been praised for its efforts to improve the infrastructure and economy of the country. It has been credited with reducing poverty and improving access to education and healthcare. It has also been praised for its efforts to promote democracy and human rights.

The government has been criticized for its handling of the dispute with China over the territory of Arunachal Pradesh. It has been accused of being too soft in its approach and of not standing up to the Chinese. However, the government has also been praised for its efforts to improve relations with China and to promote economic cooperation.

In conclusion, the government has been praised and criticized for its efforts to improve the country. It has been credited with many achievements but has also been accused of many failings. The future of the country is uncertain and will depend on how the government continues to handle the challenges it faces.

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Among the ministers who give the king a bad name is Minister for Physical Planning and Works Jagat Gauchan, an ex-convict accused in 1985 of a conspiracy to kill journalist Padam Thakurati (seen with wound in his head, inset). Gauchan (circled in red) was found guilty and is seen being taken away to prison to serve a two-year jail sentence. Gauchan’s appointment has created an uproar, with visiting US ex-senator Tom Daschle saying last week: “There should be no place in this government for ex-convicts.” Two other ministers in the present council, Home Minister Dan Bahadur Shahi and Assistant Minister for Education Senate Shrestha, were both embroiled in a fertiliser scandal.

Giving the king a bad name
Hamal Khabarapatrika, 31 July-16 August

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Medicine worse than the disease

Poor patients and poorly performing doctors are turning us into a nation of pill poppers

MALLIKA ARYAL

A 1993 study in India showed that in 80 percent of the 500 typhoid cases sampled in Maharasthra, the bacteria causing the disease were resistant to chloroquine, an antibiotic that has been the mainstay of typhoid treatment. It was later discovered that drug companies had been producing chloroquine in combination with an anti-diarrhoeal drug resulting in the typhus bacteria developing a resistance to it.

In Nepal, irrational drug use includes unnecessary and expensive prescriptions of vitamins, tonics and other spurious syrups to patients. Public health expert Aruna Upeti explains, "Malnutrition is not solved by taking vitamin supplements, but by eating an adequately balanced diet." She adds, "Misuse of vitamins also reinforces the misconception that there is a magic pill for all ills and that supplements can replace food."

INRUD Nepal’s Kafle says many doctors don’t give patients correct information about the drugs they prescribe and why. Many poorer patients self-medicate or go to a pharmacy because of the difficulty in getting cheap checkups. He says the solution is to regulate doctors’ fees and launch a health insurance system. "We would make health services affordable and will also check misuse," he adds.

Onda thinks some medicines for common illnesses have to be provided to Nepalis free of cost by the state. He cites the successful anti-TB program which gives out antibiotics free. "It is due to the national tuberculosis program that the rate of minister of TB drugs has come down dramatically," he says, adding that hospitals need guidelines so that if an illness is suspected, patient will go through tests to pinpoint the cause before a drug is prescribed.

Model pharmacy

Prakash Pharmacia in Teku is a model drug store. Owner Prakash Man Pradhan runs the pharmacy his father started 35 years ago and has a simple rule: follow the rules. That begins with requiring all his staff to wear blue coats, a government rule that has never been followed nationally. The staff are trained and professional, and this is probably the only pharmacy in the country that doesn’t look like a corner grocery.

While most pharmacies in Nepal ignore the government’s regulations on prescriptions, Pradhan follows them by the book. Today, Prakash Pharmacy is a community-based pharmacy which says places utmost importance on providing quality service to all members of the community. "I do not have to be trained abroad to start thinking about community-based pharmacies, I am only following the government’s requirements for drug stores," says Pradhan. While a hospital pharmacy provides medicine only to the patients in the hospital, a community pharmacy does not discriminate.

Pradhan even adheres to the government’s new rule that prescription and non-prescription drugs can’t be sold together, one that few pharmacies follow. "We have a separate shop that sells ove-the-counter drugs and cosmetics," says Pradhan, "and this bigger section only handles prescription drugs." And it goes without saying that no prescription drugs are sold here without a valid prescription.

Prakash Pharmacia has branches in Pashupati (Prakash Medic), Bhatighat (Sajin Pharmacy) and Sarpen (Amico Pharmacy).

Substance abuse at the drug store

“Dai, I need two strips of T or C.”

“Which would you like?”

"Is there much of a difference?"

"T is little, it’s only 10 mg, C’s a minimum dose of 25mg. It’s more effective."

"Okay, I have a feeling my grandmother will be needing the one with the higher dose. Could you get 20 ready for me, I’ll come back later?"

"Of course, no problem."

Dai, two packs of P and one of A, 10 please.

Anxi A10? You don’t get those, bahx, you get them in 25 and 5—what do you want?

"Oh, okay, I’ll get 25 ones.

"There you go, nan. Twenty Rupees, 18, with the discount."

These aren’t comic extracts from a junkie’s biography. This is me in medicine shops in the Valley. The medicines in question are sleeping tablets, treatments for tachycardia and palpitations and anti-anxiety pills. And I get them, no inconvenience, with a confirmation call to my doctor (or my grandmother’s, for that matter) without even having to show a prescription.

Since the turn of the last century, the use of drugs for medicinal purposes has become a topic under constant, heated debate. Many popular opiums and sanitizers have been declared addictive, some illegal. Heroin in cough syrup, morphine in infant pacifiers, cocaine as a cure for depression have all been replaced.

But legal nicotine isn’t less addictive than the illegal heroin. It is just available outside the black market. Addictions aren’t just physical, they are psychological and prescribed medication requires verification because the medicines being supplied are still drugs. They can cause major withdrawal symptoms and many of them are highly addictive.

It may be entirely up to individuals if they want to become addicted. But 90 percent of Nepal’s population is still under the poverty threshold, half are illiterate. Health facilities, when available, are rarely accessible and there is a lack of awareness in the general population that puts a lot of citizens entirely at the mercy of their doctors and pharmacists.

People don’t check expiry dates. They can’t take their own temperature. They don’t get check-ups regularly, they see doctors only after their health has deteriorated significantly, and they stop treatment as soon as superficial symptoms seem to go. When people don’t know that painkillers are not substitutes for panaceatolums, how can figures of authority allow them to decide, on their own, what their dose of sleeping tablets should be? How can they give an adolescent (who evidence shows the ingredients of the medicine she is buying) two strips of anti-anxiety pills, no questions asked?

What makes this availability more frightening is that many “educated” people are abusing medicine for recreational purposes. Teenagers down bottles of cough syrup, boys take estrogen pills for a high, exhausted workaholics are hooked on anti-depressants. There are hypochondriacs who swear they haven’t been able to sleep for the past 20 years without sleeping pills.

We have come a long way since Hippocrates and his theories on mania, melancholia, and phrenitis. Disorders, being studied, so they can be treated and not just controlled. To abuse scientific findings that have cost plenty of money, the botox doctors and will also check misuse,” he adds.

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Simikot: Diarrhoea claims 10, 400 infected.

Every year, about this time we see small headlines like this in the Kathmandu post. We are told of a litany of problems, from a lack of the simplest medicines and broken governmental promises and absent staff at public health posts.

Diarrhoea is so easily treated with rehydration solutions and if very severe, a short course of antibiotics, even if this does nothing to change the conditions of poverty under which such a common and simple disease becomes so much more dangerous.

But in these remote areas, even this basic-right is denied, particularly to the more marginal. This combination of bureaucratic lethargy and extreme poverty is a deadly mix, leading to suffering and misery that we can barely comprehend. These issues are not new—anyone who visits or works in the more remote areas will have witnessed them and we’ve been reading about them for many years. What is new is how the current conflict might be feeding these problems.

The state in many of these more remote areas functions inadequately in fulfilling its responsibility to provide public services. It had great difficulties in the past, prior to the conflict. But as funds are diverted from much needed health provision into the military machine (one aspect of the state machinery that is not ‘failing’) frequently veiled as quasi-developmental ventures, there are even less resources to deal with these issues.

Government health posts in these areas are frequently under or un-staffed. In some areas of the mid hills we witness the concomitant growth of small private pharmacies and clinics, frequently unregistered and staffed by either those working in the government system or increasingly by those amongst the literally thousands of health workers trained in the government health posts and that staff do not close early to go to public health workers remain in their colleges. Maoists may insist that thousands of health workers trained in the past, prior to the conflict. But as funds are diverted from much needed health provision into the military machine (one aspect of the state machinery that is not ‘failing’) frequently veiled as quasi-developmental ventures, there are even less resources to deal with these issues.

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Last year I spoke to a young man who was training to be a health assistant. From the far west, his family was investing money in his education, and like many others, he was attending one of the newly opened technical training colleges in Kathmandu. On returning to his village in the western hills for a holiday, he was incarcerated by the Maoists for several days. Eventually he was released and told that he would be allowed back to work in the area when he qualified. And was that his intention? He stated that he would rather wait until things “returned to normal”. One impact of the conflict is how it has inadvertently fed the proliferation of private institutions catering to this increased need as more and more health workers wait out the conflict and stay in urban areas.

Yet some health workers will make it back to these areas to open a small pharmacy or run a clinic. I was told last year by a representative of a drug company how a drug distributor in the west had been arrested by security forces. He was supplying drugs to unregistered pharmacists and the logic of the security forces was that he was therefore supplying drugs to the Maoists. This illustrates the increased surveillance that the army now has over health related institutions and workers. It is not the Maoists (who, ethically, have as much right to treatment as anyone else) who are dying of diarrhoea in these remote areas but those who for years have been living in an increasingly insecure existence further destabilised by the conflict. Does the conflation of state and military now feel that all the people in these areas are to be punished for the unfolding political situation around them?

Certain areas of Nepal are in a precarious balance with chronic and acute food shortages exacerbating infectious diseases. The army’s current security agenda, made worse by Maoist handling of workers, will almost certainly make these health related problems worse. In future we are likely to read many more devastating articles chronicling death from what to us seem like such minor ailments.

Ian Harper currently lectures in medical anthropology at the University of Edinburgh.
Bob Berky: the universal comedian

Bob Berky, comedian and mime artiste, did not return from his trek in Khumbu with funny lines but plenty of great experiences. He’s been in Nepal since 16 July and ventured into the mountains with his friend Broughton Coburn, author of Nepali Aama, and family. “I did pick up a few words like dai and bhai,” says Berky who plans to write a routine on the Nepalese language when he returns to the US. “We didn’t plan anything but I did perform impromptu at schools in Khumbu and Namche,” he adds, “I don’t know if they understood anything but they were laughing and it is always a good sign when people laugh.”

But the Sherpa children probably didn’t because Berky’s humour is universal. Language has been no barrier when he has appeared on MTV, Disney Channel and Nickelodeon. Trained initially as a classical musician, he also performs musically and comically with symphony orchestras in the US and Canada. His talent and reputation are now so recognised that Hollywood stars Jeff Goldblum and Michelle Pfeiffer hire him as a movement coach. Berky’s work off-Broadway earned him an OBIE Award, and he’s performed at such top venues as the Kennedy Centre, Lincoln Centre and the Edinburgh Festival.

Berky is known for his talent that taps into those humorous predicaments all of us find ourselves in at one time or another. “If we can laugh, we can touch that simplicity of the roots of us and really make it vibrate,” says Berky, “we’ll go out of a theatre not saying ‘wasn’t he a good performer?’ but rather ‘aren’t we all great!’”

Besides shows that he has lined up for in the US and Canada, he’s performing Out of the Blue Trunk at the Indigo Gallery. Out of the Blue Trunk at the Indigo Gallery on 5 August at 7PM

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Where's the mission?

It has been three months since the UN human rights monitoring mission arrived in the country and activists are running out of patience waiting for it to act at a time when they say abuses by both the state and Maoists are growing.

"The mission has a huge challenge but I think it's time for it to move a little faster," says Subodh Pyakhurel from the human rights group, Insec.

Other activists believe the mission shouldn't wait for its entire team to arrive before starting field visits since the killings of civilians is reportedly growing. "The monitors will never be stopped by the rebels or security personnel from travelling in any part of the country under any circumstances," explains Pyakhurel, adding this has become important since Nepal activists can no longer travel independently.

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Ian Martin: A lot is happening that people don't see

The mission is not moving fast enough, says Ian Martin (picture), who rejects criticism that it has been slow to get off the mark.

Nepali Times: Activists here are saying your mission is not moving fast enough

Ian Martin: A lot has been happening that people don't see. We have received complaints (from victims). We have been taking up a lot of issues directly with the state authorities and the Maoists regarding abduction and other issues. We are actively investigating many things now. Certainly we are not very present in the field yet. That won't happen unfortunately until we get more staff and are able to open our offices out of Kathmandu. We are already making a number of field visits and have planned more and will begin visits to many places of detention. All this may not be very visible but that certainly is a lot of human rights work.

The ICRC has suspended visits to detainees inside army camps, has this affected your visits too?

We've had routine meetings on their request. They wanted to inform me about their recent visits and activities. We don't want to replace activities by Nepali organisations whether NGOs or NHRC. The more they are able to do effectively, the better. But we have our own independent mandate to investigate and report.

Will you be looking into the disappearances cases as well?

In fact we are already actively doing so. We are trying to make sure that we coordinate our own work with that of others who report disappearances both to the UN working group and direct to the RNA. The RNA at the moment have teams out in the regions, one of whose aims is to try to clarify outstanding cases of disappearances. We are now for the first time receiving lists of detainees in the army barracks.

Do you expect anything from the contacts with the Maoists?

We have a mandate to engage with non-state actors. That's purely for the purpose of promoting observance of international humanitarian law and making clear that Maoists are accountable for the violations of international humanitarian law. So we are putting to them cases of concerns that are reported to us. Again it is early days to see how serious and effective the response would be.

How about vigilante groups?

This is definitely a case where we wanted to get some first hand information as to what is happening on the ground and it is certainly amongst our priorities. We will be making visits to areas where alleged vigilantes are operating and to look at what the relationship is between them and security forces.
Bollywood’s good girls learn

Heroines aren’t just discovering sex, they are positively revelling in bad behaviour

A former Miss World, actress Priyanka Chopra had a difficult time playing this scene. She had prepared for her role by studying the calculated seductiveness of Sharon Stone in Basic Instinct. But on the day that scene was shot, Chopra broke down and cried. The directors, brothers who go by the hyphenated Abbas-Mustan, had to spend a few hours convincing her that she was only playing a character. Filming didn’t start until late afternoon. Chopra is a Bollywood actress, and as such, trained to play the role of a virginal glam-doll. By tradition, a Bollywood heroine is a one-dimensional creation who may wear eye-popping bustiers or writhe passionately during a song in the rain. But she is unfailingly virtuous. Whether girlfriend, wife or mother, she is the repository of Indian moral values.

But a decade-long cultural churning has overturned stereotypes in India. In 1991, the threat of fiscal collapse forced the government to introduce wide-ranging economic reforms and allow multinational corporations to operate in India. The same year, satellite television arrived. Today, consumerism, globalization, the proliferation of semiclad bodies in print and television and the emergence of a more worldly audience have redefined the boundaries of what is permissible. Sex has been peeled out of the closet and it has become more willing to experiment with their images.

Malika Sherawat, 24, a statuesque actress, needed little convincing to step out of the stereotype. She made her leading-lady debut in 2003 with Kshishtwa, which grabbed headlines for its 17 kisses. Her follow-up was even steamier. Murder, released last year, a revamp of Adrian Lyne’s Unfaithful, had her playing a lonely housewife in Bangkok who has a passionate affair with an ex-boyfriend. Sherawat pushed the edge of the sexual envelope as far as the Indian Censor Board would allow. The lovemaking scenes featured bare backs, degradé and passionate kissing.

Boldness is the idea that a respectable upper-middle-class woman could have sexual desires and cheat on her husband—and get away with it. Murder made back its investment, approximately $750,000, several times over. Ashish Rajadhyaksha, a senior fellow at the Bangalore-based Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, said the film established Sherawat as an Indian “postfeminist icon”. Sherawat plays an Indian princess in an upcoming Hong Kong movie, The Heroin. She says her father refuses to speak to her. (For Sherawat, it also has a downside. She says her father refuses to speak to her.) Film studios in Mumbai are overrun with starlets fiercely trading on their sexuality and even established actresses are now taking chances. In Fide, Kareena Kapoor, a four-generation star of the Bollywood Kapoor aristocracy, played a scheming hedonist who beguiles her besotted lover into robbing a bank for her. There were audible gasps from audiences when her true character was revealed in Fide: she steps out of the shower with a man who is not her lover. Heroines aren’t just discovering sex, they are positively revelling in bad behaviour.

In forthcoming, still-untilled film, Sushmita Sen, a former Miss Universe, plays a protagonist who she says, “Chats, lies, sleeps with men, even kills them and gets away with it all.”

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Boldness is the idea that a respectable upper-middle-class woman could have sexual desires and cheat on her husband—and get away with it. Murder made back its investment, approximately $750,000, several times over. Ashish Rajadhyaksha, a senior fellow at the Bangalore-based Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, said the film established Sherawat as an Indian “postfeminist icon”. Sherawat plays an Indian princess in an upcoming Hong Kong movie, The Heroin. She says her father refuses to speak to her. (For Sherawat, it also has a downside. She says her father refuses to speak to her.) Film studios in Mumbai are overrun with starlets fiercely trading on their sexuality and even established actresses are now taking chances. In Fide, Kareena Kapoor, a four-generation star of the Bollywood Kapoor aristocracy, played a scheming hedonist who beguiles her besotted lover into robbing a bank for her. There were audible gasps from audiences when her true character was revealed in Fide: she steps out of the shower with a man who is not her lover. Heroines aren’t just discovering sex, they are positively revelling in bad behaviour.
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Amar Jyoti (1936) and Hunterwali (1935) and Earlier films like stretching the truth a bit. feminist, however, may be heroine’s latest avatar as a arrests the couple. she tells the police officer who pickle one more time, I’ll die,” comic: “If I have to make mango role she is forced to play is a looting spree across India. The woman, Bhuki, unabashedly uses her sexuality to cheat people but she is not evil or predatory. Her disdain for the housewife uses her sexuality to cheat people but she is not evil or predatory. Her disdain for the housewife fighting action heroine, and a female pimple who keeps men in captivity. Scriptwriter Bhavani Iyer dismisses present-day heroines as “naive attempts to portray reality” but admits that they are preferable to the deified women in earlier films. The box office occasionallyInterpreting the Hindi cinema heroines as “naive attempts to portray reality” but admits that they are preferable to the deified women in earlier films. The box office occasionally applauds the sexual daring of a Malika Sherawat but as the director Karan Johar, who has made several wholesome, family-centred blockbusters, put it, “In Bollywood, the number one position will always be reserved for the girl you can take home to Mom.” That’s why most actresses are hedging their bets. Chopra got rave reviews and awards in Aitraaz but she has followed up with good girl acts as she says, “I’m not sure I can play such a sexually aggressive character again.”

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Sujay Lama starts his fortnightly tennis column

Seventeen years ago, I left Nepal to pursue a dream of playing college tennis in America. It has been one heck of a ride. I have been blessed to have this opportunity and would like to share my story and try to help promote the sport of tennis in Nepal.

My earliest memories of tennis are following my brothers to the HIT Centre which was a five-court tennis club my father built in the mid-seventies. Saturday was the big day at the tennis centre which was located near the airport. It was my favourite day because there were a lot of interesting people from all over the world playing tennis and having fun. My father (Hem Lama) and my two brothers (Vijay and Raj) were my role models and it was very easy for me to pick up the game watching them play.

I trained intensely in Germany with my brother Raj. The biggest lesson he taught me was the importance of mental and physical discipline. I soon became the number one player in Nepal and qualified for Junior Wimbledon and played the Asian Games in Beijing. Although my game had improved, my confidence took a hit at the international competitions. The big breakthrough came one day when I was training with some elite German players. We were running up and down a steep hill a few times and half way through the run I started to overlap the competition. From that point on I realised that the most important thing was self-belief. My tennis soared when I came to the States. I won many tournaments was named two time All American and was inducted to the Luther College Athletic Hall of Fame. I never would have accomplished this if not for the love, encouragement and sacrifies my family made for me. They inspired me all along and I did not want to let them and my country down.

I have been able to take that confidence into the next phase of my life. In the last 13 years, I have been coaching players of various skill levels at the junior, professional and college ranks. I have enjoyed coaching because it is extremely rewarding to see young people realise their potential. I am a teacher and that means I have the privilege of being a role model and showing the great lessons the game of tennis has to offer. Whether it is coaching a professional at the grand slams such as Wimbledon or working on stroke mechanics with one of the girls on my team at the University of Illinois, I have been able to do it with a lot of passion. I believe in PMA (Positive Mental Attitude) and that is why I have been very successful. Everything I do as a coach and as a person, PMA is the foundation of it all.

I look forward to this opportunity to write a tennis column every forthnight from here in Champaign, Illinois for Nepali Times. I would love your feedback and suggestions.

Sujay Lama’s tennis column, Game Point, will alternate with Deepak Acharya’s golf column, Tee Time, in this space every week.

GAME POINT
Sujay Lama

FATHER AND SON: Me with my father Hem Lama at the Royal Hotel tennis court in 1970.

BOLLYWOOD BOMBSHELS:
Bipasha Basu (overleaf) and Malika Sherawat.
KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

The average air pollution for Kathmandu Valley decreased by 20 percent last week compared to the previous week. However, concentrations of dust particles small enough to stay in the lungs at the roadside urban traffic stations, particularly at Patan, Patan Hospital, exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) of 120 micrograms per cubic metre, while the air in the rest of the Valley was relatively clean.

24-30 July 2005 in micrograms per cubic metre.

Source: www.mopo.gov.np

KATHMANDU VALLEY

by MAUSAM BEED

Too little too late is how we can sum up the last 10 days of the 2005 monsoon. The worst monsoon drought in two decades. Usually by this time of year the Bay of Bengal arm of the monsoon moves along the eastward of the Himalayas bringing heavy rains. But in July a persistent high pressure zone over the Tibetan plateau thinned the advance while sucking in the Arabian Sea moisture. So far Nepal has seen only two monsoon bursts, whereas during an average monsoon we can see up to eight pouskas. This satellite picture, Thursday morning shows a low pressure system that could draw in rain. Expect another warm weekend with some localized rains along the Valley rim.

NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED

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For Rajan Khatiwada, 27, acting as the protagonist in Bagh Bhairab is a constant struggle between being a teenager 500 years ago and the person he is now. Even when before he goes on stage, he reminds himself to walk into Gyan Bir’s skin but even then, he says, “I have to remind myself to remind myself who I am.”

For his audience at the Gurukul theatre’s rendition of Bagh Bharab, however, Rajan Khatiwada is Gyan Bir, the potter. A week’s rehearsal and nearly a month of performances has polished the rough edges and Gyan Bir grows more convincing with every performance. But learning to be the young shepherd from centuries ago did not come easy for Rajan.

“It took a lot of research and soul searching. We went to the Bagh Bhairab temple in Kirtipur many times and things there are still like they were 500 years ago,” he says, “I talked to some older people about my character.” Written by playwright Salya Mohan Joshi, Bagh Bharab is directed by Sunil Pokhrel and staged at Gurukul nearly every evening. Rajan himself worked on the set design based on the black box technique. But there are other details that he took care of to give the play its essence.

“I had a certain section of the backdrop painted with red mud like in village houses so the subtle hint of smell would add to the authenticity of the atmosphere and I wanted to portray the Kirtipur landscape in the set design,” Rajan tells us, wiping away his make-up after a performance. Presenting himself as Gyan the potter on stage has been an epiphany for Rajan, the actor. The play itself is a time machine that takes him and his audience to a Kathmandu Valley 500 years ago. He says, “Gyan helped me understand the creative potentiality of my character, a potter whom everybody loves.”

Rajan Khatiwada, 27, acting as the protagonist in Bagh Bhairab is a constant struggle between being a teenager 500 years ago and the person he is now. Even every evening before he goes on stage, he reminds himself to walk into Gyan Bir’s skin but even then, he says, “I have to remind myself to remind myself who I am.”

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The news this week of an Austrian spy plane intruding into Nepali airspace should send a chill down every ultra-nationalistic spine and give all patriots goose pimples. Luckily, alert air traffic controllers noticed a blip on the radar that shouldn’t have been there and quickly swatted it, thinking it was a common house fly (Latin name: Musca domestica Linnaeus) sitting on the scope. Only then did they realise it was not a fly but an unidentified flying object encroaching in an unauthorised manner into our sovereign air space and terrorising our territorial integrity.

The Royal Nepali Air Force was immediately scrambled from its base in Tumlingtar and the jet intercepted in midair somewhere over the eastern sector, warning shots were fired according to accepted international procedures, and then the plane was forced to land at Kathmandu airport. When commandosstormed the plane they found eight spies on board all bristling with antennae. The crew gave the laughable explanation that they wanted to “see Mt Everest up close” to hide their true mission and were immediately packed off for interrogation at the Rum Doodle Bar.

Our fearless air traffic controllers deserve the highest medals in the land, but the lesson from this close-shave is that we can’t be too vigilant in safeguarding our national security during these perilous times when tensions are running high with the international community. It is time to remember the high school Boy Scout motto (“Be Prepared”) and be vigilant about future threats.

I have offered my services as a security consultant (free of cost in the national interest) and after a thorough appraisal of our current security scenario have come up with the following list of top-secret recommendations which are totally off the record and are published below on condition that readers don’t pass them on to any suspicious looking foreigners, especially Austrians still lurking around Tumlingtar.

For your eyes only:
- Our northern border is protected by high mountains, but our open border to the south is easy to infiltrate which is why we need to make an East-West Moat. All we need to do is ask the Indians to construct more embankments to submerge our tarai.
- RONAST should immediately begin plutonium enrichment at a secret reactor at Khumaltar. Experience in North Korea and Iran have shown that the only thing that will force the international community to take us more seriously is to have our own secret nuclear weapons program.
- The Nepali landmass is under constant surveillance from spy satellites, all VIPs should therefore be careful about walking about in broad-daylight where their movements can be monitored. They should wear wraparound sunglasses to disguise themselves.
- The Cabinet Room could have miniature microphones hidden under the table so the Council of Ministers should refrain from discussing anything of national importance at cabinet meetings. They should also not discuss any state secrets at home since there may be bed bugs.
- The international moratorium on arms supplies is of serious concern. So all incoming passengers are henceforth allowed to bring lethal weapons. Non-lethal weapons will not be permitted.
- We are doing a great job keeping our highways blocked by landslides, trees, blown-up bridges to thwart enemy invasion. But more needs to be done, there are still some cargo trucks plying the East-West Highway.
- By now we have amply demonstrated that this country is ungovernable. And that is the greatest deterrent of all, why would anyone in his right mind even want to attack us?