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Q. Should news be allowed on FM radios in Nepal?

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Press under pressure

The crackdown on *Kantipur* is to show the regime has teeth but it may have bitten off more than it can chew

KUNDA DIXIT

The persecution of *Kantipur* this week may have been the royal regime's way of showing it means business with its media control decree but it appears to be having the opposite effect.

After the heavy-handed midnight break-in on Kantipur FM last Friday, the government gave the station a 24-hour ultimatum to stop broadcasting news. Targeting the country's most powerful media is obviously a message to the rest to toe the line or else.

The regime's credibility was at stake. Three weeks after the promulgation of the media ordinance on 7 October, radio stations throughout the country had been openly flouting its provisions. The royal council of ministers was annoyed about the defiance, insiders told us, and wanted to show that the ordinance had teeth.

But the crackdown has gone against domestic public opinion and intensified protests from international media watchdogs and governments. Even US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said his government was "deeply disappointed and concerned" about the "the shocking seizure at gunpoint of radio equipment".

State media and pro-establishment op-ed writers have been justifying the crackdowns, saying the government doesn't want to control the press, only to "regulate yellow journalism".

Indeed, some of the provisions of the royal decree, such as restrictions on cross-ownership, a code of conduct for journalists and even the ban on news on FM, were tabled by the elected Deuba government three years ago. But a landmark Supreme Court decision in 2002 won FM stations the right to broadcast news.

Journalists and civil society members say it's the sneaky way the edict was announced on the eve of Dasain and its draconian nature that proves the royal regime is acting in bad faith. Senior officials often point to critical coverage in the papers to prove the press is free.

But Shiva Gaunle, vice president of the Federation of Nepali Journalists, says people shouldn't be hoodwinked: "It may

appear free but the media gag rule hangs like a sword over our heads." Indeed, the sword now seems to have fallen on Kantipur FM as punishment for its fiercely critical coverage of the February First royal takeover by its sister newspapers.

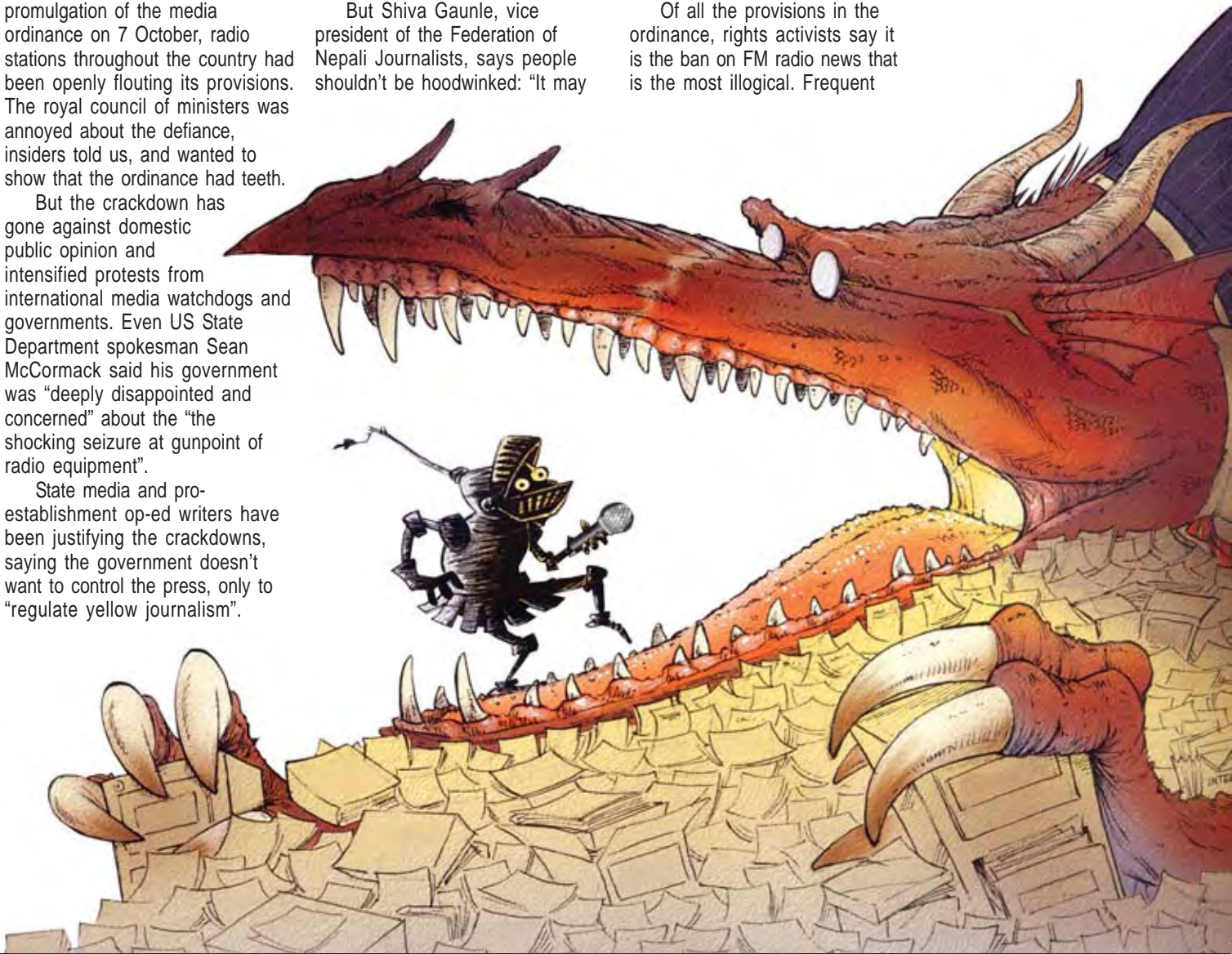
But the crackdown has united the media like nothing before. Journalists and activists camped outside Kantipur FM on Thursday as the government's 4:30 PM deadline for the station to stop broadcasting news neared. It also woke up the seven party alliance, which is still on Dasain hibernation, to announce a protest shutdown in the Valley on Friday.

Of all the provisions in the ordinance, rights activists say it is the ban on FM radio news that is the most illogical. Frequent

statements by officials that nowhere in the world is news allowed on FM has made them a laughing stock. The media ordinance has also severely eroded the credibility of the king's election announcement. ●

Breaking news

The Supreme Court late Thursday issued a stay order banning any government action against Kantipur FM for allegedly violating the new Media Ordinance. The order says officials must hold off until at least Sunday, when the court will hear numerous petitions against the ordinance.



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NOT IF, BUT WHEN

There are only two positive things that could possibly come out of the unimaginable horror of the Kashmir earthquake of 8 October. One is that India and Pakistan see the futility of further conflict in that disputed region with nature's mockery of man-made boundaries. Despite easing travel restrictions and allowing phone calls, however, it may have been too much to expect the generals on both sides to overcome decades of hatred that they have nurtured against each others' peoples.

The second constructive outcome could be that we in Nepal and elsewhere along the Himalaya learn lessons in disaster preparedness, earthquake resistant housing and infrastructure, strict zoning in urban areas, and forward planning for rescue and relief. But even here, it is unlikely that the government and people of Nepal have heeded the warning.

We had our own wake-up call on the afternoon of 15 January 1934 when at least 10,000 people were killed in a few minutes. At that time, the population of the Kathmandu Valley may have been 150,000. Today, it is two million. Even without taking into account the higher death toll due to unsafe concrete housing, if the same proportion of people were killed in the next quake as in 1934 Kathmandu would suffer at least 200,000 deaths.

Historical records show that Central Nepal witnesses a major 8 magnitude earthquake every 75 years or so, which would mean another Big One is due any day. But more frightening is the seismic gap between Dehradun and Pokhara, where there hasn't been a major earthquake for at least 400 years and where there is enough energy stored in the colliding tectonic plates to unleash one of a magnitude of 9 or more any day. What that would do to Pokhara, Butwal, Nepalganj, Surkhet and Kathmandu would be a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions.

We can't prevent earthquakes, we can't even predict them. Earthquakes don't kill people, weak houses and bad planning do. It may be asking too much to expect a government that can't even solve minor problems of food supply, health care and education to prepare for a future calamity. But it may just take something like Kashmir to warn us of what is certain to happen in Kathmandu very soon. It's not if but when.

Even if we can't save those crushed to death under buildings, how are we going to rescue those trapped? Have we talked to neighbouring countries and foreign governments for overflight rights for rescue planes because we have seen in Pakistan how red tape can delay rescue. What are we going to do if the Prithibi Highway is blocked and the airport runway is damaged?

Nepal is further ahead than most South Asian countries in earthquake awareness work and retrofitting technology. Our experts have gone to Bam in Iran and Gujarat to share their knowhow. Patan's Ward 17 and Kathmandu's Ward 34 are models for community preparedness for earthquakes.

All we need to do is replicate these on a national scale for a day that will surely come.

Still silent majority

It is silly to deny the person who usurped power from you the chance to give it back

The time has come. The king has decided that it was no use ruling without the participation of the people and realised that people have moved on from the time of his father and the first royal takeover of the democratic process.

GUEST COLUMN
Narayan B Thapa



It is true that a brake to the downward slide in governance was urgent as part of the checks and balances in democracy (and we should have provision for similar checks in the future). But to allow all and sundry to have a stab at ruling the country was totally out of tune with the times. People will appreciate King Gyanendra as someone who will feel the pulse of the country by continuing to wade amongst the masses, gathering the proven doers in the community around him to brainstorm about the future of Nepal, involving himself in the social sector and above all, providing the nation with inspirational leadership.

This is a big role for any

person and the nation needs the king to fill that role. So, congratulations Your Majesty, for announcing parliamentary elections and giving up the ghost of the Absolute Monarch.

Without taking much time to consider all possibilities we already have calls from the political parties to boycott the electoral process, being egged on, no less, by the 'civil society'. It seems petulant and silly to deny the person who usurped power from you the chance to give it back. As a citizen and voter, my suggestion to the political parties would be to accept the challenge of the elections because that is what political parties do: take part in periodic elections.

Of course, you should demand certain conditions for fair elections in the present messy situation. Off the top of my head these might include an electoral government under a neutral non-political person as prime minister, a free press, international observers, a strict code of conduct for the security forces and other desirable conditions for people to exercise their free will. But waiting for the end of the festivities to start another bout of 'agitation against regression' with the help of activists and assorted students, with the masses deaf to increasingly shrill anti-monarchy slogans, whilst rejecting the offered elections will be playing with the future of the Nepali people.

And please stop mistaking your activists for the people at large with whom you never seem to be talking, much less listening. To be sure, power has to return to the leaders chosen by the people and elections are the only way for

that to happen. A chilling thought for the will-not-let-it-happen brigade: where will you be if the Maoist insurgents decide to join the political process and take part in the elections while you sit on the sidelines? Please also understand that it is just possible that the silent majority may still want a benign role for the monarchy and it may be up to the political parties truly representing the people to wish to keep it that way.

The Maoist insurgents have brought in undoubted change in the way people think of themselves in the backwaters of Nepal. Most of it is the result of terror of course but the remotest and the most deprived areas have been put on the map, so to speak. No future political force in this country will be able to ignore their plight and that is good. But there is nothing to suggest that the Maoists will be the ones to serve these people. Communist utopia is just that: not achievable, and especially not by the methods adopted.

One has the distinct impression that the Maoist movement has moved as far as it can go. Since its support is obtained by coercion, there is no way it can be sustained any further. Of course, they can prolong the misery for Nepal for years to come. But is that what they want?

I think the time has come for them to put down their guns and take up the advantage of their position in a political way. The king has offered a way out. Do they have the courage to take it? ●

Dr Narayan B Thapa is a paediatric surgeon.



The end of imagination

Nepali professionals are crying out: we can't take it any longer

Professionals prefer not to get involved in political protests. There are at least five reasons behind their aversion for agitations. One, they often have a vested interest in preserving the status quo. Two, even peaceful movements are bothersome and the over-educated are reluctant to disrupt their normal routine.

The third reason is the language of mass demonstrations. The wild sloganeering offends their refined sensibilities. Four: engineers, doctors, lawyers, professors, managers and ranking

STATE OF THE STATE
CK Lal



civil servants are so involved in what they do for a living that there is very little time to do anything else. And last but not least is the instinct of risk-aversion that makes professionals wary of getting involved in an activity whose outcome can't be predicted. So, they prefer discretion to valour.

Journalists, on the other hand, usually prefer not to hobnob with other

professionals. They are wary of each other except in extraordinary situations. The sweeping royal ordinance announced on the eve of Dasain provided such a situation for journalists to forge solidarity with lawyers, engineers, doctors and other professionals. The intent, content and provisions of the media ordinance were so ominous that had professionals remained neutral they would have been some of its first victims.

Perhaps this is the reason why six leading professional organisations are at the forefront to challenge the order. Among all enabling conditions of liberty, press freedom is fundamental because only a free media can effectively express social grievance and provide a redress mechanism. That's the reason authoritarian rulers fear free media and invariably become press predators.

A free press and authoritarianism are inherently incompatible, a point Vice-chairman Tulsi Giri has been stressing from the day of his appointment. A meek media, submissive judiciary, docile civil society,

loyal legislature and obedient executive are essential ingredients of monarchical democracy.

Giri may be on the wrong side of the fence but he deserves full marks for political consistency over the past 45 years. He hasn't wavered an inch from his abiding faith in the force of absolute monarchy since his defection from the Nepali Congress in the 1960s. At least he is not one of those who spout democratic values that they don't believe in.

Despite all this, Giri and his cohorts live in a time warp. A silent rage is simmering just below the façade of normalcy in the country. Rankings released last week by Transparency International and Reporters without Borders show the direction in which the country is currently headed. The Black Ordinance intended to silence dissent is doomed to fail. But what will follow in its wake will probably be much harsher because authoritarian regimes are notoriously unimaginative. They tend to silence dissent with ever increasing repression.

With a sense of foreboding, professionals have gauged the ramifications of the gag order far more accurately than the seven-party alliance shouting slogans in the wilderness. After all, there is very little professors, lawyers, engineers and doctors can do when the media and other sections of civil society are forced to run on empty. Professionals know that sometimes it's far more efficient to overestimate the odds: if you see something vaguely resembling a tiger staring at you, you don't wait to make sure before you clamber up the nearest tree.

Analysing the resistance of Rosa Parks, who died this week at 92, Martin Luther King wrote in his 1958 book *Stride Toward Freedom*, 'Actually no one can understand the action of Mrs Parks unless he realises that eventually the cup of endurance runs over and the human personality cries out, "I can take it no longer".'

Nepal's professionals seem to have made up their minds about the royal government. Its outcome is now a foregone conclusion. ●

LETTERS

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Re: your editorial ('From darkness to light', # 269). What never ceases to surprise and sadden me is that despite this unprecedented national crisis none of the three political forces that all claim to be fighting for the people—the Maoists, politicians and now the king—are doing so. The Maoists call for a unilateral ceasefire, there isn't even a response from the government. The country is on fire and instead of putting it out, the politicians are adding oil to it. And the most disheartening part of it is that youth politicians are being raised in the image of their mentors. We need a leader who can at least stand up and say "I will set things right and put Nepal on a path to prosperity" and actually mean it. I don't know if we have one now, or if we ever will.

Prabhakar Shrestha Colorado, USA

WAIT

At least now people who read your story ('Step back and wait', #269) will be prepared for what they have to go through at Tribhuban International Airport. I happened to make a trip to Nepal last summer with a mom and her seven-month-old American son under my care. En route to Nepal, we found authorities in other countries very humble and cooperative but that just disappeared at Tribhuban Airport. There, the officers were scouting around and offering favours in exchange for dollars, which I denied and then waited for an hour watching people behind us in the queue go ahead of us.

Madhav Joshi

- Loved the piece by Shradha Ghale. Yes, Kathmandu airport mistreats ordinary Nepalis who don't know anyone in the army, police or government but that is not the only entry point to Nepal.

Born in Jhapa and educated in Delhi, I find Indira Gandhi Airport more convenient than Kathmandu airport due to cheaper fares and better connections. Then it's just a two-hour flight to Bagdogra and a two-hour road trip to Kakarbhitta. But that's when things start going wrong. In 2001, I was denied entry into Nepal (though I possess a Nepali passport) because my visa to the US had expired. I had to somehow convince the immigration officer that whether my US visa was valid or not was not a reason to prevent me from entering my own country. Next time I tried to cross the border, Maoists had called a nationwide vehicle strike. So I had to cross Mechi Khola on foot to reach Bhadrapur. A few months back while clearing my immigration at Delhi Airport, I was looked upon and treated like a suspected Maoist. So, even flying home via Delhi and Kakarbhitta isn't an easy option.

Pravesh Saria, email

- Congratulations to Shradha Ghale on another excellent and insightful piece on behalf of Nepal's downtrodden. She lays out the stark facts of discrimination without rancour, sloganeering or rhetoric making her expose of social injustice even more powerful. Let's see more of Ms Ghale in your pages.

Lina Petersen, email

EL SALVADOR

CK Lal is right when he enumerates the lessons Nepal can learn from the Peruvian conflict (State of the State, 'A Peruvian parallel', #268). But perhaps Peru is not the place to go to learn about how to make peace: for that we have to go to El Salvador. After nearly 15 years of an intensifying civil war, tens of thousands of

deaths, vigilante killings and massacres, peace was finally brokered between the guerrillas and the state in the mid-1980s. How did this happen? With United Nations mediation and active support from the international communities. There is absolutely no reason why the same can't be done in Nepal—it is in a similar stage of



conflict, although El Salvador's violence was more vicious. But, some will say, India will shoot down UN mediation even before it can fly. Not necessarily. There is already a softening of the Indian position. Besides, the United States which had originally opposed UN mediation in El Salvador, was convinced that the good offices of an honest broker was needed and that it was more desirable for Washington to have a democratic El Salvador than a dictatorial or totalitarian one. Maybe New Delhi can take a lesson or two from that episode in its dealing with Nepal.

J B Thapa, New Delhi

ARE WE PREPARED?

I had mixed reactions to your earthquake articles ('Worse to Come', 'Lessons of Kashmir for Kathmandu', #269). My initial

responses were of horror at the tragedy, overwhelming sympathy for the victims and amazement at the lack of adequate responses from the Pakistani and Indian governments. But while I tried to think of what I could do for the victims and survivors of the earthquake, I could not help but ask myself this question: What about Nepal? What if the images on the screen were of this country? As Praful Bidwai explains in his article and as seismologists at the University of Colorado (among others) have repeatedly said, Nepal is in an extremely earthquake-sensitive area, on one of the most unstable plates in the world and long overdue for a massive earthquake. What preparations are being made? Tribhuban International Airport is on a sandbank and sand goes through a process of liquefaction during earthquakes. Do we have the infrastructure to get relief supplies out—or are the majority of villages in Nepal just as or harder to get to than those in Kashmir? Farooq Ahmad and Praful Bidwai both urge governments and the residents of the region to wake up—are they listening?

Kabita Parajuli

LETTERS

Nepali Times welcomes all feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms can be accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with 'letter to the editor' in the subject line.

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Do not take the mountains lightly

A leader of the rescue team details the search for victims of the Mt Kang Guru avalanche



PICS: PADAM GHALE

PADAM GHALE in MANANG

If there is a lesson to be learnt from the avalanche on 20 October at the base of the 6,800m Mt Kang Guru it is that the mountains are not to be taken lightly no matter how much experience you have. Sadly, it was something that the 22-member expedition (seven French nationals and 15 Nepalis) ignored. Eighteen people died as a result.

The expedition reached Kang Guru base camp on 19 October. The weather had been fantastically clear until then and the next day the party made it to the advanced base camp at 5,700m. This was when the weather and their luck changed. It began

snowing heavily and the team decided to return to the lower base camp at 4,200m.

The French team was led by 56-year-old Daniel Stolzenberg, an experienced mountaineer and a recently retired teacher at the l'Ecole Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme in Chamonix, France. The head of the Nepali team, Iman Singh Gurung, had many years of experience running the Chure Himal Treks and as president of the National Guide Association.

The base camp however was in a poor location, surrounded by 35-40-degree mountain walls right in the middle of an avalanche zone. One hundred metres below the camp is a narrow gorge 400m long. Deep

enough to need ladders and special equipment to climb into. Reportedly, one of the porters had suggested the camp be moved to a safer location downhill but the idea was dismissed.

The party arrived at the camp around 4PM, had tea and were just entering their tents when the avalanche struck, sweeping the camp away and burying 18 trekkers. Four Nepali porters managed to escape the tide of snow. After the initial shock, they made their way slowly along the snow-covered trail to the village of Meta, which they reached at 8.30 PM and then relayed the news of the catastrophe.

The next day the Himalayan Rescue Association formed a search and rescue



LEFT: The unfortunate trekkers' base camp (circled). **ABOVE:** The body of the French climber was found just to the left of the camp.

party of experienced mountaineers, including myself. But for two days bad weather in Manang delayed us. Finally on 23 October, the skies cleared slightly and a seven-member team flew to Meta. Three of the four surviving porters were flown to Kathmandu while the leader remained behind to help with the search.

On 24 October we reached the base camp and began looking for survivors but with little hope. The next day we resumed our search at 7AM. At 8.30 AM we discovered the body of one of the French climbers, Syarle Bruno. It was taken downhill and we returned to Meta. The next day the body was taken to Meta and then to Chamme, the district headquarters, before being flown to Kathmandu. The other 17 bodies have still not been found and we believe they remain where they were swept into the gorge below the base camp. ●



UK musicians play a gig at Everest Base Camp to raise money for Nepali kids

Oz Bayldon imagined many things before he and members of the band The Hidden travelled to play a gig at the top of the world—but not that nearly 100 people would be on hand to watch them perform at Everest Base Camp on Oct 17.

"It became like a pilgrimage



with people we met along the way coming up, it was crazy," Oz, now back in Kathmandu, told us. Climbing up to Kalapatthar he was concerned about how the cold and lack of oxygen would affect their performance. When they started setting up at 4.30 AM all the

water bottles had frozen but once they started playing, "it was all cool."

Each band member performed one song, some covers some original, and then the guides and porters took a turn. The 'concert' ended after 30-40 minutes, putting the band a step closer to a

Guinness World Book entry for the highest gig.

More importantly for Oz, chairman of the Nepal Balbalika Trust, his fourth trip to Nepal was another opportunity to raise money for a learning centre and shelter for homeless children being built in Dhulikhel with

partners HelpNepal. So far the tally is 30,000 pounds and Oz hopes that sales of a documentary on the World's Highest Gig will push the total to 50,000 pounds. ●

Pictures courtesy: www.worldshighestgig.com

Laxmi Bank upgraded

Laxmi Bank has received the approval of the Nepal Rastra Bank to upgrade its Hattisar office into a full-fledged branch and corporate office. The office of HISEF at Hattisar was converted into a Laxmi Bank office in May 2004 following the merger of the two entities. Laxmi Bank began operation in mid-2002 as a regional bank headquartered in Birganj. The bank has branches in Pokhara and Banepa and a fifth branch will open in Biratnagar in November 2005.

Housing development

After its previous success in building community housing projects, the MS Group has launched another residential community—Sunrise Towers. Located at Dhobighat, the complex offers apartments and bungalows at reasonable prices. Sunrise Towers includes a grocery store and childcare centre.



NEW PRODUCTS



CEMENT RELEASED: Sri Cements Industries has released international standard Kalash cement in the Nepali market. Suitable for small and large housing and development projects, the cement follows stringent international standards. Kalash cement is available in high band packing and does not catch moisture easily. In the first phase, the cement is available in major cities and will be released nationally in the near future.

EDUCATION FUND: NIC Bank has introduced the Education Fund, a unique deposit plan with interest rates as high as five percent per year. Deposits can be made anytime, at any NIC bank. Saving accounts can be opened with as little as Rs 1,000 initial deposit. The account includes a 50 percent discount on travellers' cheques and bank drafts.



NEW HONDA: Hero Honda has released Glamour, a 125cc motorcycle with 'Neo Z' styling and a three-year warranty. The Quantum Core engine is said to generate nine basic horsepower (bhp) and to produce little noise or vibration, for a low fatigue ride. Price starts at Rs 119,000.

EASY SAVINGS: Sanima Development Finance Limited has started a new "easy savings account" that offers interest rates as high as five percent with an initial deposit as low as Rs 1,000. The account is flexible about the number of deposits and withdrawals that can be made. Promoted by non-resident Nepalis, Sanima's banking counter is open till 6.30 PM.

Rights ravaged

A lax legal system allowed the government to victimise Kantipur's owners and those killed at Manipal Hospital

Ten Nepalis died on the spot while more were injured when the roof of Manipal Teaching Hospital in Pokhara collapsed onto the lobby from a height of 70 ft on 20 October. The following midnight, government officials

STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari



forced their way into the premises of seven-year-old Kantipur FM radio station in Kathmandu, confiscated equipment and shut down the station's transmission to eastern Nepal. Different though these incidents are, both provide a window into understanding the sorry state of our legal institutions when it comes to rights associated with running private enterprises and the attendant civil society activism in Nepal.

The Manipal victims were either low-level hospital staff or visitors from the midwestern hinterland. In other words, they were poor Nepalis, the ones least likely to know if legal solutions exist for their woes, and even if they do, how to go about obtaining them.

True, in an effort to repair its damaged reputation, the hospital, which is a part of a South Asia-wide chain, swung into a quick public relations exercise. But its one-sided offer of a pot of money to all victims added up to something less than the total cost of the roof itself.

Still, what was disappointing was the absence of Nepal's various consumer rights groups. They needed to be there, not to play ideologically driven anti-business blame games but to process the step-by-step lessons of where and how things went wrong.

Yes, doing so requires resources and resourcefulness. But such actions ultimately ensure that the costs of such accidents are kept high for the offending parties in the future and that the affected consumers at least begin to see a semblance of a system for legally funnelling their grievances. As things stand, since no lessons appear to have been processed, if a nursing home's roof were to fall down tomorrow in Bhaktapur and kill 25 people, we would still have no system in place to deal with it in a way that respects victims' rights. As private businesses expand across Nepal, we cannot afford to continue to have a mishmash of various one-sided compensation processes when accidents occur and lives are lost.

The raid at the for-profit radio station was abhorrent. But conceptually, such an action was no different from what Raghuji Panth did to Lumbini Overseas when he was Minister last year (Strictly Business, #227). In both cases, those in power were sure of their rightness and felt free to flout the due legal process, disrespect property rights and take arbitrary actions against

private businesses in the name of some ill-defined social welfare.

Kathmandu's civil society pundits—with their knee-jerk anti-business mindset—who failed to shout against Minister Panth's arbitrary actions against Lumbini then, can now use the recent Kantipur example as a way to make pro-private property rights arguments. They can flay the present government for wielding illegitimate muscle power to make Nepali businesses, and by extension, everyone else, feel insecure to live and work in this country.

True, it's tempting to frame, as many have done, the Kantipur incident in terms of government squelching the freedom of the press, as though Kantipur were a complete charity organisation. But doing so repeatedly only distracts all from the urgency to look at a far greater right that is actually at stake: the right to be protected from coercive and arbitrary government actions regardless of whether you are a business or an individual.

Unless Nepal's civil society institutions and private businesses find a way to use the Manipal and Kantipur incidents to argue for a predictable and process-oriented legal system, theirs remains a fight for vague goals on multiple fronts against a government that refuses to see that its bullying only creates ripples that hurt those in Nepal all the more. ●



MIN BAJORACHARYA

A former bureaucrat in the Panchayat era and finance minister in the interim cabinet that ushered in Nepal's "democratic spring", Devendra Raj Panday is now coordinator of the Citizen's Movement for Democracy and Peace fighting against the king's rule. He told *Nepali Times* that support for the CMDP has been stronger than expected.

Nepali Times: Although the Citizen's Movement has attracted enthusiastic crowds to its events, we haven't seen tens or hundreds of thousands of people on the streets. Has the movement been successful?

The Citizen's Movement has exceeded our expectations in almost all cases. We started at a point in time when we thought we'd waited too long for the parties to come to the front. The seven-party agitation was there but it hadn't really caught fire. We were waiting and waiting and finally we said 'All right, we'll go to the streets ourselves'.

Do you think there is any hope for reconciliation with the king?

“How long can we go on?”

The coordinator of the citizen's movement says a constituent assembly should be the next step

The minimum demand that I think we'll end up making is the holding of a constituent assembly, which will hopefully lead us to a republic. In this day and age how can we have a regime when a head of a government cannot be put to public scrutiny in any way? This one point alone should illustrate why people who think logically are moving away from the monarchy.

Have you considered that the majority of Nepalis might be willing to give up multiparty democracy temporarily for peace and stability?

I'm not saying that the majority of Nepali people will come out on the street tomorrow in support of democracy. What I am saying is that the more politically aware among them must already be seeing things for what they are. Dictators have a way of winning the hearts of the common people. They do so through certain social-economic programs or by showing some degree of technical efficiency in government ...because they can do away with all the wrangling and fighting of the political parties. This regime has done nothing of that sort. So I do not see any reason why any person would say 'all right, why don't we give this king a chance'.

The way you describe it, it sounds like confrontation is inevitable?

How long can any country go on like this, in circles? You know we started this thing in 1951 when we had the first revolution, as we call it...Even going back to 1990 is not acceptable to people like me. I was responsible, legally, for this constitution because I was in the interim cabinet...Right from that time there have been demands about issues that the constitution originally did not address. These have to do with the rights of

minorities, of linguistic groups, about the Hindu state and the total lack of any provision for local autonomy. These will not be addressed by a king who wants to centralise all the power in the royal palace.

The king appears to be setting his own agenda despite pressure from within and outside Nepal. Has the international community done enough to help restore multiparty democracy?

My dread is that the international community may back off, saying 'we can't go on like this, let's have some sort of understanding with the king'. My plea to the international community has always been—you don't need to go forward (but) please don't go backward...Going forward is our responsibility. We can't expect the US, the UK and India to return democracy for us, we need to do that ourselves.

What do you think is going to happen in coming months?

Our hope is that now that the citizen's movement has established itself, in a loose way...If the political parties were to make up their minds about the goals they want to reach and about their position vis-à-vis the king in such a way that the citizens would be inspired to join them, then they and the citizens movement would join together and become a national movement. At that time we should be able to see the kind of crowd you would expect, that could topple the king...But if the king were to become a constitutional monarch in the real sense—for example pay his taxes—that would be the kind of ruler that I think that not many people would object to.

Holiday greetings

Interview with chief election commissioner Keshavraj Rajbhandari in *Nepal*, 23 October

नेपाल

What is the status of preparations for the elections?

We have done all the preparations. We have also invited political parties to hold discussions on the preparation of the code of conduct. But the political parties have boycotted the polls.



MIN BAJORACHARYA

How can you hold elections when so many parties say they won't participate?
We had invited 59 parties and 34 were present. We don't care about the parties who didn't respond to our call.

Big parties like the Nepali Congress and UML are saying they will boycott the polls.
How can these parties that claim to abide by the present constitution say they will boycott the elections?

But the same constitution does not have any provision for the king to hold elections.
It is not the government that holds the elections. It is the Election Commission that conducts and controls the elections. The government only maintains law and order and provides the necessary manpower and budget.

Why were the election dates announced just when the Dasain holidays began?
That was the Election Commission's Dasain greeting to all the parties.

When former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba spoke of elections, you said that you would need six months to prepare. How can you say you are already prepared for these elections?
That was the time we needed then. It is quite natural to take time for such work. This time, the king had already instructed the commission to hold elections back on 14 April.

Flouting the law

Editorial in *Kantipur*, 27 October

कान्तिपुर

The government showed direct contempt of the judicial system by refusing to delay a week for the media case awaiting consideration at the Supreme Court. Instead, it went ahead and threatened to close Kantipur FM . It refused to listen to what the station's officials had to say, adding that if they could not come up with a valid reason why they shouldn't be closed within 24 hours, their permission to transmit would be taken away. This proves the government's bad intentions when it comes to independent Nepali media. It also shows that the government, which is responsible for regulating and also abiding by national law, is ignoring the constitutional rights of the people and making a mockery of our justice system. The Supreme Court had already issued an interim order about FM news broadcasts. It reasoned that if it allowed the banning of news broadcasts via FM it would 'irreparably violate the right of the people to be informed'. In addition, the court asked the government to wait to issue any charges until the case was finalised. Ignoring this order, the government issued the new ordinance. The government has often lied and held the public's personal independence and human rights in contempt. In the FM news case, it has put itself above the Supreme Court and national law. The government often talks about the rule of law but ignores the constitution, law and the justice system. This habit of disregarding the law promotes

anarchy. Today, the responsibility of preventing our society from reaching that point lies with our judicial system, particularly the Supreme Court, which has been assigned guardianship of the constitution. In today's situation, it will be up to the Court to decide if it can stop this government-led anarchy.

See the light

BBCNepali Service, 16 October

समय नेपाली

At a time when almost all development works have come to a standstill due to the ongoing conflict and political instability, a few positive sectors stand out. Experts say hydropower is one such area, having recorded steady growth and withstood many difficulties over the years. But they sound a note of caution: If the political chaos and apathy persists, the sector that has lit so many houses may itself be shrouded in darkness. Water resources expert Ajay Dixit believes the power purchase policy paved the way for recent development of the sector. "Because of the small move, nearly Rs 3.5 million has already been spent in the power sector and another almost two million is being chipped in now." The policy has indeed proven to be a boon for independent power producers. For instance, Nepal Electricity Authority, which controls the national power grid, earns Rs 12 billion and thanks to the power purchase policy, independent power producers get nearly half of that. Slowly the country has also been developing homegrown expertise. To date 12 community groups are buying power at wholesale rates from the

national grid and distributing it to local communities. More than 70 other groups are working to do the same. Investors have indeed emerged winners but not so electricity buyers—the people of one of the poorest countries in the world pay perhaps the most expensive power tariff. Why this irony? Experts like Dixit blame it on big hydro projects built with foreign loans. "The small type projects built by Nepali investors cost \$1,500 per kilowatt while the likes of Kali Gandaki (144MW) cost \$2,500 per kilowatt." Yet high prices are not the immediate challenge for the power sector. The country now has an installed capacity of 600MW, which is increasingly slowly while the annual demand is rising at a rate of around 10 percent. In effect, load shedding appears inevitable. So thinks water expert Santa Bahadur Pun, who once headed the NEA. "If the situation is not tackled urgently, I can foresee that Nepal will have to resort to load shedding in the next two years." That could mean Nepal will be in dire need of big hydropower projects fast. But most such projects are either designed to export power to India or are on the drawing tables of Indian developers. The problem is that the Indian government does not appear to be in a mood for doing business anytime soon given the critical position it has adopted against the February First royal move. Is there no way out? Pun believes we need to do something on our own for the growing Nepali market. Dixit stresses that Nepal's small-scale successes in recent years could help rope in Indian investors. "The creativity that we demonstrated in the last few years can also be replicated in our bilateral dealings with India," he added.

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Employment Opportunity in Himalmedia

Himalmedia Private Limited, a leading Nepali media company that publishes three premium periodicals: **Himal Khabarpatrika**, **Nepali Times** and **Wave** calls application for following posts

Brand Manager - 1
He/she should be a graduate preferably in business administration with at least 2 years of experience in relevant field. He/she should have excellent communication skills with aptitude for brand management.

Marketing Officers - 10
He/she should be a graduate preferably in commerce with (1-2 years) of experience in marketing of any products/services. He/she should have excellent communication skills with flair for marketing.

Sales Assistant - 20
He/she should be SLC pass. Preference will be given to people having street smartness and exposure to sales concept.

Interested candidates are requested to apply with CV clearly stating the post being applied for to follow address no later than November 18, 2005.

Human Resource Department, Himalmedia,
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal OR
E-mail: recruit@himalmedia.com
(mention job being applied to in subject line)

Dalit, Janjati and woman are highly encouraged to apply

Hammer: Media Control Ordinance
Bed: Press
The eyes are still left, hit him!

समय Samaya, 27 October

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ Given both the failure of the king to reach out to the political parties to discuss the elections with them and the announcement of new media restrictions, Nepalis and the international community alike worry that the king is less interested in conducting free and fair elections than in elections intentionally designed to validate his continued rule. ”

- US Ambassador James F Moriarty to journalists in Butwal, 26 October

SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Media ordinance (excerpts)

Ordinance Amending some Acts Related to the Media,
Preamble: Whereas it is expedient to amend some Acts related to the media; and As there is no session of parliament at present;
Be this ordinance enacted by His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in accordance with Article 72 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990.

1. Short Title and Commencement
This ordinance is named 'Ordinance amending some Acts related to the Media, 2005'.
This ordinance shall come into force immediately.

Amendment to the Radio Act 2014:
Proviso of Section 3 of the Radio Act 2014 has been replaced with the following proviso,
'but any person obtaining a license for operating telecommunication services in accordance with Telecommunication Act 2053 or any customer utilising telecommunication services through that licensed person; or any person or organised institution with permission or license in accordance with National Broadcasting Act 2049 for broadcasting any program through satellite, cable or any other means; establishing frequency modulation broadcasting system for broadcasting educational, entertainment and informative programs; establishing satellite station for program broadcasting, or customers utilising broadcast services through a licensed person or institution is not required to obtain a license in accordance with this Act for installing, using or making telecommunication or radio broadcasting equipments.'

Amendment to National News Agency Act, 2019:
National News Agency Act has been amended as follows:
SubSection '5(a)' has been added after SubSection 5 of Section 30 as follows.
5(a): Anyone collecting or disseminating news violating Section 32 shall be fined up to Rs 500,000.00
SubSection 2 of Section 32 has been replaced with the following:
(2) News agencies pursuant to SubSection (1) can disseminate their news throughout the kingdom of Nepal obtaining permission from His Majesty's Government. Provided that, there is no need to obtain permission from His Majesty's Government for disseminating news to an Agency.

Amendment in Press and Publication Act 2048
Press and Publication Act 2048 has been amended as follows:
In Section 14
1. The words "His Majesty's" in clause 'a' has been replaced with "His Majesty's and members of the royal family"
2. The following has been added after Clause (c)
c(i): 'discouraging acts that are deemed criminal as per existing laws'
3. In SubSection (1) of Section 16
a. the words "anything prohibited for publication pursuant to Section 14 and 15, news, information or any material, or" have been added
b. Clause (d) has been replaced with the following Clause (d)
(d): "Promoting or assisting Terrorist, terrorism and

destructive activities"
c. Clauses (b) and (e) have been omitted.
4. In Section 27, the words "fine up to Rs 10,000.00" have been replaced with "fine up to Rs 100,000.00"
5. In Section 28, the words "fine up to Rs 5,000.00" have been replaced with "fine up to 50,000.00"
6. In Section 29, the words "fine up to Rs 5,000.00" have been replaced with "fine up to 50,000.00"
7. In Section 30, the words "fine up to Rs 5,000.00" have been replaced with "fine up to 50,000.00"

Amendment in Press Council Act, 2048
In Clause (d) of SubSection (2) of Section (12) of Press council Act, 2048, the words "or his Press Representative Certificate or Temporary Press Representative Certificate shall be cancelled" have been added after "complete prohibition".

Amendment in National Broadcasting Act 2049
The following amendments have been made in National Broadcasting Act 2049:
1. the words "or Television" have been omitted from Clause (c) of Section (2)
2. the words "news-based programs" have been replaced with "informative programs" in Section (5) and the following explanation has been added.

Explanation: For this Section "informative programs" denotes any programs on health, education, population, environment, weather, road transportation or related to any development activities with an objective of promoting information and public awareness.
3. Section 6(a) has been added after Section (6), as follows:

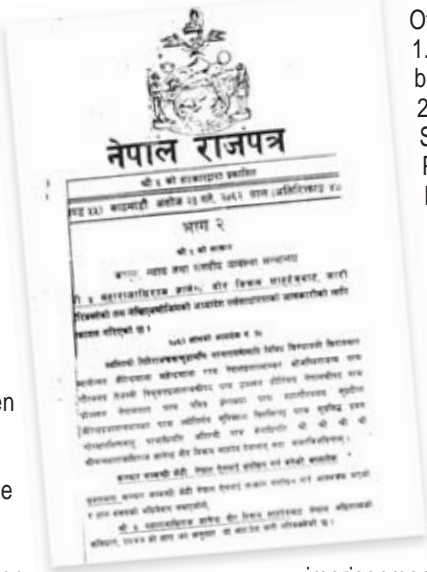
6(a): (1) Notwithstanding anything written in this Act or elsewhere in existing laws, any person or organisation will not be provided a license or certificate of radio, television and publication either at once or time by time.
(2) Notwithstanding anything written in this Act or elsewhere in existing laws, if any person or organisation has obtained a license or certificate of radio, television and publication prior to commencement of this Section, such person or organisation has to opt for any two among radio, television and publication within a year from the commencement of this Section and the remaining third should be managed, broadcast or published by a separate person, institution or management.
(3) His Majesty's Government shall revoke the license of a radio or television broadcasting if any person or organisation with a license or certificate for radio, television or publication does not opt for any two or does not make arrangements for a separate person, organisation or management for the broadcasting or publication within the duration pursuant to SubSection (2).
(4) The words "institutions or joint venture with domestic or

foreign person or" contained in Section 9 (1) are omitted.
(5) Following Section 11(a) has been added after Section 11. '11(a)': Not to broadcast programs from another place without permission: Any broadcasting institution shall not broadcast its program simultaneously from other than one place without obtaining permission from His Majesty's Government.

4. Section 15 has been replaced with the following Section 15.
(15) Shall not Broadcast: No one shall broadcast any materials containing the following matters:
a. Subject matters with negative effects on political parties
b. offensive matters
c. any matters whose objective is to instigate revolt against government by using violence
d. any matters creating unreasonable horror and terror in the public
e. any matters that misinterpret, dishonour, humiliate or dominate any caste, ethnicity, religion or culture.
f. any matters that discriminate, dishonour, humiliate or dominate any caste on the basis of their area of habitat.
g. any matters against the non-aligned foreign policy of Nepal.
h. any matters or material prohibited for publication pursuant to existing laws.
5. In SubSection (2) of Section 17 the words "fine up to Rs 10,000.00 " have been replaced with "fine up to Rs 100,000.00".

Amendment to Defamation Act, 2016:
Of the Defamation Act, 2016-
1. In Section 3, the words "if published" have been replaced with "If published or broadcast".
2. Section 5 is replaced with the following Section 5:
Punishment for defamation or defamatory broadcasting or publication:
(1) Anyone defaming any other person shall be liable for a fine up to Rs 50,000.00 and imprisonment of up to one year.
(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in Sub-Section (1) anyone broadcasting or publishing any defamatory matter through any electronic or other means of mass communication deliberately or with reasonable cause to believe the occurrence of defamation shall be fined Rs 100,000.00 to Rs 500,000.00 or up to 2 years imprisonment or both."

3. In Section 6, the words "printed or inscribed" have been replaced with "published or broadcast" and the words "fine up to Rs 100.00" have been replaced with the words "fine up to Rs 50,000.00".
a. The words "fine from Rs 100.00 to Rs 500.00" have been replaced with "fine up to Rs 50,000.00".
b. The words "fine from Rs 100.00 to Rs 500.00" have been replaced with "fine up to Rs 50,000.00".
c. The words "fine from Rs 500.00 to 5,000.00" have been replaced with "fine up to Rs 50,000.00" and "fine from Rs 100.00 to Rs 1,000.00" is replaced with "fine up to Rs 100,000.00".



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Groove Suppa
in performance

Solid, a Jazz trio from Norway

JAZZING UP THE JAZZMANDU

Jazz seems to be the new rock n roll in Kathmandu. With popular bands such as 1974 AD also dabbling in jazz, the genre is all poised to set the Valley afire with its soulful and foot tapping beats.

Jazzmandu was started in 2002 by a group of enthusiastic young musicians who decided it was time to explore the intricacies of this style of music and put Kathmandu on the global jazz map. The festival has received an overwhelming response over the past few years, with last year's audience reportedly totalling more than 10,000 people.

Jazzmandu aims not only to explore jazz and encourage young musicians but also to promote Kathmandu as an international tourist destination that offers an assortment of entertainment besides trekking. This year's scheduled programs follow:

1. Jazz for the Next Generation

Organised in collaboration with WAVE magazine, this is a music competition for Nepali musicians under 24

years of age. The event will be judged by visiting international musicians and the winning band will perform at Gorkarna alongside some of the top performers featured at the festival. Band members will also have an intensive workshop with the musicians. Friday, 4 November, 4PM, Yala Maya Kendra- Patan Dhoka, Rs 75.

2. Valley Jams

Jazz for the Next Generation takes place in the afternoon and for all you jazz enthusiasts who just can't get enough, Valley Jams will be the evening entertainment during Jazzmandu. It will feature various artistes performing at different venues around the valley simultaneously. Friday, 4 November, 7.30 PM onwards, Lasoon (Jawlakel), Latin Quarter (Babar Mahal Revisited), Jatra (Thamel), Rs 200.

3. Jazz Bazaar

The Jazz Bazaar at Gorkarna Forest Golf Resort is Jazzmandu's biggest event and usually the most popular as well. It features a blend of cultural folk, classical and

Nabin Chettri
of Cadenza.

jazz music performed by international and Nepali musicians. Featured this year are Solid, a band from Norway whose numbers vary from hard swinging jazz to more open and subtle soundscapes. Bombay's Groove Suppa will play a mix of rock, jazz, funk, blues and other styles. Our own Cadenza will feature a mix of international musicians including Mariano on alto saxophone and flute (Spain), Mort, electric guitar (US) and Bastian, keyboard (Switzerland) performing Afro-funk, 'Nepjazz' and fusion. The winner of Jazz for the Next Generation will also perform along with Gandharva playing Nepali folk music and Sukarna with classical Nepali music. Saturday, 5 November, 4PM onwards, Rs 599 with a discount of Rs 100 before 30 October, Gokarna Forest Golf Resort. No outside food and beverages or pets allowed. Free shuttle bus available every hour from 2PM. A variety of food & drinks, jazz T-shirts and souvenirs will be on sale.

4. Red Hot Latin Jazz

If you thought jazz was just about lounging and listening, think again. This promises to be an evening filled with Afro-Caribbean and South American rhythms. Some of the best musicians of Jazzmandu will come together to keep you moving and grooving on the dance floor to the sounds of Latin jazz, merengue and cha-cha. Monday, 7 November, 7.30 PM onwards, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Rs 1299, including food and a complimentary drink.

5. Free Jazz at Patan Square

A free show organised by Jazzmandu to bring together people from all walks of life and designed especially to promote jazz among those who usually can not afford tickets. Tuesday, 8 November, 3.30 PM to 5PM, Patan Durbar Square.

6. Jazz at Patan

If you do not get enough music at the free show on 8 November then you can always come back for more the next day. This promises to be a unique evening in an historic venue with international musicians combined with Nepali classical musicians and premiere jazz band Cadenza. Wednesday, 9 November, 6.30 PM onwards, Patan Museum Square, Rs 999.



David and Carmen, the duo from Canada



Rabin Lal Shrestha, Santosh Bhakta and Suresh Rajbhandari—the classical musicians due to perform at Jazzmandu



Groove Suppa from Bombay



VALLEY-DU 2005

7. Jazz for School Students

In collaboration with SEBS (Society for ex-Budhanilkantha Students) this event specially designed for school students is by invitation only. Aiming to expose students to the joys of jazz, it will also promote interaction between musicians and students. Featured bands are David and Carmen from Canada, Soul Mate from Shillong, Cadenza and Solid from Norway. Thursday, 10 November, Budhanilkantha School, 1PM to 3PM.

8. Supper Club - The Best of Jazzmandu

For all those who were unable to attend the earlier events or would just like to taste the flavour of Jazzmandu with some fine dining thrown in, this is the perfect event. Featured bands are David and Carmen from Canada, Soul Mate from Shillong, Cadenza from Kathmandu and Solid from Norway. Friday, 11 November, 7.30 PM onwards, Hotel Shangri-la, Rs 1499 including dinner and a complimentary drink.

9.Upstairs Jam

Upstairs is all about jazz. The best jazz bar in town, it has

not only created a name for itself but also helped to establish many musicians in Nepal’s music scene. Jamming at Upstairs has been a tradition since the place opened so it seems appropriate that it would be included in Jazzmandu. Thursday, 10 November, Upstairs Jazz Bar, 7.30 PM onwards.

10. Jazzmandu Peace Parade

Geared to promote jazz and peace in a single event, the parade will follow the Lajimpat road in a carnivalesque atmosphere, with vintage bikes, cars, jazz musicians, Maruni dancers, Lakhe dancers, folk Dancers and marriage bands, all spreading the message of “Music for Peace”. Saturday 12 November, 1PM to 2 PM, Lajimpat.

11. Jazzmandu All-Star Fever

The grand finale of Jazzmandu. All the musicians from the various bands will perform together to create an atmosphere of music and friendship. It will be a mix of grooved and pumped music to dance the night away and dream of next year’s festival. Saturday, 12 November, 7.30 onwards, Hotel Summit, Rs 699.



Mariano saxing it up



Vocalist of soulmate from shilling belting out a tune

The Music of Surprise

NEAL SELLARS

What is jazz? Good question! Louis Armstrong said if you had to explain it to someone, they just didn’t get it, just didn’t dig it, in Satchmo-speak. Jazz journalist Whitney Balliet, oft-quoted, called jazz “the music of surprise”. It’s been called America’s art form and America’s gift to the music world.

Jazz comes in many styles and has many labels—trad, Dixieland, mainstream, bop, modern, avant-garde, fusion, funk, acid, Latin, you name it. Everyone else does.

It originated as a blend of European and black American music and evolved from there, drawing inputs from many sources. It’s not much more than a century old. The essence of jazz is improvisation, usually within a written framework. But it’s also about emotion, a feeling, like you “feel” a blues number when you hear one.

There are books written about how jazz started in New Orleans, with black musicians in brass bands playing at



funerals and street parades. Then it went “up the river”, the Mississippi, to cities like Kansas City and Chicago and spread far and wide, including to Europe.

Jazz was usually played in sleazy joints like bordellos and speakeasies. Vocalist Blossom Deane told her club audience that she didn’t tell her mother she was singing there. “She thinks I’m in jail!”

But no more. Jazz, though still not well paid, has come of age. It’s now recognised as a genuine, sophisticated art form, as simple and yet as complex as music by Bach or Beethoven. Jazz fans often love Bach and if he came back today, I’m sure he’d love jazz.

Popular music feeds off jazz and jazz feeds off popular music. Many of the good songs, the best popular numbers, become jazz “standards”. Jazz musicians not only play music, they play with music—change it, improvise it, kick it around in a group.

How do you get to like jazz, to learn about jazz? Listen, if possible, to live jazz. It’s fascinating and exciting to see and hear top jazz being created and played in front of your eyes and ears.

You may find you like the simple, toe-tapping trad or Dixieland. You may like the more sophisticated modern jazz such as bop (the revolution led by saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker, considered by many to be the next jazz genius after Louis Armstrong). You may like fusion, which developed after the arrival of electronic instruments on the rock scene in the 1960s. Most people like swing, as played by the big bands like Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller around World War II.

Or, if you’re lucky, you may like it all!

Neal Sellars is founding co-ordinator of the 4ttt Palmer Street Jazz Festival in Townsville, North Queensland, Australia.



David and Carmen

November Sky

Mars and meteor showers

Dear Stargazers!

Hope you had a wonderful Dasain holiday with lots of stargazing. Some of you also might have observed partial eclipses of the Sun (3 October) and Moon (17 October). During these events, astrologers worldwide were busy forecasting the fates/futures of people and many in Nepal were fearful to observe even the Moon's eclipse. Remember: the Zodiac, planets or eclipses do not determine your future. Your future depends on YOU—what you do and what you learn.

November is generally called the month of the Pleiades (*Kritika*) because this most famous of star clusters adorns the November night sky from dusk till dawn. The Pleiades star cluster—sometimes referred to as the Seven Sisters—is a misty-looking dipper-shaped formation of six stars that marks the shoulder of the constellation Taurus, the Bull.

The Great Summer Triangle, made of the three bright stars Vega, Deneb and Altair, is also pretty obvious. Soon after sunset you can find the Great Summer Triangle directly overhead. Low on the southwest horizon immediately after sunset is a large beautiful constellation called Scorpius, a giant scorpion with a complicated curved tail. The most

obvious feature in Scorpius is the bright red star Antares in the scorpion's "heart". Behind Scorpius, just to the west, is another easy constellation, Sagittarius. This is supposed to be an archer but it looks like a teapot.

However, the major celestial event for November is the **close approach** (30 October) and **opposition** (7 November) of the red planet Mars. Opposition refers to the period when a planet is opposite the Sun in the sky, with Earth between the two. At a brilliant magnitude of -2.3, Mars rises at sunset, is out all night and is quite high at midnight in Aries. The nearly full Moon joins Mars on the 14 November.

The possibility of the red planet having once sustained life has been the subject of endless speculation. Currently, spacecrafts are circling the frigid and arid surface of Mars taking detailed images and searching for hidden water, while NASA's two robot explorers range over it.

Venus achieves greatest elongation on 3 November but its 47-degree solar separation is wasted since it's south of the ecliptic and not very high. Still, watch it closely when it meets the Moon on the 5 November.

By a strange coincidence, both Mercury and Venus are at their greatest elongation east positions on 4 November. Mercury will be seen about a hand span below Venus, in the twilight sky above the west-south-western horizon. Also, the thin crescent Moon will be seen between these two planets. Just below the Moon's southern limb the red giant star Antares will be visible.



Saturn is the brightest object in Cancer. Rising before 11PM at mid-month, it floats alongside the Moon on the 21 November. Jupiter rises about half an hour before sunrise so it is difficult (but not impossible) to see in the predawn sky on the first morning of the month. However, Jupiter rises earlier and earlier each morning so that by the end of the month it rises more than two hours before the Sun and can be seen as a bright object along the "edge" of Virgo and Libra.

Uranus is in the centre of Aquarius but it is at the limits of naked eye visibility (6.0 magnitude). Neptune is in the centre of Capricornus but its low magnitude (8.0) makes it impossible to see without optical aid and detailed maps. Pluto is in "Eastern" Serpens (east of Ophiuchus) but at a magnitude of 14, it is well beyond the sight of all but the best telescopes.

Meteor Showers: The Taurids meteor shower reaches its peak on 3 November but you'll see less than 10 meteors an hour, not very impressive. These meteors are the "offspring" of Comet Encke—a frequent short-period comet well known to the comet-hunting fraternity.

The Leonids should be more interesting. This meteor shower is caused by the remains of the comet Tempel-Tuttle. The Leonids last only a few days, starting around 15 November, peaking on the 17th and tailing off by the 19th. ●



Google Earth's satellite view of New York's Central Park

Google eyes

The famous internet search engine now lets you spy on your friend halfway round the world

JIGME GATON

For the Nepali couch potato who prefers shopping at KhukuriPalace.com instead of walking down to his or her local Gurkha shop, the new tool from internet search engine Google will appeal for online travelling, shopping, and plain old-fashioned voyeurism. Google Earth provides the most efficient way to travel the globe and even meet other travelling couch potatoes without ever stepping outside the house.

At first glance, this new software looks like a collection of satellite images of Mother Earth mated with a video game interface yet after a few minutes of using this free program, you realise it goes far beyond watching TV or playing a video game. Most of us are familiar with the technology on view in any HollyBollywood spy-dance-thriller, where the spy apparatus zooms in from outer space on the evil person or vehicle on the ground.

Thanks to Google Earth, you too can zoom in on the backyard of your *sathi* in the US and see if they do indeed have that new Land Cruiser they've been boasting about. In short, Google Earth is just what it says: a three-dimensional interface to the Earth.

This, by the way, has upset the Government of India to no end after it found that the Pakistani government was Googling India's missile sites! Of course, a better use of this new educational tool cum online video game, would be

to go trekking free of knee pain and blisters. Zoom the route from Kathmandu to Muktinath without a permit and 15 roadside security checks. And for the shoppers in us all, each of the globe's major cities is catalogued—with details ranging from Armani boutiques to Seven Elevens—with the exception of Kathmandu and Butwal.

The satellites that provide the images Google Earth uses rarely fly over our small kingdom, insignificant as it is in global military and commercial matters, so the imagery is not updated or connected to the world's global addressing system that has been online for years. (Heck, I don't even have an address, do you?). So you won't see a dot on the map labelled Bhat Bhatini Supermarket anytime soon—although by becoming a member of the Keyhole community, an online chat forum located within Google Earth, you can place points on a map or leave "posts" about anything you see.

You do have to download about 15 megabytes to your cyber terminal or home PC to be able to connect to Keyhole. But once that's done, you can chat with other Googlers who are busy exploring the intimate details of the globe or spotting possible UFOs. You could ask fellow Keyholers: Is that an Alien Crop Marking or an Army Radio tower? Where is the world's largest parking lot? Did my brother really put in a new pool?

Fun and games abound. I highly recommend this free program to all in the kingdom who have a high-speed internet connection. Educators and tourism professionals alike will find this program useful. Even though the US programmers at Google cannot spell Kathmandu, virtual tour guides in the West can highlight must-see sites in Nepal for those planning a visit. Teachers can demonstrate geography while students think they are playing a video game. I have personally corrected the location and spelling of the Pashupatinath Temple, which was marked as a momo shop somewhere west of New Baneswor! And here's a challenge for a die-hard geography buff: use the Keyhole forum to correct all the spelling mistakes of Nepali place names—too numerous to mention.

If you're interested in Google Earth, you better download and try it out soon. Many countries around the globe are beginning to protest this US corporate experiment (to give anyone online worldwide access to recent satellite imagery using a sophisticated searching scheme that your seven-year-old daughter could figure out). Or maybe those Googlers are looking for nuke sites and the whereabouts of al-Qaeda? ●

Check out Google Earth at <http://earth.google.com> Jigme Gatton is a cartoonist for the *Nepali Times* (see City page) and frequent contributor to this paper on issues of technology and culture.

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Nepal’s war widows see red

Red is no longer just the colour of revolution, it also a symbol of women’s empowerment

MANISHA ARYAL

The news item tucked away inside a Nepali daily newspaper was indifferent and unmemorable: ‘Suspected Maoist Rudra Chapagain, alias Ramesh, was shot dead by the security forces in Baneswor...’ But that death wiped out everything in the life of Chapagain’s 25-year-old widow, Debi. With her husband gone, she lost not just her right to wear her wedding beads, glass bangles, tika and clothes in different shades of red but also her social status, economic security and legal protection.

Born into a bahun family from Bhojpur, she came to Kathmandu eight years ago to go to school. Here, she met a fellow villager, had an inter-caste marriage against her parents’ wishes and had a son by him. He was a karate instructor who dreamt of launching a martial arts training institute in Kathmandu.

Dressed in a drab black and white salwar kamij, with no make-up on her face, Debi breaks down as she recalls the pain she has lived through in the last six months. “He had loaned three or four lakhs to various friend,” she recalls. “When he left our rented apartment that morning, he said someone had promised to return the money owed him.” That evening, she heard about his death on the eight o’clock tv news.

If he were a Maoist, she never knew about it. Debi’s parents reminded her



EKAL SILWAL

that her misfortune was of her own making so she decided to turn to her husband’s brothers, both assistant sub inspectors in the Nepal Police. Her oldest brother-in-law invited her to stay with his family but she had to leave within a fortnight as his wife made it clear that Debi was too attractive to be welcome in her house. She then went to stay with her second brother-in-law. Debi was just settling in with his family when he was killed in action three weeks later during a firefight with Maoists in Siraha.

With nowhere else to go, Debi and her six-year-old son now share an apartment with her brother’s family. She can’t go back to her husband’s house in Bhojpur because local Maoist cadres have labelled her family “anti-people” and have padlocked their house. “I can’t even turn to my in-laws because they

themselves are living in a rented room in Itahari,” she says.

Rights activists estimate that there are over 15,000 widows like Debi, each an individual tragedy and most being ostracised. A recent study by the group Women for Human Rights counted 7,000 widows in 100 VDCs of the 23 districts most affected by conflict. Of these, two-thirds were younger than 30, a third were illiterate and only two percent had college education.

Worldwide, men make up the bulk of the fighting forces of militias and armies but it is women who form the majority displaced by war. In the absence of men, women-headed households also carry the additional burden of taking care of families in conditions of extreme poverty and insecurity.

In Nepal, war widows have a

double trauma of grief and social stigmatisation. Their presence in religious ceremonies is considered inauspicious, they are hounded out of their homes, denied access to land, property and children and their assets are often seized by those closest to them. As young women without protection, they are also targets of social isolation, economic discrimination, psychological trauma, sexual violence and crimes like trafficking and forced prostitution.

Despite ratifications to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the consensus on the Beijing Platform for Action and governments’ endorsement of the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, conflict widows continue to suffer in the face of government inaction.

The Nepali state has acknowledged its responsibilities towards widows of conflict by making available a one-time compensation package (Rs 750,000 for widows of members of security forces and up to Rs 200,000 for widows of civilians killed in conflict) and a monthly stipend of Rs 150. Both require women to register with their VDCs. But “Maoist” and “civilian” widows often don’t have the knowledge and the wherewithal to access the compensation money. The monthly stipend is barely enough to feed a family for two days.

Nepali women, especially



Hindu women, dress in shades (and combinations) of blue, yellow, black and white to indicate they have lost their husbands. Colour coding invites unwanted attention, discrimination, abuse, violence and isolation. Last year activists launched a movement to reclaim the colour red for these women. It has spread like wildfire from Dang to Ilam and is empowering women to think of their lives as meaningful and productive.

“What we really need, however, is a social security scheme for these young women,” says Lily Thapa of Women for Human Rights. Other actions that would help: a safe place to recover from the wounds of war, skills training and job placement for self-sufficiency and policies supportive of widows. ●

Debi's name was changed on request.

Surkhet’s displaced have only memories

“It is inhuman to separate mothers from their children”

GOMA GURUNG in SURKHET

The graffiti scrawled on Shanti Hamal’s house was all it took for this 37-year-old to leave her home in Khursanibari in Dailekh.

‘On the 18th, it’s your turn’ said the blood-red letters. Shanti immediately packed her bags and left home arriving in Surkhet on 1 July. She has been here ever since.

The day before Shanti fled, Dilli Koirala and Rishi Dhakal had been mercilessly beaten by Maoists something Shanti had seen with her own eyes. She was just too afraid to stay.

Shanti says the reason she may have been targeted was because the army had removed a booby-trapped red banner outside her home a few weeks previously. The Maoists had accused her of being a government spy. That was also the reason Koirala and Shakal were beaten until they nearly died.

The irony of Nepal’s conflict is that Shanti has also been at the receiving end of the wrath of the security forces. Last year, there was a firefight between insurgents and soldiers in her village. The soldiers went house-to-house interrogating, threatening and intimidating. “It’s not my fault at all, yet neither side will leave me alone,” Shanti told

us in Surkhet, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

Shanti says that although Khursanibari is near Dailekh’s district capital, it is contested terrain so villagers have to walk a fine line and try not to get caught in the middle. There are many like Shanti who are internally displaced in Surkhet.

Lalkaura Malla is a 61-year-old from Pakha in Kalikot. Since her husband is an RPP member, her 14-member clan left the village four years ago and haven’t been back since. Of the 14, five are women and they eke out a living running a restaurant in town. “Sometimes when they are sick, there isn’t enough money to take care of them, there is never enough food,” says Lalkaura, “and we can’t sleep at night worried about the rest of the family still up there in Kalikot.”

Human rights activists have been trying to convince families like the Mallas and Hamals to go back to their village, saying the Maoists have guaranteed their safety. But Lalkaura is convinced it’s not safe. “They will not leave us alive,” she says simply. The displaced women of Surkhet would rather that rights groups gave them training in income-generating activities so they can continue with their lives and take care of their families. “Among the internally displaced, it is the women who suffer most,”



says Lalkaura.

According to the human rights group INSEC, there are some 250 internally displaced families in Surkhet alone. None of them are receiving any aid. INSEC’s Surkhet representative Durga Thapa says his organisation doesn’t provide financial aid but is trying to ensure that it is safe for the

families to return to their villages. Recently, INSEC got the Maoists to guarantee that 27 families could return safely to Jumla.

“Ultimately, both sides have to talk and sort this out,” says Thapa, “but it is inhuman to chase out women and separate mothers from their children.” ● (Mahila Bolchhin, NPI Nepalgani)

'8/10' and after

Amidst Kashmir's tragedy, we must prepare for the next big quake in the Himalaya-Hindukush

Why has the Kashmir Earthquake of 8 October been termed the 'Southasia Quake' by the international media, including the all-powerful, real-time satellite television networks? Southasia is a vast region and the ground trembled beneath one corner of it, well known to the world as Kashmir, on two sides of the 'line of

SOUTHASIA BEAT
Kanak Mani Dixit



control'. Somehow, it does injustice to the suffering of the living and memory of the dead to call the disaster by the name of the larger region when a local name is available.

Meanwhile, the UN has declared the Kashmir catastrophe more devastating than last year's tsunami. Three to four million people are suddenly without

homes on the edge of winter. The result of an underground quake, the tsunami of 12/26/04 struck the southern beaches of Southasia, while the earthquake of 8/10/05 hit the northwestern mountain fastness. Because it was such an unusual event and also because many holidaying westerners died tragically, the coverage of the tsunami attracted emergency support on a massive scale. Not so with the Kashmir quake of 8/10. To date the world is not even close to matching the \$11 billion gathered for post-tsunami relief.

In the face of an earthquake that knows neither borders nor LoCs, of course we must utilise the opportunity of the disaster to ease Kashmir tensions between India and Pakistan. But geopolitical certitude in the two capitals will surely require something more than a shifting of geological plates to undo. What we need is for national establishments in both countries to



learn to take the Kashmiris themselves into confidence, as well as find a way to fuzz the frontiers and sanction dual identities. For that, we need a shake-up of the mind, not the ground.

The immediate challenge in Muzaffarabad, in Uri, in Hazara, in Tangdhar, is to help those without shelter and means of livelihood to make it through the winter of 2005-06. But thereafter, we are looking at many years of rehabilitation. Given the sharp drop that we can expect in humanitarian concerns as soon as the television cameras stop broadcasting live, the intelligentsia of Pakistan, India and

Southasia as a whole have a responsibility not to turn their backs on this quake and its living victims. They have to stay with the Kashmiris for the long haul and keep the governments on their toes.

This year, nature chose Kashmir to sound a warning to the rest of Southasia—most importantly, to those who live along the Himalayan-Hindukush rimland. The geologists are not sitting easy and neither should the rest of us. The prospect looms of a horrendous earth shaking in what is known as the Central Himalayan Gap, which covers all of Nepal and more. There has not necessarily been enough

release of 'cumulative elastic energy' in the rubbing of plates beneath Nepal and the nearby regions to the north, west and south. A huge swath of territory is therefore dramatically overdue for a devastating quake. The suffering of Kashmiris must at least inform those who are in a position to save lives when the earthquake hits the Central Himalaya.

The newly adopted building material all over the Himalaya-Hindukush is concrete. Heavy-set buildings were the death traps of Kashmir as testified by numerous pictures of the tragedy. Kathmandu, the largest urban concentration in the Himalaya, will become a 'valley of death' when the Big One comes, for its buildings are now nearly all of concrete using 'pillar system' construction. And what of rescue? In Kathmandu and elsewhere, there will not be the military helicopters and ground transport available in militarised Kashmir.

To die under rubble while awaiting a rescue that never comes is a gruesome way to go, as happened to many on and after 8/10. Kashmir will have to be helped back on its feet, while we look ahead to the next Big One—and prepare. ●



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Surya Nepal Masters

Tournament leads the push to expand golf tourism in Nepal

Surya Nepal Masters, started way back in 1993, is today perhaps the biggest sporting event in its category in Nepal. This event has not only helped develop the sport in this country, it has also helped promote golf tourism and been a proud ambassador for Nepal.

The tournament is sponsored by one of Nepal's biggest private sector organisations, Surya Nepal, a company that has continually invested in enhancing golf's profile and used the sport to promote tourism.

As part of this sustained effort towards building golf tourism, last year Surya Nepal tied up with the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) to take several fresh initiatives, such as event and country coverage by Ten Sports, targeting Indian golf enthusiasts at over 40 golf clubs in the country and inviting prominent Indian tour operators to visit the country for a first-hand look. All that hard work has paid off as golfing tourists from India and elsewhere are arriving in increasing numbers.

Surya Nepal plans to take those initiatives even further this year. In an effort to extending coverage beyond India, the company, in association with NTB and Le Meridien Gokarna Forest Golf Resort and Spa, plans to do extensive promotion in West Asia, South and Southeast Asia. Ten Sports will again be back to feature the best of the event and telecast it to millions in the region.

TEE BREAK
Deepak Acharya



In addition, Surya Nepal will now be promoting inter-club tournaments with international golf clubs all year round. Held under the Surya Nepal Golf banner, this will be a series of planned tours by golf enthusiasts from countries such as Dubai, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Thailand, Singapore and, of course, India.

As a first, this last weekend a number of golfers from New Delhi were flown to Kathmandu on special packages to compete with locals in the Diwali Golf Tournament under the Surya Nepal Golf banner.

Many more such initiatives are planned during the next few months. The objective is to offer ready-made attractive package deals to willing tourists across the region and to ensure that they have wonderful golfing vacations. These golfers will then be ambassadors for tourism to Nepal and the numbers will only multiply, according to the plan.

Countries like Thailand and Malaysia have benefited immensely by promoting golf tourism. For example, over 100,000 golfers go to play in Thailand each year. Nepal has a comparatively better climate and also offers great golfing, so why miss this opportunity? ●

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





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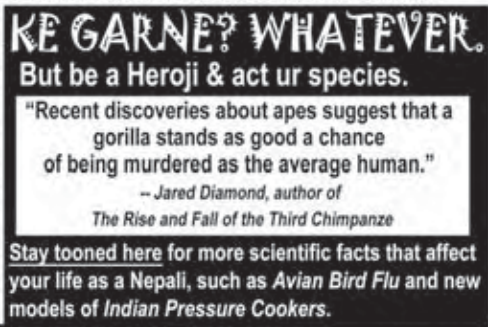
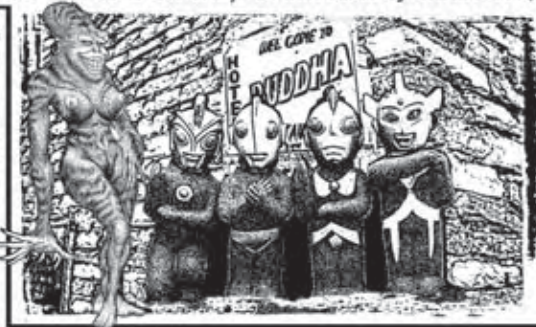
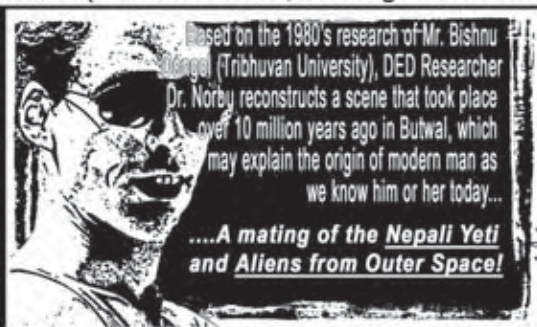
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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Dolpo in Time** personal photographs and paintings by Tenzin Norbu Lama, 29 October – 11 November at Banana Cat Café, closed on Wednesdays. 5522708
- ❖ **Photos** by Mani Lama, 1 November at Lajimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Photographs** by British film maker Susan Griffiths Jones, 20 November– 7 December, Lajimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Art Walk** Traditional artworks at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg. 4248999

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

- ❖ **Changing Faces in Nepal** lecture by Susan Fowlds on cleft lip and palate surgery, 28 October, Hotel Shankar 9.30 AM.
- ❖ **Hey DJ**, party at Hotel Yak & Yeti featuring DJ Mukul from London, 28 October, 8PM onwards, Rs 699. 4410798
- ❖ **What is Happening to me?** Understanding anger and karma, one day course led by Ven. Lama Dhaddak at HBMC, 29 October. 4414843
- ❖ **Laxmi Puja Mela** at Baber Mahal Revisited, 29 October, 11AM – 7PM. Rs 290.
- ❖ **Moksh Festival** fun games and more, 29 October, 11.30 AM.
- ❖ **Dipawali Utsab** stalls and fun at 1905 Kantipath 29 & 30 October, 11AM – 7PM. 4225272
- ❖ **Celebrate Kukur Tihar** with a free vaccination and health check, 30 October, 8AM – 12PM, Jawalakhel ground.
- ❖ **Halloween Night** party at Rox Bar, 31 October, 7.30 PM, Rs 600. 9857011146
- ❖ **Disarmament Week** 24-30 October.
- ❖ **TBS PTA Football Tournament** at Dasrath Stadium, 30 October. trophy@tbs.edu.np
- ❖ **Gai Tihar/ Laxmi Puja** 1 November.
- ❖ **Bhaitika** 3 November.
- ❖ **International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict** 6 November.
- ❖ **Mean Streets with De Niro and Scorsese** Film festival at Lajimpat Gallery Café, 9 – 30 November. 4428549



MUSIC

- ❖ **World's Highest Gig** at Bamboo Club, Thamel, 28 October, 7.30 PM. 9851007359
- ❖ **Project Peace 2005**, third Thamel Street Dance Music Festival, with British DJ Mukul and various other local DJs, 29 October, 2PM onwards.
- ❖ **Sundar Shanta Nepal** travelling peace concert, 15-30 October.
- ❖ **Jazzmandu** 4th annual Kathmandu jazz fest, 4-12 November.
- ❖ **Traditional Newa Music Concert** by Tanani Bajan Khala from Jyapu Tole, 28 October, 6, 13, 20 & 27 November at Hotel Vajra. Show and Tea Rs 400. 4271545
- ❖ **Jatra Friday** nights, live music by Siron. 4256622
- ❖ **Unplugged** sessions with Strings, Jatra Saturday nights. 4256622
- ❖ **Live Music** at Juneli Bar, Hotel de l'Annapurna, Darbar Marg. 4221711
- ❖ **Ladies Night** Wednesdays, one free cocktail to the ladies at Jatra.
- ❖ **Musician Night** every Tuesday at Moksh, 7.30 PM onwards. 5526212
- ❖ **Live Jazz** by the pond at 1905, Kantipath. 4225272

FOOD

- ❖ **Signature Pasta and Italian Wine** 20-31 October, 6.30-9.30 PM at Yak & Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Kebab and Biryani Festival** cuisine from the house of Mughals at Hyatt Regency 5-20 November, 6.30 PM onwards. 4491234
- ❖ **Sushi and Saki Promotion** at Hyatt Regency. 4491234
- ❖ **The Sidewalk BBQ** with live jazz, Fridays, Shangri-La. 4412999
- ❖ **BBQ Dinner** at Summit Hotel, Fridays, 6.30-9.30 PM. 5521810
- ❖ **BBQ** by the Swimming Pool at Le Meridien, Rs 888.
- ❖ **The Jazz Gourmet** fine dining redefined, Shangri-La. 4412999.
- ❖ **Annapurna Value Lunch** at Rs 299, 4221711.



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- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** has special offers for Tihar holidays. 4361500.
- ❖ **Junglewalks**, rafting, elephant rides all at Jungle Base Camp Lodge, Bardia. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
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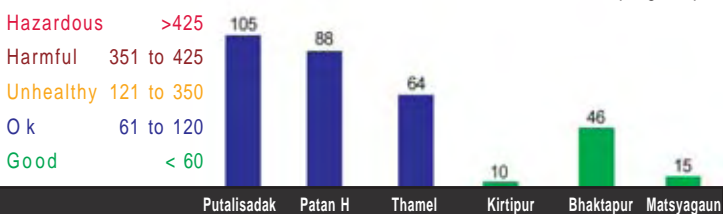
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KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

It may be due to the unexpected few days of rains we got last week, or the holiday season. Whatever the reasons may be, Kathmandu's air is a little easier to breathe last week. The average PM10 particles (harmful matter less than 10 microns in diameter that lodge in the human body) concentration throughout the Valley was within the national standard of 120 micrograms per cubic meter, unusual for this time of the year. As winter sets in, the pollution level in the air is bound to increase. For now, enjoy the fresh air while it lasts.

16-22 October 2005 in micrograms per cubic metre.
Source: www.mope.gov.np



NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



Last weekend's heavy snowfall and torrential precipitation were record setters. The 57 mm of rain that fell on the Valley made it the wettest October in history. The heavy snowfall in the northern mountains created havoc among tourists and locals. Similar events were last reported in early November 1995. Blue skies have now returned after the low pressure system was replaced by a high last Tuesday. Mercury levels are up by about 4 degrees on average since the return of sunny days. Satellite images taken Thursday morning show a huge cyclone over the Bay of Bengal and the eastern side of the South Indian peninsula indicating the departure of this year's monsoon. Nepali skies will continue to be sunny this weekend but be ready for foggy mornings.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



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ON GUARD: People gathered outside Kantipur FM on Thursday to prevent any further actions by security forces, who seized re-transmitting equipment from the station last Friday night.



YOUTH FLY HIGH: Participants in the flying juniors program of the Avia Club's Air Sports Association pose for a photo at Pokhara Airport after taking a spin in a Micro-ultralight aircraft on Monday.



WELCOME WALKERS: Tourists trekking along the west bank of Phewa Lake last Sunday. Post-ceasefire their numbers have grown noticeably in and around Pokhara.



UNITED WE BURN: Students burning a mock up of the Media Control Ordinance in Dillibajar.



SHAKING IT UP: A woman in Bhaktapur separating husk from rice grain. Harvest season started with the end of Dasain.




Football for fun, funds

The British School's TBS PTA charity football tournament returns to Dasrath National Stadium on Sunday, 30 October. Run by teachers and parents of students at the school, the one-day event will feature eight teams playing 20-minute games with the finalists going head-to-head for 30 minutes. Proceeds will go towards Sankhu Hospital, the ANFA district youth development scheme and Sathsath, an organisation currently looking

after 20 children who live and work in the streets of Kathmandu. Sankhu Hospital specialises in correcting skin defects and treating burns and relies entirely on donations. Off the pitch there will be a whole load of fun games for children, such as bouncy castles, face painting and splash pools. A barbecue will be sizzled by the British Gurkhas and will be accompanied by a bar. Organisers are also selling raffle tickets for Rs100 with a mountain flight for two as the top


prize. Tickets for the tournament are priced at Rs10 for Nepalis, Rs100 for foreigners and half price for children. Children supported by Sathsath will participate as 'ball boys' and will also play an exhibition game with The British School team at the end of the day. "Nepalis and the expatriate community here don't often get a chance to interact with each other. We have priced the ticket at a minimum so that many people can come and participate," says tournament director Steve Priest. ●



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OS032	Wednesday Friday	Ktm. - Vienna	0040	0620

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FLIGHT NUMBER	DAYS	SECTOR	DEP.	ARR.
OS032	Friday	Ktm. - Vienna	0040	0620

Summer Schedule

Effective 30th Mar.06 - 27th Apr. 06

FLIGHT NUMBER	DAYS	SECTOR	DEP.	ARR.
OS032	Tuesday Thursday	Ktm. - Vienna	2330	0550+1


Effective 04th May.06 - 11th May. 06

FLIGHT NUMBER	DAYS	SECTOR	DEP.	ARR.
OS032	Thursday	Ktm. - Vienna	2330	0550+1

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Go to hell


Going to hell isn't as easy as it used to be. There is cutthroat competition for the limited slots available and you have to be really, really wicked if you want to make the grade.

It's not enough anymore to be a wilful defaulter or to pocket fat kickbacks on lethal procurements. Everyone does that these days. No, the benchmark is higher now and all of you out there desirous of spending eternity in purgatory need to show a much greater aptitude for evil than you have so far.

I mean, look at the competition: mass murderers, narco-terrorists, hired assassins and you think you can go to hell just because you scammed the Roads Department?

However, it pains me to say this but global standards for depravity have been slipping in past decades and it's a disgrace. There was a time when we had real pros around like Emperor

UNDER MY HAT
Kunda Dixit



Bokassa or Papa Doc Duvalier or Augusto Pinochet. Alas, they don't make them like that anymore.
To be sure, Dubya is one helluva guy but he's still a featherweight. Robert Mugabe shows promise but he has a long way to go. Then there are an assortment of wannabe tin pot dictators around the world (including one in a country that begins with 'B' and ends in 'a', and another whose capital rhymes with zing-bang, and another whose national bird is a BEEEEEEP and national exchequer is BEEEEEEEEEP) but looking at the way they are conducting themselves it is obvious they are just amateurs.
So, in order to ensure that only the World's Most Heinous make the grade, Devil's Advocates (Nepal) Pvt Ltd, the firm that is responsible for Mr Satan's legal affairs here on Earth has been contracted to carry out an entrance exam for those who want to pursue their careers further in hell. Of course, for that, the applicant first needs to expire but due to the rush it is better to book early. And only if you pass this test do you get a slot in the queue. All those who think they don't have a chance in hell to go to heaven are eligible and women are encouraged to apply. You have one hour, cheating is allowed and beating up the invigilator during practicals will be a demonstration of eligibility.

1. Give us one good reason why you want to go to hell (tick one):
a. I think I'd feel at home down there
b. So I can continue doing what I was doing here
c. Because it's nice and toasty
d. All of the above

2. What is your profession here on Earth?
a Really really bad guy
b Professional hitman
c Professional defaulter
d Convicted criminal with skeletons in the cabinet

3. If people don't agree with you what would you do:
a Invite them home for a drink or two, or three
b Sock them in the nose and make them unconscious
c Declare them persona non grata
d Decorate them with the sixth-highest medal in the land

The correct answers are: 1(d), 2(d), 3(c). If you got them all right you are hereby considered eligible for permanent resident status in The Netherlands. To hell with you!

Birtamod - Jhapa 15th Oct.

• Metauda 17th Oct.

• Ghorahi-Dang 19th Oct.

• Dhangadi 21st Oct.

• Tansen-Palpa 24th Oct.

• Damauli 26th Oct.

• Charikot-Dolakha 28th Oct.

• Bhaktapur 30th Oct.

सुन्दर शान्ति नेपाल

शान्ति संगीतयात्रा २०६२

TRAVELLING PEACE CONCERT 2005

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Kunti Moktan

Om Bikram Bista

Sapana Shree

Jyoti Ghimire

Satya Swaroop Acharya

Nepathya

Today in Charikot
Come, join us

Today in Charikot
Date : 28 Oct 2005, Friday
Time : 1pm
Venue : Kalinchowk Sec. School Ground
Local organisers and Ticket Contact:
Federation of Nepalese Journalists-Dolakha, Kalinchowk Sec. School, Pashupati Kanya Sec. School, Kutidanda Sec. School - Makailari, Devi Sec. School - Boch, Sarva Sec. School - Jilu, Bhim Sec. School - Dolakha, Mahendrodwaya Sec. School - Mail.

Day after tomorrow in Bhaktapur
Date : 30 Oct 2005, Sunday
Time : 2pm
Venue : Bhaktapur Durbar Square
Local organisers and Ticket Contact:
Kharapa Nasa Khala, Shree Padma Higher Sec. School, Shree Changu Narayan Higher Sec. School
Live Broadcast : Image 97.9 FM, Bhaktapur FM 105.4

Entrance Rs. 10/-
Ticket contact Local Organisers

Organised by: नेपाली जर्नालिस्ट संघ

Managed by: nepa-hya

Gates open at 11 am in Charikot & 12 noon in Bhaktapur
Bags and sharp objects not permitted in the venue



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