

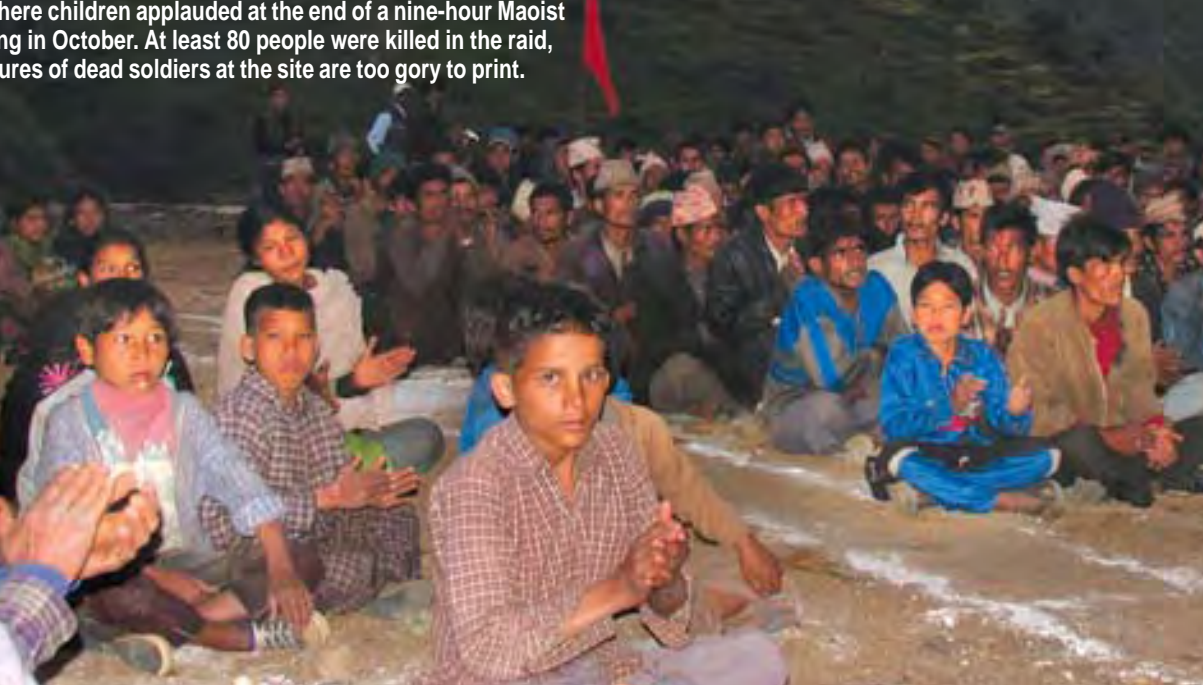


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GROUND ZERO: The Royal Nepali Army Karnali Highway road construction camp that was attacked on Sunday is located on this exact spot where children applauded at the end of a nine-hour Maoist public meeting in October. At least 80 people were killed in the raid, and first pictures of dead soldiers at the site are too gory to print. See p 7, 8-9.

A large crowd of children, mostly boys, are sitting on the ground in a dirt clearing. They are all clapping their hands and looking towards the camera. The children are dressed in casual clothing like t-shirts and sweaters. In the background, a red flag is visible on a pole. The scene appears to be outdoors at night or in low light.

NARESH NEWAR

Shibesh Regmi, chief of Action Aid Nepal, says the existing act already had strong legal provisions to take action against any NGO not complying with government agreements. He adds: "There really was no need to introduce any new codes of conduct."

The policy change has apparently infuriated even government officials, who argue it will only jeopardise the work of INGOs, who bring in Rs 7 billion annually to Nepal. The estimated 30,000 non-government groups countrywide are planning protests to pressure the government to leave them alone. ●



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ROAD TO NOWHERE

The Karnali Highway is being carved out of the rocky flanks of these awesome mountains near Pili (pictured below). At the moment the road goes from nowhere to nowhere, high above an abyss. Which just about sums up the state of the country.

If there is one lesson for the army, the rebels and their leaders from Sunday night's slaughter in Kalikot it is the bloody futility of this senseless war.

The headlines read like basketball scores RNA: 44, CPNM: 26. But neither side won. Both lost. The dead were young Nepali men and women who ended up as cannon fodder. The saddest part of it is that they died in a needless conflict over an outdated ideology that can be resolved with a little bit of vision and political will.

This still isn't one of those intractable ethnic third world wars, a ferocious struggle for self-determination or national liberation. No, it is just blood-thirsty, misguided violence that demands human sacrifices.

Leaders of the warring sides want all power for themselves but it is clear they cannot attain it through a military victory. The army's successful defence of district headquarters against human wave attacks has forced the Maoists to now concentrate on vulnerable forward outposts, to landmine army convoys or slaughter soldiers' families. On the other hand, the near-doubling of the army's troop strength and adding new armaments have not improved its capacity to score a crippling blow against a battle-hardened and determined guerrilla force that feeds on continued apathy of an uncaring state.

The army brass often justifies its increased budget allocation saying it needs it to give the rebels a bloody nose and force them to the negotiating table. It is clear now that that strategy is not working. Killing more fellow-Nepalis is not the solution.

As the British, then the Soviets and now the Americans have found Afghanistan is ideal guerrilla country. But Nepal is three times more ideal because our mountains are more rugged, they are covered by forests and they are densely inhabited. If you want protracted guerrilla war, Nepal is where you would wage it.

That is why you can't win it with more soldiers in forward bases which would just give the Maoists more targets like Pili. You don't fight it with helicopters with rocket pods which would only turn villages to dust. You don't fight it by curbing the media or dismantling democracy. You find ways to end it with negotiations so you can prosper from the country's progress.



KUNDA DIXIT

Imagined communities

Instead of pretending to work with communities, we should revive grassroots democracy

It is surprising to see development agencies, small and large, local as well as multilateral, hide behind a vague and self-serving concept of 'communities' and pretend that the latter can create and defend the 'space for development' in a violent environment.

GUEST COLUMN
Jorg Frieden



In his recent budget speech, the Minister of Finance stated that the "effectiveness in the implementation of the programs and improvement in quality of service can be maintained if the involvement of the local communities... is ensured".

A development bank recently wrote that 'community-owned projects show remarkably low incidence of interference on the part of the insurgents and willingness on the part of communities to push back the insurgents when they do interfere'.

In remote parts of Nepal and areas beyond a day's walk from a motorable road the political strength of the Maoist insurgency is a reality. In villages and hamlets, the real authority is in their hands: often young and female. No decision whatsoever is taken without their consent since the CPN-M has the monopoly on the use of force. Weapons are seldom seen but they are very much present in the minds of the local people.

Every development worker entering these areas to get in touch with 'communities' must talk and convince the Maoist cadres first. Development work that provide immediate benefits, that is seen as useful by the majority of the people, that is carried out in a transparent way and that brings political advantages or cash to the Maoists has a good chance of being

accepted. This doesn't mean, however, that the decision on its continuation is in the hands of 'communities' or that they are in a position to 'push back the insurgents'.

Indeed, for the last two years (1 February has changed nothing in this respect) bilaterals, the UN and ADB consultants have been conducting frequent direct and indirect discussions with the Maoists in order to understand, get permission to work or try to enforce the Basic Operational Guidelines.

The guidelines have helped in gaining access and acceptance of the impartiality of development work. But they have often been insufficient to avoid interruptions or suspension of activities. The National Planning Commission's statistics on the km of roads built in a year or schools transferred to parent committees reflect to a large extent the negotiation skills of bilateral agencies, NGOs, human rights activists and other intermediaries.

But to pretend that communities are empowered and able to protect themselves and the space for development, to believe that villagers can orient development activities, are acts of denial. Such statements reveal the refusal to see how seriously the conflict has affected rural life. In a large part of the country there has been a steady erosion of resources, hope and initiative and in some areas we are now close to a humanitarian crisis.

Human rights violations and impunity are daily reality. Households, teachers and civil servants have had to serve 'two governments' and have been subject to heavy taxation by the Maoists in cash or food or shelter and care for wounded combatants. Frequent changes in cadres and partyline have increased the sense of insecurity. On the other hand,

the security forces have often spread fear by their erratic and violent behaviour.

These pressures have extended traditional migration movements, leaving behind a weakened society. Some women have been empowered, but they have paid a heavy price for increased self-determination, as they have been burdened by additional work and responsibilities.

So, we don't know what 'communities' mean anymore. In rural Nepal, this word is mainly taken to mean various users groups established by NGOs and project staff in order to manage resources or execute externally financed activities. All these organisations are ridden with serious problems of social exclusion, lack of accountability and political manipulation. High caste and traditional elites, although now closely watched by Maoist militants, continue to play the dominant role in almost all the existing organisations.

Indeed, to be able to speak of 'communities' in any meaningful political sense we should recall the democratically elected VDC which, despite their shortcomings, anchored social and physical capital in rural areas. The conflict has blown them away and no political miracle can bring them back soon.

Yet only democratic institutions can ensure sustainable development results and the actual inclusion of women and socially discriminated groups.

Development work and projects should continue to be designed taking the desirable revival of village development committees into account, instead of pretending that 'communities' can be a substitute for a vibrant and plural democracy. ●

Jorg Frieden is the director in Nepal of Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

LETTERS

REPLY TO REPLY

Re: Sambhav Sharma's comments (Letters, #259) on my earlier writeup (Support by default, #258). There are no problems with political parties per se but with the utter corruptibility of their leaders and their total lack of accountability to people. Merely replacing Panchayat thugs by multiparty thugs does not a democracy make. The parties are decaying from inside and are, therefore, vulnerable to increasing attacks from people who naturally would include ex-generals. Only elections lend legitimacy to politicians as their representatives for specified duration in a democracy. Thanks to parties in power all these years, the country has found itself on the verge of total collapse. Anywhere else, the situation would have called for presidential rule. So, instead of trying to mislead the people by complaining about the king's direct rule, the Young Turks should purge their parties of corrupt elements and make structural reforms to prevent their re-emergence in future. The king has granted them three years to mend their manners. During the time, instead of grovelling at New Delhi's feet, the parties should atone for their sins and work with the king to solve the all-pervading problem of the Maoists who, with

their safe haven in India, do not yet seem inclined to negotiate a return to peace.

Bihari K Shrestha, Kathmandu

PORTERS' PROGRESS

Thank you very much for publishing research that shows Nepali porters are the most efficient in the world (Porters' progress, #258). Just to add to the information: the subject is not new and has been part of scientific discourse with articles like Trends in the Workload of the Two High Altitude Aid Posts in the Nepal Himalayas (*Journal of Travel Medicine* 6:217-222, 1999, by Buddha Basnyat, GK Savard and K Zafren), The Burden of the Himalayan Porter (*High Altitude Medicine and Biology*, Volume 2, Number 2, 2001, by Buddha Basnyat and Benedicte Schepens). The article published in *Science* (Volume 308, 17 June 2005) under the title Energetics of Load Carrying in Nepalese Porters is an excellent observational study carried out by Belgian researchers GJ Bastien, B Schepens, PA Willems and NC Heglund. The researchers have done a comparative study with European porters who also carry loads on their backs and African women who carry head-supported loads. There has been increasing academic interest in the structural alignment of cervical vertebra (and spine) of porters. The International Porters' Protection Group

is also working for the safety and rights of porters. I can see present research failing to observe a few extremely important contributing components of the load-carrying mechanism of Nepali porters. We need to understand the laws of physics to study and interpret rather than go for expensive invasive procedures.

Matiram Pun, Institute of Medicine, Maharajganj

HOSPITAL WASTE

Recently I walked down a road near the south gate of Bir Hospital where people were selling tea and live chicken. I was horrified to find hospital rubbish lining one side of the street: needles, bloody bandages and medicine bottles were just dumped on the wet and muddy street. This filth can then be brought back into the hospital on people's shoes. Who in their right mind could do such a thing? What doctor who has sworn the Hippocratic oath to respect and save life could allow this to happen? Don't tell me they don't know about it. Don't tell me that they are unaware of the risk to anyone who should walk on this road not to mention if someone is foolish enough to scavenge in this filth? In a country with so many problems, there are some problems that we can do something about.

P M Lustig, Kathmandu

SOLAR POWER

Tuki-free country (#258) on the mission of Babu Raja Shrestha to light up the country with solar power is incomplete without the acknowledgement of awards won by the Centre for Renewable Energy (CRE) at the World Bank's *ēLau na abata kehi garauni* competition and also at the global competition for the *ēLight for All* program based on solar tukis. CRE has been awarded a UNDP project under the Small Grants Program of the Global Environment Facility. Such recognition of the dream spearheaded by Babu Raja and his colleagues at CRE should allow them to realise their dream of bringing the light of development to rural Nepal. Babu Raja deserves every recognition he can get at the national level so that other visionaries like him also get inspired rather than leaving the country at the first available opportunity.

Adarsha Tuladhar, email

RHINO HORN

Re: The no-horned Asiatic rhino (#258). I have a solution to poachers killing rhinos for their horns: cut off the horns of all rhinos in Chitwan and replace them with plastic (duplicate) ones. No problem for tourists, big surprise for poachers.

Pascal Vuieert, email



Parallel histories

Nepal and Pakistan have parallel pasts. And similar destinies?

This week, two of our neighbours will be celebrating their 58th independence day. Due to an easy access to Indian media, we know that 15 August is India's independence day. But Pakistan became independent a day earlier on 14 August. Both countries suffered a harrowing partition

STATE OF THE STATE

CK Lal

that saw the biggest transfer of population in human history. Nearly a million died, millions more were rendered homeless. Unresolved issues of partition continue to haunt relations. Serious efforts at rapprochement between these two nuclear nations have now begun, but given the bad blood it's still fragile. India has matured as a settled democracy where elections are held periodically and their outcomes respected. Other than a brief dictatorial interlude of an emergency in the seventies, Indian politicians have seldom veered away from the constitution. The Indian military has steadfastly refused to be drawn into politics. Religious bigotry, separatism and leftwing rebellion exist but are not in danger of tearing the country apart. Democracy has a way of self-correcting itself and resolving conflict. In Pakistan, democracy failed to take root and the country has been under direct or indirect military control for over half a century. The country's history is a record of various coups, the rise of self-declared messiahs and their fall from grace, mostly under unusual circumstances. Nepal has a lot to learn from India, but we need to learn even more from Pakistan. For some inexplicable reason, the destinies of Islamic Pakistan and Hindu Nepal are mysteriously

intertwined. Every time the axe of authoritarianism falls on democratic regimes in Islamabad, Kathmandu is sure to follow. Gen Ayub Khan declared himself president in 1960. As if on cue, King Mahendra dissolved Nepal's first elected parliament. Gen Yahya Khan took over in 1969 and in Nepal the Panchayat fell into the hands of ultra-conservatives within the Gaun Pharka campaign. In 1977, Gen Zia ul-Haq staged a military coup and executed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This led to riots in Kathmandu that had to be defused with a referendum. In August 1988, General Zia, the US ambassador and top Pakistani army officials were killed in a mysterious air crash, marking a return to democracy. In Nepal the discontent soon spilled over in the streets, leading to the 1990 People's Movement and a new constitution. Gen Musharraf staged an airborne coup in his country in October 1999 we had a parallel royal takeover in October 2002 in Nepal. If what has happened in Pakistan since is anything to go by, the palace also badly needs an electoral exercise to legitimise authoritarian rule. On Tuesday, US Ambassador James Moriarty strongly urged political parties to accept any proposal for elections emanating from the palace. And that is another similarity between Kathmandu and Islamabad: US ambassadors in both places have often been the arbiters of the fate of democracy. But Pakistani generals are much better at handling America. Pakistan gets more per-capita US aid than any other country in the world except Israel. Islamabad's rulers ignore unsolicited US advice with panache. Here, Sachit Shamsheres and Kuber Sharnas publicly grovel in front of foreign envoys, as they did on Tuesday. All militarised societies are at

the brink of state failure. Pakistan and Nepal stand together at 34th and 35th places from the bottom respectively. But Pakistan's military has a demonstrated capacity of handling emergencies while the Royal Nepali Army has yet to prove it is capable of containing the Maoists. The rout in Kalikot is a grim reminder of uncertainty looming ahead. 'If the war with Maoists continues, Nepal's survival will be doubtful,' cautions the report titled *The Second Freedom: South Asian Challenge 2005-2025* published by the thinktank Strategic Foresight Group. But it doesn't seem to sway dictators. The Pakistani military has been a virtual ruling party in Pakistan nearly throughout that country's history. Narayanhiti seems to want to be something similar, but without shouldering the same responsibilities. The international community, America in particular, needs to get over its obsession with evil communists from the Cold War. Each of the countries in South Asia faces different challenges. Post-colonial states like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are struggling for their second freedom—from identity politics, class wars, communal strife and other uprisings of political nature. Challenges in Bhutan and Nepal are rather primal, we are yet to evolve into political beings. We are still struggling for formal freedom, the fundamental right to be free citizens of not just an independent but a free country. Faiz Ahmad Faiz writes in 'We Shall Witness': 'Aur raaj karay ge khalaq-e-khuda/ Jo main bhi hoon aur tum bhi ho (So will rule God's people/ Which is also you and also I)'. There is something in the resilience of the people of Pakistan that all of us must salute. ●

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Homecoming

It is the astounding lack of order in Kathmandu that brings me home

There is something magical about returning to Kathmandu after spending half a decade in America's trimmed, tame suburbia. Everything greets your senses like a blast of fresh air and you are seized with rapture as you walk down its potholed streets.

The first things that strike you are the billboards and street signs. "Eat Restaurant", "Prolific English Boarding School", "Intellect Computer Institute". The directness and simplicity of these words are so much in character with the city that you wonder how you never recalled them while away. "Sincere Market", "Human Tailors", "Unique College": they flash past as the taxi swerves on the laneless street echoing with loud music, honking, hawking and spitting.

The surprising thing is that the cacophony refuses to get on your nerves. On the contrary, it gives you a rush, a peculiar sense of freedom and you roll down the windows to soak up your mad, marvellous city of dust and fumes and all.

It is the astounding lack of order in Kathmandu that brings you home. Home as you cross the crazy intersections at your own risk and witness the wrath of reckless drivers at rush hour. Home as you watch paper boats sail on a roadside puddle and street kids riding ancient sculptures. Home as you smell sewage on the holy river by which an elderly man soaps and scrubs himself clean with all his might.

And some nights when the city turns black and hushed without electricity, life still goes on as it always has. It makes no difference to the stock market or headlines in the newspapers.

Yes, you love Kathmandu with renewed intensity when you return from a place that can never, ever be your home. A place so alien it is defined by its power and superabundance. A place where excess is the norm and the poorest are also the fattest. Where a bewildering centripetal force sucks you into yourself and life revolves around your space, your car, your bills and your meals cooking in your microwave.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES: Billboard at Narayan Gopal Chok warns against using mobiles while driving but it seems to suggest burning tyres is ok.

A place where you must organise and systematise the very air you breathe or you end up violating the rights of those around you. You end up paying incredible fines: parking ticket, speeding ticket, smoking ticket, drinking ticket, fine for not paying the fine in time. A place where law and order hounds you even in your dreams, especially the dreams of the millions discarded by the System, those who do not hold power in the pigment of their skin, those who quietly slog day and night, and hide as though slogging were a crime.

How exhilarating to be in Kathmandu and leave all that behind. Here you can order a half-plate of momo without breaking a restaurant rule. You can eat french fries made of real potatoes, not frozen slices dumped in the fryer. You can buy the toothpaste you need without growing dizzy over a hundred brands. You make transactions with people, not automated voices (or people who sound like automated voices).

You can drop in without an appointment and still be welcomed with a hot cup of tea. You can stand outside your friend's house and scream her name without half the neighbourhood calling the police.

You stand on your rooftop and watch the hills that rise beyond the haze, the clothes hanging on crammed terraces and the temple roofs peeking from behind new office blocks. The magic of Kathmandu grips you more powerfully if you have ached in her absence. For in that absence she has grown dearer and more irreplaceable. You have remembered her like a song. So when you come back and watch her breathe and move before your eyes, you become mute with joy. You hear of her countless flaws from countless people but you only feel her beauty in your bones. ●



PICS: NARESH NEWAR

Life after leprosy

Patients may be cured of infection but still face the stigma

NARESH NEWAR

Chandrakala Kunwar was 12 when she started showing symptoms of leprosy infection. Neighbours in her village in Myagdi soon found out and fearing an epidemic, dragged her to the banks of the Kali Gandaki and quarantined her in a shack built with twigs and leaves, warning her never to set foot in the village again.

"I still hate them," says Chandrakala, now 20, about the villagers and relatives who ostracised her from buying at local shops, using the public tap or going to school. Finally, her father carried the girl for nearly three hours from her village to the district hospital. Eventually, she was transported to Anandaban Leprosy Hospital (ALH) in Lele outside Kathmandu. Eight years later, she has lost most of her toes but is cured. The mental scars, however, still remain. In Lele, patients recall heart-rending tales of victimhood.

"No matter where I go, whenever people see my feet, they will remind me that I am a leper," says Chandrakala. Says another patient, Maya Lama: "No matter what we do we are still treated differently."



Rewati (above) was abandoned by her family when she developed a leprosy infection. She is now at Anandaban hospital in Lele.

Nepal has been successful in reducing the leprosy affected population from a prevalence rate of 21 per 10,000 in the 1980s to just 2.41 per 10,000 by 2004. In fact, the country is on the verge of declaring leprosy eradicated and in reach of the World Health Organisation (WHO) target of reducing the number of cases to one per 10,000 people.

"We are already reaching that stage where we no longer see leprosy as a major public health crisis. It is just a matter of a few years," says Binla Ojha, director general of the government's Leprosy Control Division. But for many health personnel working closely with leprosy affected families, numbers are not so important.

"The problem of leprosy does not end with medical care because real challenges of stigma start once the patients complete their treatment," explains Pradeep Failbus, superintendent of Anandaban, the country's pioneering and best leprosy hospital. It offers free treatment and medicines supplied by the Ministry of Health.

Doctors here say curing leprosy is not the problem: it is addressing the low self-esteem and psychological trauma of

exclusion once patients return to their home villages. "The worst problem is social exclusion, perhaps even more than leprosy because it will take a longer time to heal," says specialist Madan Ghimire, whose studies have shown that even the educated have strong prejudices against people who are cured but are deformed by leprosy. The situation is much worse for girls and women, who are often abandoned by male relatives and husbands.

"A wife would rather get infected by her husband than desert him," says Rewati Mahato, a 20-year-old mother of four children whose face shows signs of infection. She was abandoned by her husband who remarried and fled to India. "Life becomes a nightmare," she added. Mahato was forced by relatives and neighbours to live in isolation in a forest. She left her children with her parents and travelled over 150 km from Mahottari district to Kathmandu for treatment.

"Even after decades of mass awareness that leprosy is curable and not very contagious we still have this problem," explains Shovakar Kandel, an activist with the self-help group Integration Dignity and Economic Advancement (IDEA).

Kandel feels the media is not doing enough to educate the public and fears continued ostracisation could trigger psychological disorders in former leprosy patients.

But the government is optimistic such stigma will be eradicated as the disease itself disappears. "It's definitely not easy to reintegrate especially individuals with deformity," says Ojha. "We have to work on raising mass awareness to generate sensitivity towards their situation." ●

अनुशासन र नैतिकताविहीन व्यक्ति र समाज अन्ततोगत्वा पतन भएर जान्छन्। त्यसैले राष्ट्रिय जीवनका हरेक आयामहरूमा उदाहरणीय अनुशासन र नैतिकता कायम गर्नुपर्छ। र त्यसको सुरुवात आफैंबाट गरौं।

श्री ५ को सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
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Mero mobile

Nepalís first mobile telephone company ãsoft-launchedí its service this week three years after obtaining its license. Spice Nepal Private Limited (SNPL) changed ownership half-way through the set up process after the Khetan group sold its share to a consortium lead by Russian Nepali businessmen. ãWe are pleased to inform you that most elements of our GSM network have been installed,í SNPL said in a statement on Tuesday. The company is carrying out tests with select customers before launching the main service which will go under the brandname, ãMero Mobileí and have numbers beginning with 9801.

On Tuesday, secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication Lok Man Singh Karki and chairman of Nepal Telecommunication Authority Suresh Kumar Pudasaini ceremonially launched the service by talking to each other through the new system.

MA-60: buy two get one free

The government is negotiating with the Chinese aircraft manufacturer, Xi'an Aircraft Industry Group Co, for a buy-two-get-one-free deal to supply two twin engine turboprops for Royal Nepal Airlines. The Royal Nepali Army will get one of the planes for free.



The aircraft is a 56ñseater derivative of the original Soviet Antonov An-24 and has upgraded Pratt & Whitney engines and Rockwell avionics. At \$11 million apiece it has been exported to Zimbabwe, Fiji, Eritrea and Congo. Although not very popular among pilots, airlines find the aircraft cheap and useful for rough airfields.

Sources at Royal Nepal Airlines arenít too happy with the new aircraft and say they would have preferred more modern turboprops like ATR-72s or SAAB 340 which have a proven record of service on domestic routes like Pokhara, Biratnagar, Bhairawa and Nepalganj. Itís the government deciding, and it looks like they canít resist getting one free plane for the army,í one airline official told us. The MA60 doesnít yet have UK or US FAA certification and has been decommissioned from service by Chinaís own Wuhan Airlines and China Eastern Airlines.

Everest profits climb

Everest Bankís operating profit registered a growth of 9.1 percent over the last year, or Rs 376.9 million, based on the unaudited accounts of 2004/2005, the bank announced. Credit grew by 29.6 percent, while total deposits increased by 25.2 percent, to Rs 10,097.7 million over the preceding year in its network of 16 branches.

Rainy day savings

The Bank of Kathmandu has launched a new savings scheme. The Kopila Bachat Yojana will pay, quarterly, a higher rate of interest than a savings account. Customers need to have an account with Bank of Kathmandu in order to sign up and a monthly transfer of Rs 1,000 or any multiple of a thousand will be debited automatically on the 25th day of each month.



Taxing books

You can't balance the budget by taxing knowledge

For a country that boasts that it ranks 'only' 10th from the bottom in GDP per capita in the world, what do you expect?

Nepal has one of the lowest literacy rates in Asia, especially among girls. Education is politicised, higher education is over-commercialised. So why not tax books, right?

ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed



Of the many absurd things that have transpired in the past year or so, the new tax on books in the new budget is probably the most absurd. Surely the intention in the beginning of the 21st century is to make education policies less cumbersome, education fees more affordable and books affordable?

Nepali publishing has just been coming of age with few private companies really taking the risk to invest in producing world-class material such as the press that prints this paper. However, there is little apart from regular periodicals and reports for the report-hungry development communities—there is little serious publishing that goes on. The bulk of the printing that takes place on a recurring basis is educational books that are consumed by the growing number of students and these are mostly imported.

Most of the books used in the ever-mushrooming colleges and universities are not published in Nepal. Therefore, the new tax impacts students directly. In a country where good libraries are as alien as the concept of good governance, it is the young who will directly suffer. We do not have separate student editions, as in many countries, nor do we have a well operating market for used books or proper libraries. Students have no option but to buy the books they need.

It is nothing new for competition-shy Nepali



KIRAN PANDAY

businesses to seek protection. They have done it in the past and they will do it in the future. And surely it is a global tendency for homegrown enterprises to ask for protection. Therefore, this provision can make some local businesses happy as they can surely have a competitive edge. Of course, we have an inefficient government monolith in this sector that wants to continuously produce sub-standard products and ensure that some individuals and their patrons benefit. But why sacrifice a sensitive issue like book pricing at the altar of individual interests?

We need to also understand that we ourselves have embraced WTO membership, which we like to flaunt. One of the key WTO issues is Intellectual Property Rights. Therefore, Nepali companies will really need to work around the copyright of books before they even think of publishing them here.

With a fraction of a non-student population that reads

and a fraction amongst them that actually buy and read, there is little market for licensing of publications. The only option is to import, to tax it more means directly affecting the prices that consumers pay. Pirating audio CDs, video CDs and DVDs is easier as the cost of piracy is low, but to pirate books you need volumes and surely the intention of the new tax is not to encourage illegal printing.

Many have argued that this insignificant tax hike should not affect pricing too much and since book imports are not significant, why make this a big issue? The Beed feels the same but differently: if the Finance Ministry can't really quantify what additional duties will be raised or how much import substitution is possible, why do it? Why send the wrong signal?

We are telling the world that we want to reform, we want to promote education, we need more assistance in this sector. And then we go and increase the tax on books. ●

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Road rage

Royal Nepali Army Spokesman Brig Gen Deepak Gurung in an interview with *BBC Nepali Service*, 9 August

BBC
नेपाली

BBC Nepali Service: What information do you have on the recovery of the bodies of 40 security personnel in Pili?
Brig Gen Deepak Gurung: The bodies show signs that the soldiers were tortured and killed by the Maoists after capture. They were shot in their heads and some of their body parts were mutilated.

You have mentioned there were non-combatants among the security personnel in the Pili camp. Who were they?
They are soldiers with the Royal Nepali Army but they were hired for road construction.

But the army's press release issued on 8 August stated that there were around 100 local people who were hired for construction work. What happened to them?
They were not local people. They were non-military people who had been hired from elsewhere.

Your press statement stated clearly that these non-military persons had been kept in the military camp at Pili. So what are the chances that there were civilians also killed in the clash?
Things are not clear as yet. There are camps for road construction in Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan and Jajarkot also. Even in those places we have hired people like that. These people are non-combatants who are not full soldiers. We hire them because if we take locals for such work, they are scared away by the Maoists.

Were any civilians involved in the construction work?
These workers do wear army uniforms but they are not trained soldiers. They are something like a non-military construction crew.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Apart from them, did the army use any civilians for construction work?
Civilians are never used.



SHARAD KC

Maoist western military command chief Prabhakar on *BBC Nepali Service*, 9 August

BBC
नेपाली

BBC Nepali Service: As always, your statement contradicts the army's claim. What really happened?
Prabhakar: The fact this time is that the entire camp has been destroyed. They were around 250 people in total. Of them around 160 have been killed and we have held 52 of them captive. Any human rights activist and journalist can come here and get the real information.

There have been reports that civilians were caught in crossfire.
That is just a lame excuse. There were no civilians there. They were all armed personnel of the army with whom we fought for 11 hours. The Pili camp was established in our base area and no local people had been working in that construction.

But the army says there were non-combatants in that camp who were there to work on the road construction.
Non-combatants do not carry weapons. We have their entire records. We know their names and the weapons they carried. They all were carrying INSAS, SLR and LMGs. Discussions with the 52 security personnel that we have held captive can make things clearer. We would request you to do that.

Your party has time and again claimed that the army has tortured and killed unarmed Maoists. Why don't you practise what you preach?
That we have attacked unarmed people is something they (the army) have been saying to cover up their own lapses. We have not attacked any unarmed person. We even urged armed soldiers to surrender. As a result, some of them are with us.

Maoist promises

Editorial in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 5 August

नेपाल समाचारपत्र

Recently, Maoist supremo Prachanda stated his party would abstain from targeting civilians and political party workers and stressed that those captured by the rebels would be treated with respect, according to international law. But with Maoist atrocities growing there is now scepticism as to whether rebel leaders and cadres will keep the promise. The violence in Mankot of Bajura is evidence of the Maoist terror. They bombed the house of Juhare Luhar after he failed to serve food to a group of rebels, killing the man's three-year old son Lokendra. In another incident a young girl was burnt alive in a public vehicle. Only a few months back nearly 40 civilians were killed in the bus targeted by a rebel landmine in Chitwan. Frequent apologies after each incident start to appear farcical when such atrocities keep happening. These incidents are acts of terrorism and in no way can help the Maoists achieve political power or reconcile with the democratic parties. All this occurs at a time when the parties are showing interest in such a dialogue. If the rebels want to come into the political mainstream, they should stop their violent ways. Peace and terrorism don't go together.

Let them return

Editorial in *Kantipur*, 7 August

कान्तिपुर

Bhutani refugees have no other choice than to use India as a transit route to return home to Bhutan. The recent incident of Indian police forcing a group of refugees to return to Nepal is nothing new: such groups have been blocked by Indian cops many times. For nearly 15 years, India has been ignoring the refugees' plight despite Nepal's request to help it solve the refugee crisis. To make matters worse, India has been violating the border treaty whereby nationals from both Bhutan and Nepal are allowed to travel freely through India without permits or visas. It is really unfortunate that a democratic nation like India shows no willingness to resolve the Bhutani refugee crisis, constantly ignoring the problem by calling it a bilateral issue between Nepal and Bhutan. As a strong advocate of democracy and human rights, India should be able to empathise with the rights of over 100,000 refugees living in a neighbouring country. The international community, including the European Parliament, the US and other western countries, have been asking the Bhutani government to solve the refugee problem. So far, it has not been able to do much and the refugees are running out of patience. Former Bhutani parliament members Tekh Nath Rizal and Hari Adhikari have been forced to live as refugees. Today, their issue is not even being

discussed in Nepal due to the absence of parliament.

The king's man

Samay, 5 August

समय

King Gyanendra's chief secretary Pasupati Bhakta Maharjan, who carries the noble title 'Mir Subba', is regarded in the palace as the eyes and ears of the king. Serving nearly three generations of the royal family, Maharjan has proved to be staunchly loyal to the royals. He has even made his son, daughter and niece enter the royal service. 'He never conveys any bad news to the king,' says a former prime minister. Maharjan has a significant presence inside the palace from where he oversees the country's foreign affairs and policies. He started his royal service in the time of King Mahendra and consolidated his influence during King Birendra's reign. After the royal massacre, he was the first person to inform Prime Minister GP Koirala that the



ABIN SHRESTHA

king had 'a heart attack'. He was also credited for smoothly conducting the announcements of the new kings, first Dipendra and then Gyanendra. His loyalty and power even led the palace to extend his service while that of powerful royalist Chiran Sumshere Thapa was terminated. Thapa, in turn, was the person who informed the world how the massacre was caused by 'the accidental discharge of an automatic weapon'. Maharjan is probably the only confidante of the late King Birendra to be included in the inner circle of the new ruler. On the king's orders Maharjan has to speak out harshly when the situation demands it such as when he ordered the resignation of National Assembly member Dipta Prakash Shah three years ago, which marked the beginning of palace interference in the independence of parliament. Maharjan is, today, vested with more powers than even such staunch royalists as Sachit Shumshere Rana, Bharat Keshar Singh and Sharad Chandra Shah. According to one palace official, even Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey reports to him.



नेपाल

Nepal, 14 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“As the case is related to the people's right to be informed, the license of the FM may not to be seized till the court finalises the case.”

Justice Anup Raj Sharma, in *Kantipur* 11 August .

Slaughter on the banks of the Tila

Jana Aastha, 10 August

आस्था

The 227-strong temporary base camp of the RNA at Pili was set up only 12 days ago. Fifteen minutes after the helicopter that brought in camp commander Lt Col Raju Debkota had flown back to Nepalganj on Sunday evening, Maoists in the thousands started their attack on the post. The soldiers hadn't even had time to dig trenches and sentry posts and a helicopter had made two trips ferrying supplies from Kathmandu on Sunday itself.

Most of the personnel in the camp were non-military staff from the Pioneer Brigade, Bhadrakali who are normally used for road construction, flood and landslide rescue. They had arrived in Kalikot three months ago and soldiers from the Sri Jang Brigade at Singha Darbar and Debi Dal brigade in Lalitpur had just arrived to provide protection for the road worker recruits.

The battle raged from six in the evening on Sunday, 7 August till four the next morning. Army helicopters with night vision were dispatched but couldn't do much because of the terrain. They were finally able to land at a nearby school on Monday afternoon where they found 40 bodies of dead soldiers, 111 others who were missing have been located and the fate of 76 others is not yet known. Lt Col Debkota and seven others managed to escape.

Eleven of the soldiers appear to have been lined up and executed with a bullet in the forehead. After capture some of them tried to raise their hands and say that they were sons of poor families from the Pioneer Brigade but were cut down with khukuris. A Lt Bhandari had his private parts cut off and then was killed.

The soldiers fought back for over nine hours. The attacks came from two sides. Many soldiers were thrown down the cliff on one side of the camp. The weapon guarding the perimeter was firing continuously till three in the morning until it ran out of ammo. If the Maoist claim of having captured a lot of

ammunition is true then it looks like the soldiers couldn't get to the armoury to reload. The only way out for the soldiers after they ran out of bullets was to escape into the night. All in all the Maoists lost at least 26 of their fighters, including battalion commissar Lokesh (Sharad Awasti).

Ironically, because of a heart condition Raju Debkota was posted to road construction garrisons in the west. The RNA has been in a hurry to finish the Karnali Highway because of King Gyanendra's expressed wish during a visit to Kalikot last year. But Naresh Basnet, an officer known as the army's millionaire who is in charge of the army's construction projects, sent an untrained officer into an undefendable garrison. Basnet is the brother-in-law of the king's military attaché, Rishi Kumar Pandey.

Army sources say the Pili base camp was set up in a hurry without proper defences. But the army has vowed to resume the highway construction within a few days despite the setback.



KUNDA DIXIT

“This is a major disaster”

Sitaram Baral in Jana Aastha, 10 August

आस्था

The Maoists had sent a letter to the RNA last month threatening to attack the garrison guarding Kolti airport in which they boasted they could take over without even firing a shot, just by rolling boulders down from the surrounding hills. The RNA's Far-western Division took this threat seriously and rushed reinforcements and kept helicopters in Kathmandu on standby. But it now appears that the threat itself was a diversion and the plan all along was to attack Pili which was similarly vulnerable. From the looks of it the RNA has suffered a serious human and material loss. Said one army officer: “This is a major disaster in the army's recent history if the captured arms could invite another big loss.”

The role of the army garrison was to guard the explosives used in road construction. Only 19 of the weapons from the camp have been recovered. If the Maoist western division commander Prabhakar (Janardan Sharma) is to be believed, the Maoists have looted a lot of dynamite and guns much more than what they looted in the previous largest attack so far in Ghorahi in 2001.

Prabhakar told *Rajdhani* his forces had captured an 81 mm mortar with 250 rounds, two two-inch mortars with 150 rounds, two LMGs with 5,000 rounds of ammunition, 70 INSAS rifles with 30,000 bullets and 80 SLRs with 21,000 bullets.

The attack was not a surprise. There were reports from a Maoist captured on 25 July that a big attack was planned. Travellers on the road had also spoken of three Maoist brigades massing along the Acham-Kalikot border area. The Maoists appear to have planned their attack well: on a vulnerable base where air support and even surface reinforcements would be difficult. So why did the army choose such a weak spot? According to Min Bahadur Shahi of the non-profit group, KIRDARC the reason could be that there is a village nearby and where there is a water source.

This has been the first-ever attack on an army road unit. The RNA seems to have believed that the Maoists wouldn't attack a road unit, but the rebels made no secret of the fact that they treat the Karnali Highway as a strategic threat to their base area.

To be sure the Maoists have suffered a series of defeats since February First, leading ex-generals like Bharat Keshari Singh to proclaim that they had been weakened. The Maoists were mauled in Khara, Rukum, Rolpa, Bardiya, Pandaun, etc. The Maoist guerrillas attacking Pili were from the same units that fought in the previous battles in the west.

के तपाईंले आज

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

पढ्नु भयो ?


पायल शाक्य
मिस नेपाल 2004

व्यक्ति अनेक, विचार अनेक, क्षेत्र अनेक तर पत्रिका मात्र एक... अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्टमा प्रकाशित सामग्री सम्बन्धी विविध प्रश्न लिएर हामी तपाईंको घर आँगनमा आउँदै छौं । तपाईंको सही जवाफले आकर्षक उपहार पाउने छ ।


सम्पूर्ण पत्रिका

ANNAPOST



ALL PICS: MOHAN MAINALI

Don't kill the Karnali with your aid

Humla's elected district leader says Nepal's most remote zone could take care of itself if Kathmandu left it alone

JIVAN BAHADUR SHAHI in HUMLA

There are six directions in the Karnali: north, south, east, west, up and down. The rugged topography and remoteness of this roadless region has held Karnali Zone back for centuries.

But the real reason the Karnali has not been able to develop is not lack of resources. It is the lack of imagination. Over the decades, the Karnali has been deliberately made dependent on the outside world by keeping it reliant on rice flown in from Nepalganj. If the money spent on food and air freight over the past 30 years was added up and invested in irrigation, highways or energy the Karnali would, by now, be feeding the rest of Nepal.

We, the people of the Karnali, are pastoral people, we have relied on our livestock and traditional trade between Tibet and the midhill valleys. But one of the unintended side-effects of the success of the community forestry program has been the ban on free-grazing of livestock herds. And the centuries-old trade for salt, grain, wool and essentials between the Tibetan plateau and the tarai that sustained the people of the Karnali has been crippled by the insurgency.

Planners in far-away Kathmandu have little understanding (or the will to understand) our plight. Donor agencies may show interest but quickly turn elsewhere when they



A BRIDGE TOO FAR: The Maoist destroyed this vital bridge across the Karnali River at Rengli in Kalikot two years ago, locals built a wooden bridge but even this was washed away by monsoon floods since this picture was taken.
Another bridge further upstream over the Karnali on the border between Mugu and Bajura at Sukadhik.

realise just how difficult life in remote Humla, Mugu, Dolpa, Jumla or Kalikot is: our harsh winters, erratic flights, the shortages of just about everything.

Karnali is poor because it is neglected, not because it lacks resources. Our assets include timber, fuelwood, hydropower, eco-tourism, biodiversity and herbal products. Our remoteness means we lack a market for these products. We need a road to the border: to India or China whichever is closer.

The marginalisation of the indigenous people of the Karnali and their migration in search of work has lead to the loss of cultural autonomy and environmental degradation. There are entrenched problems of traditional gender inequality, female illiteracy and the low status of women and disadvantaged groups.

Abandoned by Kathmandu's political elites and ignored by development partners, our people have become distrustful of outsiders. The forced dependence on outside food has caused an erosion of our traditional self-sufficient pride and dignity. The people of the Karnali are deeply cynical because of years of political and administrative alienation that span the Rana regime, Panchayat, democracy and the present direct rule by the king.

Development should be area-

specific, appropriate for local conditions but the government in Kathmandu has a one-size-fits-all policy. It is trying to keep our people acquiescent by airlifting rice and salt to the Karnali. This may keep people quiet for the time being but it has created a debilitating dependency. This is not the right approach to development.

We have been using Tibetan rock salt for more than 200 years in the Karnali. Now, in the name of goitre control, they are airlifting iodised salt from Nepalgunj paying Rs 65 per kg aircargo rate and distributing insufficient salt at a subsidised rate of Rs 7 per kg. This is an example of the medicine being worse than the disease.

On the one hand, the government is unable to ferry enough salt and on the other, subsidies have discouraged traditional salt traders from bringing rock salt from Tibet. A better idea would be to set up an iodisation plant in Simikot or Gamgadi to iodise local salt.

Development in Nepal has rarely been demand-driven, it is proposal-driven. We have to start planning according to the people's needs and not according to the government's or donor's needs. The people of Karnali now have a slogan: "Instead of salt give us iodine, instead of rice give us irrigation, instead of sympathy give us hydropower." It's the old adage about giving a fisherman a net.

Food aid to the Karnali should be phased out and gradually replaced with a strategy to boost local production of millet, barley, buckwheat and high-altitude potato which are suited to local conditions. Our farms are rain-fed and the growing season is short, the best option is to irrigate the low-lying valley floors using small affordable hydropower stations for lift irrigation by daytime and lighting at night. The irrigated farms can grow enough food to feed the Karnali and yield cash crops like local fruits and herbs.

Government civil servants have always looked down on us Karnali people. They have treated

people who don't eat rice as *pakheys*. Who is more uncivilised: those who can't grow their own food and who would starve if they didn't get their daily ration of subsidised air-freighted rice or those who grow their own nutrition-rich millet and buckwheat and don't depend on the outside world?

It's not that Karnali people haven't seen rice in their life. In fact, paddy is grown in the southern regions of the zone. Once and for all, Kathmandu needs to realise that the Karnali is not a food-deficit area but only a rice-deficit one. And we don't mind, as we can do perfectly well without the rice, thank you. We won't starve just because you don't send us your rice.

The population of Nepal's remotest district, Humla, is just 40,000. Let's say 10,000 of them are babies. If the 30,000 adults needed one kg of rice a day, the whole district would need 30 tons of rice a day and nearly 11,000 tons a year. But the government is only supplying 6,000 tons of rice a year to Humla. So how come people aren't starving to death?

This is proof, if proof is still needed: if we could encourage the people of Humla to grow more of their own food, provide irrigation and an additional cash crop, they could take care of themselves. And it would save Kathmandu billions of rupees a year that it could earmark for some needier area of the country.

Oh yes, the transportation mafia will lose its lucrative contracts. The civil servants won't be 'civilised' any more because they have to eat *dhindo* but it will rescue the Karnali from the clutches of our crippling dependence on the outside world.

It is now the 21st century, across Hilsa in Tibet, there is now a highway there is electricity and living standards are soaring. On our side of the border we are still in the medieval ages. This can't go on much longer, we have to start changing now. And we will do it ourselves if Kathmandu is not interested. ●

(Jivan Bahadur Shahi is the former elected DDC chairman of Humla)



GRANDMOTHER, DAUGHTER, GRANDDAUGHTER: Three generations of villagers tend to cows on a high pasture in Mugu, none of them can read or write.

Most-affected by Conflict

Even before the attack on the army's road construction site in Pili of Kalikot on Sunday that killed at least 100 people, the Karnali's four districts were already more-badly affected by the conflict in per-capita terms.

Statistics till December 2004 collated from human rights organisations show the number of abductions here is proportionately nine times the national average. The number of internally-displaced people is 15 times the all-Nepal figure. While the conflict has claimed the life of one Nepali in every 2,000 in the past ten years, in the Karnali, two people out of every 1,000 have been killed making the killings here four times higher than the national average.

Mohan Mainali

Wanna try ice ?

New Liril Icy Cool... an experience so nice, it feels like bathing with Ice !



Japanese Story is about geologist Sandy Edwards (Tony Collette) and Japanese businessman Tachibana Hiromitsu (Gotaro Tsunashima). Their polarised characters are thrown together purely for business reasons when Sandy reluctantly accepts the assignment to guide Hiromitsu with the hope of promoting her software designs. Hiromitsu, who is infatuated with Australia's limitless landscape demands that Sandy drive deeper into the unknown. At first Sandy openly displays her disdain and frustration towards Hiromitsu, yet a series of unpredictable developments allow attraction, desire and romance to ensue.



Thunderstruck is about five friends, all fans of well-known Australian rock group AC/DC. In 1991 they make a pact that if any of them should die, they will bury him next to their favourite band's lead singer, Bon Scott. Twelve years later their lives have taken very different directions when the unthinkable happens. Now the estranged friends reunite for a cross-country road trip from Sydney to Perth in an old van to spread their friend's ashes next to his idol.



Swimming Upstream tells the true story of Anthony Fingleton, a young Australian who somehow manages to become a champion despite the obstacles of a disruptive family life and an abusive alcoholic father. Set in 1950s Brisbane, life is tough for Harold (Geoffrey Rush) and Dora Fingleton (Judy Davis) and their five kids, especially since Harold has a hard time keeping a job. With little money for recreation, the kids take advantage of the local swimming pool and soon Tony and his brother John are swimming faster than anyone.

Aussie Film Roadshow

The Australian Embassy Film Roadshow is coming to Kathmandu for the fourth year in a row this weekend. Featuring six recent Australian films that will appeal to a broad range of tastes, the event will showcase developments in the Australian film industry and highlight the nation's history, culture and contemporary values. Past Roadshows featured award-winning films like *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Children of the Revolution* and Sam Neill starrer *The Dish*.

Date	Show Time	Film	Duration
13 Aug	11AM	Japanese Story	101 mins
13 Aug	2PM	Thunderstruck	96 mins
14 Aug	11AM	Swimming Upstream	97mins
14 Aug	2PM	Ned Kelly	106mins
15 Aug	5:30 PM	Bootmen	89 mins
16 Aug	5:30 PM	Getting Square	98 mins

All screenings at the Russian Cultural Centre in Kamalpokhari, 13-15 August. Free passes can be obtained from the Radisson Hotel and the Australian Embassy in Bansbari. For more information: Australian Embassy 4371678.



Ned Kelly is Australia's legendary bush ranger and folk hero. The film is an adaptation of *Our Sunshine*, a novel by Robert Drew about the Kelly legend. Ned Kelly (Heath Ledger) is wrongfully imprisoned for stealing a horse and when he returns to the bosom of his large Irish family, finds that the police won't let him go straight. After being accused of a crime he didn't commit, Kelly is left with no option but to go on the run. Accompanied by his gang (among them Orlando Bloom) he robs banks to survive and to gather money to free his family from prison.



Bootmen tells the story of brothers Sean and Mitchell Okden, two men who share a common talent—dancing—but have completely different ambitions. Mitchell, the elder (Sam Worthington) is a small town boy who aspires to buy a trucking rig and start his own company. Sean (Adam Garcia) on the other hand, dreams of leaving Newcastle to pursue a career in the world of tap dancing. Sean finally gets a break when a talent scout offers him a position in a Sydney-based tap show starring Anthony Ford (Dein Perry). Before Sean leaves however, he falls in love with Linda (Sophie Lee), a beautiful young hairdresser who has recently arrived in town. As Sean strives to begin his tap career, Mitchell spirals into a life of crime.



Getting Square Barry Worth (Sam Worthington) is an ordinary criminal doing time in a Brisbane jail after taking the fall for manslaughter in place of his employer and mother's boyfriend Chika Marin (Gary Sweet). He denies having committed the crime but does not reveal the name of the real killer for fear of what may happen to his mother and younger brother Joey (Luke Pegler). When corrupt detective Arnie DeViers (David Field) cruelly breaks the news that Barry's ailing mother has died, Barry's parole is fast tracked so he can take care of his younger brother under the supervision of his caseworker, the beautiful Annie Flynn (Freya Stafford).



ELD News

August 2005

professional development
for development professional

25 August
Shared Learning Forum - Paul Reitman (ex-Microsoft / IBM) will lead a one-day workshop on **Microsoft PowerPoint**, at SAP, Thapathali; cover charge Rs 350 (Students Rs 250); Reservations by e-mail only, please.


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5-day intensive training on **Professional Writing / Proposal and Report Writing**; e-mail or phone for details.

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Vacancy Announcement

(Re-advertisement)



Center for Research in Energy
NEPAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE
Changunarayan VDC, Bhaktapur
GPO Box 10210, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Nepal Engineering College (nec) seeks the following faculty position for its education, research and development activities in the area of energy and mechanical engineering.

Faculty Position	: Junior Professor
Number	: 1
Required Qualification	: The applicant must have at least a First Division in M.E./M.Sc. Engg./M.Tech. Degree in Energy or Mechanical Engineering of B.E./B.Sc. Engg./B.Tech. degree in the same with a minimum of 5 years of professional job experience. A proven knowledge on biomechanics and/or intelligent systems in an advantage. Additional experience in technology extension works is preferable.
Experience	: An experience in teaching the undergraduate engineering students for at least a year is required.
Salary and Benefits	: As per the College rules.

Please apply to the given address with a copy of the latest CV. The application should reach us on or before August 20, 2005.

With petrol prices rising and natural resources diminishing all over the world, alternative energy is starting to look not just like the best option but for Nepal, it may be the only option.

In Nepal, renewable energy sources like solar, hydro and biogas are examples of what works. Tribhuban University's Centre for Energy Studies has taken things a step further by building a 'Zero Energy House'—a building that generates as much energy as it consumes throughout the year and does it without using any fossil fuel.

Inside the Institute of Engineering in Pulchok, the house's main source of energy is a 6.5 kW solar photovoltaic system on the roof. All it needs is 4.15 hours of direct sunlight a day to generate 27 kW of electricity which is stored in battery banks in the basement. The excess power is supplied to the campus' power grid so that during cloudy days when there isn't enough sunlight, power can be 'borrowed' from the grid.

"The energy given and taken from the campus grid is equal, hence the term Zero Energy House," explains the brain behind the house and director of the campus' Centre for Energy Studies, Jagan Nath Shrestha (pictured, below).

The building has been fitted with thermocole insulation between the walls to help maintain its temperature and includes a solar water system and solar kitchen equipped with a sun-powered cooker. OK, you can't fry chicken in it but it is enough to boil water and cook simple meals.

A wireless system in the campus computer lab reduces power consumption, a weather station and other appliances such

Zero Energy House

A prototype house with infinite energy-saving potential

AARTI BASNYAT

as a gasifier—an efficient smokeless burner used for drying large cardamom—are also being developed and used.

The Centre for Energy Studies is also working on a unique Earth Air Tunnel system which works on the principle that four metres below ground level the air temperature remains constant, which at the university grounds is at about 19 degrees. The system sucks outside air into a tunnel where it mixes with the underground air and cools down or heats up

depending on the season. This regulated air is then blown into conference halls and classrooms by convection, where it acts as an air conditioner or heater depending on the outside temperature.

"The Zero Energy House wouldn't be immediately applicable for the lay person but there are features which are attractive. The EAT for heating and cooling homes and offices is one such feature," says energy expert Bikash Pandey of the international energy group, Winrock, "the thing now is to make architects more aware".

The Zero Energy House was designed entirely by the Pulchok campus faculty. It took five years to build and cost around Rs 60,000,00.

"We started from scratch and began designing, thinking that if we come across problems we would consult experts," recalls Shrestha.

Because it is a model house, it has used every conceivable source of alternate energy available in Nepal: there is even a working model of a microhydro powerplant on-site that students can observe and study without leaving the campus. The canteen kitchen runs on biogas energy powered by kitchen rubbish and garden waste and the Zero Energy House's security guard uses biogas for all cooking.

Research continues on other potential bio-fuels from trees and crops that contain oils or can be turned into fuel alcohol by fermentation as alternatives to expensive imported fossil fuels.

Says Shrestha: "We want to show that alternative energy is an option and by demonstrating and making an example of ourselves we plan to prove this fact. The motto for our students is 'Don't look for jobs, Create jobs'." ●

Mediawatch

On air again

A handful of FM radio stations started airing news and current affairs from 11 August following the Supreme Court's ruling that the government abstain from taking any legal or administrative moves against Nepal FM 91.8 until a final verdict is made. (See also: 'Stay tuned', #259). Nepal's foremost private FM station, Radio Sagarmatha also started its evening news broadcast, *Haal Chaal* from 11 August. The ruling was the result of a petition filed by Nepal FM on 8 August against the government's decision to close it in seven days if it continued broadcasting news. The Nepal FM team is now asking other stations to take this decision as an opportunity to resume broadcasts. Radio Bheri in Surkhet, Radio Swargadwari in Dang and Synergy FM in Chitwan have resumed news on air. After February First FM stations were ordered to air only entertainment related programs. The government continues to repeat the untruth that nowhere in the world do FM stations broadcast current affairs programs. Some 1,000 radio journalists lost their jobs because of the decision.

Maoist censorship

The popular daily in eastern Nepal, Dharan's *Blast Times*, has been told by Maoists to immediately cease publication. The Maoist's Ilam leader Umesh warned in a statement that the newspaper has been banned for false reporting. Journalists are asking the rebel leaders to lift the ban and have urged the rebels, who have offered an olive branch to the political parties, to show that they respect press freedom and allow dissenting voices to be heard.

Letter to the king

The International Federation of Journalists has written to the king highlighting international concern for the safety of journalists and condemning the government's violations of civil liberties and human rights. The IFJ has now participated in two missions to Nepal, and on each occasion we have received, and welcomed, assurances from the Nepali government that all the articles of its constitution guaranteeing basic rights are in force, said IFJ President Christopher Warren in his letter. However, the daily reports of new media bans and attacks against journalists demonstrate that these assurances have meant nothing, said the IFJ president. He added that there is need for more international pressure on the government, until it realises that it is utterly unacceptable that human rights and the right to free speech have been abandoned in Nepal. The letter to King Gyanendra is part of the ongoing campaign for press freedom and journalists' safety in Nepal. A Global Day of Action for Press Freedom in Nepal on 30 August involving IFJ affiliates has been planned to express international disapproval to the king.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

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Japan boosts aid

TOKYO- In a bid to meet international expectations and boost its image as a generous donor, Japan is taking steps to shore up its falling Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget in fiscal 2005, raising mixed expectations.

“We welcome a hike in the falling ODA budget. The issue now is making sure the government takes the opportunity to continue to increase development assistance and becomes a leader in the international efforts to eradicate poverty in recipient countries,” said Masaki Inaba, representative of the Japan Africa Network.

Taking the lead in the debate to increase ODA, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has pledged to increase Japan’s ODA budget by \$ 10 billion over the next five years and also to double aid to Africa to meet the target to increase assistance to the continent set at the Group of Eight (G8) summit in Scotland in July.

Japan’s ODA budget in 2004 was \$ 8.9 billion and has been falling for the past four years as a result of the long economic recession that has cut away at national revenue drastically at home. (IPS)

Microcredit queried

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 10 - Muhammed Yunus, a founder of the microcredit movement, once described it as a program for putting homelessness and destitution in a museum, so that one day our children will visit it and ask how we could have allowed such a terrible thing to go on for so long.

But after 30 years, it is still unclear if microcredit fulfils some of its proponents’ loftier claims of poverty reduction. The point of contention hinges on the effectiveness of the neo-liberal market model, with some researchers questioning whether increases in income through self-employment can solve the structural problems of poverty.

Microcredit program extend small loans, often of just 75 or 100 dollars, to very poor people, especially women, for starting or augmenting businesses in the hopes of increasing profit. The loan is usually paid back over a period of six months to a year.

Microcredit began in the 1970s in Bangladesh when the Grameen Bank began giving small loans to those too poor to be eligible for credit from other banks. Grameen has a particularly high repayment rate, due, in large part to its weekly meetings and peer-monitoring group.

The most effective microcredit programs follow this model and are complemented by health and education classes that assist loan recipients in their small businesses, ideally slowly raising themselves out of poverty by providing capital and training.

It is clear that microcredit works for some. However, it is unclear to what extent it works and for whom. Some researchers argue that microcredit is only applicable to the well-off poor and those with some access to education, as loan recipients need verbal math skills and a sense of entrepreneurialism to succeed. (IPS)

One person’s terrorist...
Defining acts of indiscriminate violence against civilians is not as simple as we think

Every age has its enemies. In the mid-20th century, fascists were the evildoers. After WWII, communists became civilisation’s public enemies. The 7 July bombings across London have shown that terrorists remain today’s designated masters of evil.

The word ‘terrorism’ now appears in law books around the

COMMENT

George P Fletcher



world and is gaining new legislative adoptions. Various civil sanctions apply to ‘terrorist organisations’. It can be a crime to assist a terrorist organisation.

But it is sometimes hard to determine who ‘they’—the terrorists—are. Whether organisations are terrorist or not is largely an administrative determination motivated by politics. Politically divided, the UN repeatedly passes resolutions against terrorism but cannot agree on how to define the term.

The standard definitions of terrorism are all off the point. The US Congress has, for example, set forth a formula that requires a motive to coerce or intimidate a population or influence a government. But this definition does not even clearly cover the terrorist attacks of

September 2001.

I think it a mistake to try to define terrorism in the same way that we define theft or murder. A better approach is to identify the questions that arise in thinking about terrorism and clarify why people experience terror as a result of certain acts of violence. Then we can define terrorism with reference to all these variables but without making any one of them decisive.

The three primary points of controversy are: identification of the victims, the perpetrators and the relevance of a just cause.

Must terrorism’s victims be civilians? Some think so but al Qaeda blew up the USS Cole and most people regarded the killing of the sailors onboard a terrorist attack. There is a similar question about the perpetrators. Can terrorists be soldiers or state agents? Islamic states within the UN favour this position and I think they are right.

The most controversial issue in defining terrorism is captured by the slogan: ‘One person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter’. The problem is whether a good cause justifies using horrendous means. Islamic states think that it does, which puts this group at odds with Western opinion.

Behind the phenomenon, the nagging question remains: why is terrorism different, why does it

require a special definition, why are we more afraid of this form of violence compared to ordinary criminal acts? One reason is that terrorism is typically an organised activity.

For terrorists to strike terror in the public mind they must act in public. Criminals prefer secrecy. Terrorists crave publicity. Effective terrorism always captures headlines. It is unexpected, with great shock value.

Sometimes the victims are military and the perpetrators are states. Sometimes the cause appears to be just, and one person with enough weapons but no organisation might wreak terror. A conspiracy to lace letters with anthrax might incite terror in private and some terrorists might feel remorse and guilt about their actions.

All dimensions of terrorism admit of counter-examples. This should not be surprising. Complex accounts with built-in exceptions may make lawyers uncomfortable, but in the real world they are perhaps -the best we can devise. ●

(Project Syndicate)

George P Fletcher is Cardozo Professor of Jurisprudence at Columbia University. His latest book is *Romantics at War: Glory and Guilt in the Age of Terrorism*.



KIRAN PANDAY

There is more than one way to consider the concrete pillars that reach up to the sky from the tops of incomplete buildings all over the Subcontinent. One floor is built and the iron rods are left straining upwards,

SOUTHASIA BEAT

Kanak Mani Dixit



looking ahead to the day when another floor will be added. Perhaps that storey too will have more rods atop, indicating unfinished business, hope and perhaps avarice.

It seems that in large parts of our urbanising region a building is never complete. There is the

expectation that the economy will improve, demand will kick in and a storey will be added. In this calculation, aesthetics is clearly not a priority.

Artistry and design is indeed a remote issue for the first generation of middle- to lower-middle class homeowners presented with the potentials of the ‘pillar system’. The attraction is the wide indoor spaces that were never possible earlier in the era of mud, brick, tile and timber. As specific architectural elements like flooring, roofing, dividers and sidings are discarded in the age of cement, an entire store of what may be called dwelling vocabulary is being abandoned.

In the hills of parts of Nepal

Waiting for tomorrow
Iron rods sticking out of the tops of buildings may not look too good, but they represent hopes for the future

modern construction materials have led to the demise of the *pindi* (veranda), that familiar space for chores and conversation under the *pali* (eave), contained by the *tham* (pillar holding up the *pali*). Indoors, the *nidal* (main wooden beam) and the *dalin* (cross beam) are disappearing as are terms such as *chota* (the first floor) and *buinglel* (the second floor and attic). As homeowners opt for flat roofs, the *dhuri* is also history, that sloped roof of tile, straw or grass.

The Southasian classes who can afford concrete are yet to adapt to living in cement boxes. The transition from mud floor, wooden supports and load-bearing brick walls has been too quick and drastic and the indoor quality of life has taken a terrible beating. Walking down Kathmandu’s city core, one can see centuries of building design at one go—the mud-brick edifices with lattice-work windows from the era before glass panes, the buildings with lime-mortar pointing that hark back more than a century to when the technique arrived from Avadh and, finally, the buildings of cement-mortar that have been evolving since their appearance

in the 1960s.

The living quarters of the older buildings were certainly cosier with their low ceilings, and room widths—of the houses of commoners and the palaces of kings alike—defined by the lengths of tree trunks available in the mountain forests. The interior spaces of these houses were refined over centuries and can truly be said to reflect the genius and sensibility of the highlander Gurung of the midhills, the urban Newar of the Kathmandu Valley or the forest-dwelling Tharu of the tarai plains.

But it would be mere romanticising the past if one were to see nothing of significance in the modern-day constructions despite their aesthetic deficit. The homeowner will willingly get rid of the *dhuri* and *buinglel* if s/he can have a cement flattop that needs no maintenance and opens up the roof space for various household activities. The heat and cold that the cement roof absorbs during the different seasons, creating discomfort indoors, is a reasonable trade-off. Downstairs, concrete beams and pillars allow for vast spaces never dreamed of and windows now let in unprecedented amounts of light.

Most significantly, the ground floor need no longer be the dank and damp space suitable only for keeping livestock and storing manure. Suddenly this level is available for commercial space, airy, inviting and open to the street. Of course, being partial to this evolution of the ground floor does not mean that one has to like the clanking, rattling, rolling metal shutters that are by now a ubiquitous Southasia-wide feature.

Over time, as we all begin to understand these modern building materials better, an indigenous architectural form is bound to evolve. This evolution will not take place by way of top-down introduction from those who build for the well to do, but will be pushed by idioms that emerge from the gallis, toles and bahals. We will come to terms with the unexpected indoor space we have suddenly been presented with and learn to fill it with the warmth and charm of our traditional homesteads.

The ungainly rods poking off the top of concrete rooftops therefore may indicate not greed, but hope for a better tomorrow. Hope to add a floor some day. For the moment aesthetics be damned. ●

Be a winner

Create a routine and stick to it

Is life all about being competitive? I believe in most instances it is. This is part of human nature. For anyone who believes in getting better or achieving success to its fullest, being competitive is a must. Those having enormous talent and an ability to endure undoubtedly have a head start, yet it is great desire coupled with true discipline that leads to a successful life and ultimately to being a champ.

In the case of golf, in some way or another there is competition everywhere, be it among beginners or top professionals on the PGA tours. 'Hey my ball flew 100 yards,' one beginner says to the other. 'I got four birdies and I drove 290 on one of the par 5s,' one club golfer says to his partner. What is all this?

This is simply the player's ego exerting itself on a fellow golfer, making him aware that he has just done something better. Sometimes I think that if there was no drive to compare and compete, life would be very dull.

TEE BREAK

Deepak Acharya



In today's world, competition exists not only in sports but in every field. Look at education for example, where every student wants to go to the best school or college, or how every businessman wants to be richer day by day. In golf, you have the challenge of hitting a longer drive, hitting a perfect draw or fade, hitting it close from the bunker or to sum it up, scoring better.

So exams arrive and the pressure is on. Similarly, it's competition day and what happens? Tension, negative thoughts and all the 'normal day' performance characteristics disappear. The end result: from mediocre to a disaster.

So what advice can I give to help you turn all those days and months of practice and playing into a successful tournament result?

In the 24 hours preceding a competition it helps to have a routine that you can rely on to get you into the right physical and mental state for competing effectively and at your full potential.



Uncertainty is always a source of stress. As you know, the sudden realisation that you have forgotten something can cause outright panic. If you want to make sure you are really prepared, a simple pre-competition routine will be really beneficial. It is an important part of staying in control of yourself and your performance.

Start by setting out three columns on a page with headings 'Time to Race', 'Activity' and 'Notes'.

Use the notes section to add more detail if required, perhaps to build in some contingency. Set out the activities that you need to carry out to perform at your best. Write them in time sequence so that they are easy to follow.

Try to view a competition as something greater than the duration of the match or race or round. Give yourself time to get things right, and recognise that your actions several days before, even weeks before your event, can have a bearing on performance. You won't, for example, suddenly manage to produce your best on the day of a race if you have neglected your training all week.

The more you use a plan or routine, the more you will refine it based on your personal experience and the more reliable it will be on the big stage. Try developing and using these preparation techniques over a period of time. Start with minor competitions, even though you might be tempted to put less effort into your preparation at these events.

Your plan might feel awkward to begin with but with time, practice and fine-tuning it will come good if you persevere.

Build in some flexibility and don't get hung up on details. What we don't want is for your plan to become a source of stress. It is there to take some of the mental effort and strain out of the competition experience, not to add to it!

Finally, your routine is yours. What works for you might not work for others. What works for others therefore might not work for you. There's only one winner. Make it you. ●

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

This column alternates with the new Game Point column on tennis by Sujay Lama in this space.

Beijing booms for Games

Organisers of the 2008 Olympics in China are going into orbit to ensure the capital city is ready on time

The huge digital clock on Beijing's Tiananmen Square shows there are still some 1,100 days until the start of the 2008 Olympics. The Chinese capital however is already well on its way towards being ready.

Eight of the 11 new venues planned for the Beijing Games are under construction, the rest will be before the end of this year and ground has been broken on key support buildings, from the sprawling Olympic Village to a high-tech communications centre.

'Preparations for the Beijing Olympics are going according to schedule and progressing relatively smoothly,' Liu Qi, president of the 2008 Beijing Olympic organising committee, said in July. 'All the venues will be finished in 2007 and surrounding roads and bridges will also be completed on time.'

Following July's subway and bus bombings that killed more than 50 people in London, Chinese officials have been talking about stepping up security for the 2008 Games but have revealed little about specific plans. 'Especially after the London bombings, we have again raised the safety and security requirements for the Beijing Olympics,' Liu said, without elaborating.

Soon after, Beijing police were ordered to carry out their duties 'based on the standards set for the coming Olympic Games' and to begin implementing new security checks for large public events so that flaws could be ironed out before the 8-24 August 2008 Games.

'There are only around 1,000 days to go before the Olympic Games in 2008,' the *China Daily* quoted Beijing police chief Ma Zhenchuan as saying. 'We have to use every opportunity to raise our risk management abilities toward terrorist attacks and familiarise ourselves with high security inspections for the Olympic Games.'

Beijing has hiked its original \$1.6-billion operating budget for the Games to closer to \$2 billion, due in part to security concerns after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States.

But the city has also been trying to tighten its belt, further reducing already scaled-back plans for the "bird's nest" National Stadium, the site of the opening and closing ceremonies and the athletics competitions.

The shift of the equestrian events to Hong Kong should help that economy drive, allowing planners to avoid the costs and headaches of building a venue and quarantine facilities.

While the steel bones of the National Stadium are already visible above ground, work on the National Indoor Stadium, the gymnastics and handball venue designed to evoke a folding Chinese fan, the Olympic



wrestling facility and the Laoshan Velodrome for cycling have started only in the past few months.

As of early June, China's total investment in five main Olympic venues had hit 30.7 billion yuan (\$3.79 billion), with more than 12 billion yuan slated to go to the sites this year alone, the semi-official English version of the *People's Daily* said.

Organisers' estimates of the total bill for the 2008 Olympics have risen to \$40 billion from

\$37 billion, with most of the money targeted for new roads and subway lines and efforts to improve the city's power grid and environment.

Almost 90 billion yuan would be poured into 60 key construction projects this year, the *People's Daily* said.

The loftiest Games-related project is the planned August launch of a small satellite that will take up orbit over Beijing and snap a picture a week of the city to keep track of construction on and around the Olympic Green.

'Once it is in orbit, even the smallest illegal building in the area will not be able to hide,' Beijing science official Li Shizhu was quoted as saying by the *Beijing Morning Post*.

In a sign of the prestige Beijing is giving the Games, the Olympic Green and the Olympic Village have been located on the ancient north-south axis that bisects the Forbidden City and other imperial landmarks and used to represent the Chinese emperor's central position in the nation.

The city is looking so far ahead it is already screening big names to direct its opening and closing ceremonies.


The list of bidders for the directing chair reads like a who's who of the Chinese film world, including global commercial successes Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige. The native heroes could face stiff competition from a formidable Hollywood contender—none other than Steven Spielberg.

The director of the ceremonies and the tentative plans for the events themselves should be announced in September. ●

Out Now



"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a man with a bad goatee can be a hero.) - as translated by UNACOOTs, the United Nation's Association of Cartoonists



THE ADVENTURES OF HEROJIG
by JIGME GATON



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- Britney Spears, July 2005

Note: Catch "Rendezvous with Herojig" 9pm on Kantipur TV every Thursday nite!

#79 2062 by jigme gaton - read. love. write.

The Adventures of HeroJig can also be seen at www.extreme-nepal.com

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Lubhu** Paintings at Gallery Nine, Lazimpat, 12-18 August. 4428699
- ❖ **Perceptions of Time** Paintings by Sunila Bajracharya at Lajimpat Gallery CafÉ, until 16 August. 4428549
- ❖ **Slide Show and Art Exhibition** by Alphonso Doss at Siddhartha Art Galley, until 19 August. 4218048
- ❖ **Art Walk** Traditional artworks at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg. 4248999

EVENTS

- ❖ **International Youth Day** 12 August.
- ❖ **Anti Plastic Campaign** 12 August.
- ❖ **Chill Out** with Dj Leo from Venezuela at Moksh, 13 August, Rs 300 with dinner, 8PM onwards.
- ❖ **Introduction Tibetan Buddhism** Talk by Ivy van Eer 13 August from 10AM to 4PM at HBMC, Thamel. 4414843
- ❖ **Dunga Daud** Media challenge, Sundarjal-Gokarna, 13 August. 9851031431
- ❖ **Teej Festival** at Radisson Hotel, on 12-13 August, 9AM-7PM.
- ❖ **The Ring of Buddha** by Jochen Breitenstein at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, 14 August, Rs 50. 5542544
- ❖ **Coffee with Narayan Wagle** Talk with the author of ëPalpasa CafÉí at Jatra, Thamel, 14 August, 7PM.
- ❖ **MTV Blast** featuring Vjs Nikhil and Ramona. Rs 1499, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 19 August, 6PM onwards.
- ❖ **Intercultural Exchange Program** Every Wednesday at Goethe Zentrum, Thapathali, 4.15 PM. 4250871
- ❖ **Film South Asia í05** 27 September-2 October, entry forms and details. www.himalassociation.org/fsa
- ❖ **Tai Chi** Demonstration and group meditation at Swayambhu. 4256618
- ❖ **1905 Sundays** Garage sale, pet practices and more. 4215068
- ❖ **Art Workshop** for kids at Buddha Gallery. 4441689
- ❖ **Sanibar Mela** Saturdays at Bakery CafÉ, Dharara, 2PM and Chuchepati, Boudha, 3PM.



MUSIC

- ❖ **Hindustani Classical Music Concert** Tuesdays at Hotel Vajra, 7PM. 4271545
- ❖ **The Duo** Live at the Jazz Bar, Hotel Shangrila, Lajimpat.
- ❖ **The Good Time Blues Band** at Rum Doodle, Thamel, 7PM. 4701208
- ❖ **Ladies Nights** Wednesdays at Jatra, Thamel, with live acoustic music. 4256622
- ❖ **Fusion** at Jalan Jalan Restaurant, Lajimpat, 7PM. 4410438
- ❖ **Live Music** at Hotel de liAnnapurna, Darbar Marg. 4221711
- ❖ **Jazz** at Upstairs Jazz Bar, Lajimpat, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8PM.

FOOD

- ❖ **Monsoon Madness Special** at K-too!, 30 percent discount on Mexican specialities. 4700043
- ❖ **Kilroyís 3rd Annual Wine Festival** at Kilroyís of Kathmandu, Thamel. 4250440/41
- ❖ **Saturday BBQ** for Rs 888 at Le Meridien, Gokarna. 4451212
- ❖ **The Chimney Restaurant** Signature dishes at Hotel Yak and Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **International Buffet** starting Rs 625 at Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
- ❖ **Daily Delite** Lunch at Shambala CafÉ, Hotel Shangri-La, Lajimpat. 4412999
- ❖ **Ciney and Par-e-jat** BBQ for Rs 625/ person at Dwarikaís, Fridays at 7PM. 4479448
- ❖ **Boire and Manger** at Vineyard, Baber Mahal Revisited.
- ❖ **Special Combo** Burmese and Thai Menu at 1905, Kantipath.
- ❖ **Arniko Special Lunch** at Hotel de liAnnapurna, Darbar Marg. 4221711
- ❖ **Krishnarpan** Nepali speciality restaurant at Dwarikaís Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **The Beer Garden** at Vaijayantha, Godavari Village Resort. 5560675

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Spa** Seasonal rates valid till 21 October at Le Meridien, Gokarna. 4451212
- ❖ **Overnight Stay** Breakfast and swimming for Rs 999 per person at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675, 5560775
- ❖ **Malaysia Dream Holidays** direct flights with Air Nepal International. 2012345
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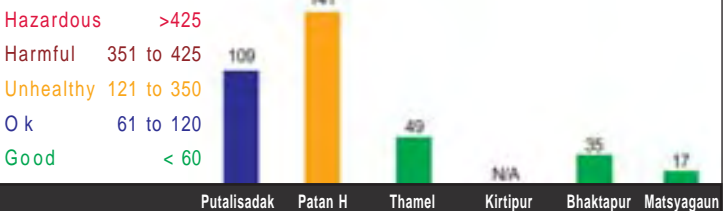


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KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

Surprisingly the air quality in Putali Sadak, normally one of the most polluted spot in Kathmandu, was quite good in the past week. The level of PM10 particles (less than 10 microns and small enough to lodge in the lungs) dropped as low as 40 micrograms per cubic metre Saturday. The average PM10 concentration in Putali Sadak was 109 micrograms, which is 13 percent less than the previous week and well below the national standard of 120. The air quality in most other places in the Valley was also fairly good because the rains washed the dust, except around Patan Hospital.

31 July 6 August 2005 in micrograms per cubic metre.
Source: www.mope.gov.np



NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



After three dry weeks the return of monsoon rains early this week may be termed ëbetter late than neverí. This yearís dry pre-monsoon, the late and weak start to the rainy season and now this long summer drought have had an extensive impact on society and the environment. These late rains have helped to partially make up the loss. This satellite picture taken Thursday morning shows signs of more rain for central and eastern Nepal through the weekend. Western Nepal will receive heavy rainfall early next week as the current low-pressure zone over the east looks set to move there. Contrary to the past three rain-deficient months, the Valley will get normal rainfall in the first half of August.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



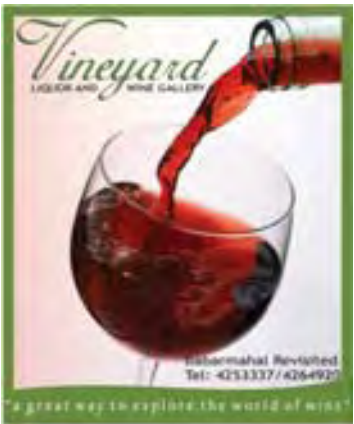


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KIRAN PANDAY

FULL HOUSE : A curious crowd listens as US Ambassador James F Moriarty delivers his opinion on the state of Nepal at a program organised by the Nepal Council of World Affairs on Tuesday.



SUMIN BAJRA

WHY DID THE ACADEMICS CROSS THE ROAD?: From left to right, economist Bishwambher Pyakuryal, former ambassador Lokraj Baral and political scientist Prof Krishna Khanal cross the street at Kantipath after a seminar last week.



KIRAN PANDAY

PEOPLE POWER: Thousands gathered at Naya Baneswor Chok last Friday for a protest meeting called by the Citizens' Movement for Democracy and Peace .



SURESH RAJ NEUPANE

BIRTHDAY BRAWL: 'Nepal Tiger' Bharat Bahadur Bisural and other wrestlers fight for supremacy at Dasrath Stadium at a competition to mark the king's birthday on Saturday.



ANUP PRAKASH

MAKING WAVES: Prashna Shakya belts out a tune at the WAVE Tour 05 concert in Dharan on Saturday.

Dina, the daughter Bangdel

Dina Bangdel has many faces including writer, lecturer and artist. But this time she was in Kathmandu as an editor, rushing home from the US to ensure that the last works of her late father, artist and historian Lain Singh Bangdel, were properly edited and distributed.

Lain Singh Bangdel wrote *Jay Verma ko Murti* and *Nepal ko Verma Banksh* during the last few years of his life and in them he claims that the Verma dynasty ruled Nepal in the fifth century before the Lichhavis. Bangdel based this claim on a statue of Jay Verma found in Maligaun in Kathmandu and the argument has triggered a new debate among historians about this period in Nepali history.

Before working on these volumes, Dina had edited her father's earlier work, *Inventory Of Stone Sculptures Of The Kathmandu Valley*. She says, il just want to honour my father's deep and overwhelming love for his country.i

Dina worked with John Huntington on the book *The Circle Of Bliss, Buddhist Meditational Art*, which took five years to complete and established her as an expert on Buddhist iconography in her own right. The book documents 160 Buddhist statues from Nepal, India, Mongolia, Tibet and China which were on display at the Los Angeles County Museum for five months in 2003-04.

Dina is currently teaching Buddhist art at Ohio State University and is unhappy that although people in the west are really curious about Buddhist artistry and culture, Indian and Tibetan works have overshadowed Nepali Buddhist religious art. She says her mission in life is to promote Nepali devotional art and makes it a habit to tell people that the roots of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist art are here in Nepal. Like father, like daughter. ●

Dhruba Simkadha



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- Newly constructed, traditional facade, contemporary interior
- Basement parking (2700 sq ft) + surface parking (2700 sq ft)
- Great view of city and surrounding hills
- Inhouse garden restaurant (top floor + roof)
- Power backup system (40KVA)
- Ground floor and first floor connected (ideal for dept. stores, banks)
- Each floor 2600 sq ft
- Lift for 8 persons

Suggested Interior Designs

Contact: SHREE BHAWAN. 4444500, 9851030672

The Most Asinine Columnist in the Mr Politically Incorrect Category

As surely as night follows day (or is it the other way around?) it is now that time of year again when we celebrate the annual beauty contest season. From now till Dasain, every week is already booked with much-awaited knockout tournaments in various categories to select young men and women or body parts thereof who are most qualified to be Miss Nepal, Miss Taken or Miss Fit.

This week we have already seen the successful selection of a Miss Teen Kune with winners in the Most Photogenic, Best Hair and Thickest Dandruff categories. Competition was keen and it was a pleasure to see so many members of the unfair sex (mainly mediapersons like me) thronging the venue to get a peek at the contestants as they let their hair down.

And even before we had time to get over our hangovers, the very next day at the BICC was the eagerly-anticipated Little Prince and Princess 2005 Contest which, befitting the times, had 42 below eight-year-old contestants doing junior catwalks and taking part in the Q&A rounds in which judges asked simple off-the-cuff questions to test their intelligence, like: iWhat would you do if, god forbid, you were a Prince?i Now that we have the calendar of events for the rest of the year from various organisers, it does look like it will be a busy season of pageant-hopping for us reporters who have beauty as our beat. Highlights:

Master and Miss Infant Nepal 2005

Motto: iCatch íem young!i
Date: August 23-27
Venue: Prasuti Griha Main Auditorium, Thapathali
Criteria: Only babies who have their umbilical cords already cut are eligible. Will be required to take part in the elimination procedures, which includes the Koochi-koochi-koo Round, Crawling-Around Round, Disposable Diaper Round, Breast-feeding Round, Burping Round and the Wee-wee and Poo-poo Rounds. Judges will evaluate participants on the basis of noise, poise, odour, motor functions and response to questions in the Interview Round about which way our country is headed in the foreseeable future, if any.

Decisive Anti-Regression Street Pageant, 2062 BS

Slogan: iThe Bold and the Beautifuli
Date and Time: Top Secret
Venue: Somewhere Inside the Prohibited Zone
Categories: Miss Brickbats, Most Photogenic Stone-thrower, Mr Arsonist in the Tyre-Burning Round, Mr Roving Ambassador and Plenipotentiary In-charge of Meddlesome Affairs. Political participants above 82 years of age must take part in the make-or-break Continence Round and the Party Conventionis Going Round and Round in Circles Round while their optimistic political heirs can enroll for the quarterfinals of the Mr Young Turk contest.

Politically-Incorrect Miss and Mr Nepal Nomination

Credo: iWe Love Our Mud and Our Motherlandi
Venue: Behind-the-Scenes
Procedure: Winners will be not be selected on a merit-basis but nominated by a clique of shadowy advisers
Categories: Miss Thighland, Miss Censorship, Miss Congeniality, Miss Latent Talent, Mr & Mrs Autocracy, The Right Honourable Mr Ex-Convict, Messrs Wilful Defaulters.
Activities: All participants required to take part in a game of Musical Chairs and the Skeletons in the Closet Round after which winners will be allowed to sit for a brief period on chairs before they are unceremoniously unseated. The proceedings will conclude with the staging of a Crowning Ceremony for the Most Asinine Newspaper Columnist in the Last Fiscal Year.



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