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TEN YEARS IS ENOUGH

Labelling those with divergent views as 'anti-national' is the last resort of scoundrels. It is also the time-honoured practice in autocratic societies to crack down on dissidents by invoking 'national security'. When nothing else works, when rulers want absolute power at all cost, dictators everywhere prefer this method.

The royal regime is going out of its way to mock the 12-point agreement between the mainstream parties and the underground Maoists by playing up the foreign location of its creation to call the parties 'anti-national'. As we said in this space last week, we believe the venue is not an issue. Peace, democracy and sovereignty are, and anything that takes us there is ok with us.

Even if there was outside facilitation, what's wrong with that? If we can't fix it ourselves why not let others do it for us? That is called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuban himself slipped off to New Delhi in 1950 to reinstate the Shah dynasty and bring democracy.

These were Nepali political parties and Nepali rebels trying to find a solution to a homegrown revolution. The underground rebel group appears to have been persuaded after 10 years of futile conflict to join the political mainstream, accept multiparty democracy, and work towards decommissioning their weapons under international supervision.

We should be celebrating this breakthrough. After all, it was only a question of time before the comrades backtracked. We have repeatedly stressed that the ideal outcome would have been unity between the king and the parties, but February First slammed the door on that one.

The thing to do now is to push for an extension of the ceasefire in order for the Maoists to convince the public that they have negotiated in good faith. After all, given the way past ceasefires have ended, we can't trust the Maoists. But we have to test them. Then the other armed side needs to come on board, and one urgent confidence-building measure would be for the army to reciprocate the extension of the ceasefire.

By keeping the door ajar on the monarchy the party-Maoist document offers a face-saving way for the king to rollback his takeover and return to a constitutional role. For his own sake, for the sake of his dynasty and the kingdom, we urge the monarch to take up this offer and ensure his continuity. It's his last chance for voluntary devolution. After this, it is unlikely there will be very many more offers. The writing on the wall has never been as stark as this.

The nation has come to another fork on the road. The wrong turn will take us into a ruinous civil war. The right turn is the path to peace, democracy and development. Ten years is enough.

Between Mugabe and Shwe

"I come from one of *those* places that you read about and shake your head"

In the first week of August, a familiar face jumped out at me from the usual chaos of student notice boards. The poster that caught my eye was disarmingly simple, just blue, black and white in a format I'd seen before. Those, however, I'd

GUEST COLUMN
Jemima Sherpa



barely registered—one showing a corpulent, bespectacled Robert Mugabe, another with Burma's General Than Shwe. This was different.



I found myself staring at the familiar frowning visage of Nepal's King Gyanendra. The simplicity of the two-toned line drawing, his sagging jowls and puffy eyes traced in black and white on slightly grainy paper took me back to years of Nepali classes, through pages of badly edited government-issue textbooks with their illustrations supporting constructs of a country and language that somehow never quite matched up to what I could see or comprehend.

I've never been able to decide if other Nepalis here have this same gut reaction when they find themselves face-to-face with something from places they call home. I've come to suspect that for most the answer is probably no. For Nepalis, seeing things you recognise is never as common as it must be for the Americans or English or even Chinese and Indians spending time abroad. In fact, homesick Nepalis tend to wallow by watching Bollywood movies, the closest we can get to the familiar this far away. For us, glimpses of home are rare in the western world, and ones that show us a bit of the Nepal we recognise—rather than a one-dimensional tourist paradise or third world hell-hole—are even rarer.

Still, this Amnesty International poster confronted me with a reality I'd never fully comprehended before: I come from one of *those* places! One of those places that you read about and shake your head

over while skimming the morning paper, one of those places that people hand out flyers and petitions and booklets to 'save', one of those places that has been in 'crisis' for so long and so often that it ceases to shock and surprise.

Outside of our borders, the culmination of centuries of Nepali history, over 200 years of a monarchy, a failing fledgling democracy and a nine-year civil war are reduced to in this poster: evaluating our landlocked country and controversial king against a simple list: Abductions, check. Torture, check. Disappearances, check. Rape, check.

Just that week, I'd met a couple from Zimbabwe through some mutual friends, one of those odd Saturday afternoon twists of chance. I listened to the woman talk of life since she and her husband came here three years ago, forced by factors I can only imagine. At the door, she paused and said, almost as an afterthought, "I've been here too long without going home."

'Amnesty International Freedom Week', read the poster on the wall, echoed by an almost identical one of Mugabe a few feet away. 'You Have The Freedom To Choose. Millions Don't'.

It's strange how a badly sketched face and three ticked boxes can say so much and yet so little about lives left hundreds of miles behind. Glancing around, I quickly pulled it down and carefully slid it between my notes as I walked away. ●

Is peace really breaking out?

If it doesn't, we will know who wrecked it

Unlike the emptiness in western philosophy, *sunyata* in Vedic thought is full of infinite potential. On the surface, the current stalemate in Nepal may be unnerving but we also stand on the threshold of immense change that will irreversibly transform the Nepali polity.

True, the state is still in a state of suspended animation. Everyone is waiting for something to happen, but nobody

STATE OF THE STATE
CK Lal



wants to make the first move.

The king has made his intentions abundantly clear: he wants a system where his word will be the law. Defending the constitutionality of the RCCC, the royal attorney general argued in the Supreme Court early this week that the rights of a Hindu king were almost limitless. But the cloak of constitutionality, howsoever thin, is too precious for the palace to discard. To save face, the royalists are pretending that the 4 October, 2002 takeover didn't create a constitutional vacuum. But they are

clutching at straws now.

Maoists are firm in their resolve to let the constituent assembly decide the future of the country. But their leadership seems to be uncertain about whether the rank-and-file will accept this. For all their bravado, the Maoist leadership lacks the courage to make a complete break with its blood-stained past. But if they can claim that this is victory in negotiations, there is no reason why the commanders will not accept an exit strategy to end the pointless war.

The mainstream parties have realised the futility of their delaying tactics. They too know that nothing less than a new compact with the people can break the present deadlock. But leadership has never been the strong point of either Girija Prasad Koirala or Madhab Kumar Nepal. Both are better at reacting to decisions made by others. They, too, are waiting for someone else to hasten the process of reconciliation between the insurgents and the mainstreamers.

With bureaucracy controlled, academia strictly monitored, professionals emasculated, media muffled, courts confused and NGOs threatened, Nepal's nascent civil society finds its voice too weak to make an impact. Lately, even peace and conflict experts have begun to speak in carefully calibrated tones. They are unlikely to question the relevance of the king's African odyssey at taxpayer's expense, the Maoist's hesitancy to extend the unilateral ceasefire for an indefinite period, or the reluctance of the mainstream parties to accept a constituent assembly without ifs and buts.

All major stakeholders are twiddling their thumbs and creating diversions to hide their nervousness. Incapable of ending individual and collective humiliation on their own, each wants an outside facilitator to rescue them from their predicament. Since helplessness is hard to accept, pretensions have become their armour of compulsion.

The chairmen of the council of ministers are engaged in orchestrating municipal elections to divert international attention. The Maoists are holding talks and biding time. The parties are staging symbolic rallies to display their prowess. Civil society is engaging donors to save its existence. To end all this grandstanding and indecision some form of outside intervention has become inescapable. The Maoist supremo has been most forthright in accepting the importance of the participation of a 'dependable international community' in disentangling the royal knot in Nepal.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal has hinted he is ready to take the plunge if an atmosphere conducive to peace is created by all for a safe landing of their cadre. Should peace break out in the near future, we now know who we should be grateful to. Even more importantly, if hurdles are placed on the road to truce, it will not be difficult to pinpoint the blame.

So we are poised between sunyata and infinity. It's everything or nothing. ●

LETTERS

FATIGUE

CK Lal has never tried to hide his views on the army. However, he seems to be extra vitriolic in his latest column ('Military fatigue', #273) about the Jaleswor incident, probably because his own community was mistreated by the army. In future I hope Lal realises that soldiers for the last four to five years have been fighting the insurgency non-stop, being far away from their near and dear ones and without any dasain or tihar or any form of leave. It is easy to write, Mr Lal, but it is much tougher to be in the army. Please show some sympathy to them once in a while and be more mellow in your choice of words.

Dr Amrit KC, Bishalnagar

● All you journalists ever see is the negative. Does CK Lal realise that if it was not for these very frustrated, untrained soldiers you would either be wearing a green uniform or killed. Let's give the RNA some credit. They lay down their lives to protect the country from a ruthless enemy. It can't be easy killing fellow Nepalis on Nepali soil. They are in constant danger and all the good that they do goes unnoticed. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the soldiers of the RNA for doing what they are doing. No army is perfect we have seen this in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq but every soldier knows his duty and they join the armed forces to protect the very people who criticise them. I feel sick of you journalists. How would you feel if you were out there at the front facing an enemy that wants to destroy our nation? May Goddess Kali shower her blessings on every soldier of the RNA.

Name withheld, email

● Good thing we still have commentators in this country like CK Lal who have the courage and foresight to warn us about the dangers of alienating *tarai*basis. Mr Lal is telling the RNA for its own good and for the future of this country that it has to stop making excuses for excesses like the Jaleswor incidents and human rights violations which are pushing the country to the brink. While being forced to deploy in an unwinnable guerrilla war, there is a danger the soldiers are creating a bigger crisis with all the people they harass. A action's army can't say: "They're doing it, too, and so can we." As a state party, it has to be more responsible towards all citizens and not just the mainstream community.

Jaganath Sharma, email

● C K Lal is right in pointing out that it is tough for army personnel in the tarai. But the way the soldiers are behaving, it may be difficult to save their image. Last year, while travelling with my dad on the highway soldiers at checkpoints repeatedly used rude and unprintable words while addressing my elderly father. And forget about '*tapa*' or even '*timi*', it was '*ta*' all the way. I was helpless before an armed 20-year-old soldier. Welcome to Nepal, I thought. How can there be respect for human rights with an attitude like that? If this guy was a bad apple, there seem to be an awful lot of bad apples out there. This year, I was in Delhi for a week on transit to Nepal. My father asked me not to bring anything apart from my clothes. He wanted me to leave even the gifts elsewhere, in case I encountered unnecessary hassles at the checkpoints. If you can't differentiate between a Maoist and an innocent citizen how are they going to fight this war? And it's the Maoists who declared a ceasefire, not the forces who are supposed to protect and safeguard citizens. Lord Pashupatinath has turned away. May someone save Nepal. PS: Please do not disclose my name. I do not want to jeopardise my family.

Name withheld, email

● Although I used to be a supporter of the king, I am having second thoughts about his blatant disregard for the country and his choice of cronies, but I still feel that the parties joining the Maoists is not the solution as you argue in your editorial ('Breakthrough in Delhi?', #273). How can you join forces with the Maoists when we all know that they do not accept political pluralism? One can't forget history—look at Mao and Chang Khai Shek. They fought the Japanese together and then Mao tried to backstab him. It is sad to see the political parties falling into the trap of joining forces with a party that has slaughtered their ranks for years just to get power. Mr Girija Koirala is nothing but a power hungry, corrupt politician (this goes for MK and all the rest of their buddies as well). Don't they have any remorse for all the party workers whose blood has been spilt? They just want to join mainstream politics because they know they have lost the people's support. The Maoists can't be trusted, they will eventually take up arms again until they have absolute power. Baburam Bhattarai and Pushpa Kumar Dahal should atone for all the lives they have taken. They should never be allowed to join politics and should be tried in Tundikhel as traitors and terrorists. And if the political parties join them then they should be tried as well.

Name withheld, email

● Your editorial shows how the *Nepali Times* has lost its direction. Readers like us relied on your paper to reveal the truth and show a direction during this turmoil and conflict but it is now clear that you have eaten up everything that you stood for and advocated. The very title is disgusting. India has been a pure hypocrite towards Nepal with regard to the Maoist problem, the Bhutani refugee problem, building dams in border areas and interfering in politics. To expect that this country will come up with something beneficial for Nepal is pure stupid. I agree that the current government with its bad policies and governance is the reason why the Nepali people are still giving some space to the political parties. But what the parties have done in aligning themselves with the

Maoists and India is completely in line with what they have done in the past and what they represent. The parties are the personification of corruption, immorality and power at any cost. With this alliance, they are well on their way to obtaining one more title: 'terrorist'. Having lost all hopes of getting to power by fooling the Nepali people again, Madhab Nepal adopted the Maoist methodology of terrorising when he said that there will be a big revolt and bloodshed if this alliance does not have its way. The *Nepali Times* would have done better if it had not echoed these threats. With these forces at play, I do not want my name revealed.

Name withheld, email

● As long as brave Nepali gurus like Narjit Basnet and Dhan Bahadur Khadka profiled by Naresh Newar in his excellent field report 'Frontline teachers' (#273) who have suffered being dismembered by Maoist butchers still believe in the power of the pen over the barrel of the gun, the Nepali younger generation will still have hope. I salute all the Narjits and Dhan Bahadurs in Nepal for their sacrifice.

Dhruba Khanal, email

GAGANTHAPA

Nowadays when it seems like every Nepali with even mediocre ambition is fleeing the country out of disgust with the status quo, it is refreshing to know that there is a young leader in Gagan Thapa who has an ambitious vision for the country ('The Gagan phenomenon', #272). Sadly however, the party that he is an asset for, as Dipta Shah says, could also be his biggest obstacle to making a significant leap to turn things around in the country. Mr Thapa should realise that the Nepali Congress, with its selfish agenda, hypocritical views and lame old leaders, has severely lost its credibility with the Nepali people and that his mere association with the party would hamper the support that he has enjoyed from the younger generation. The author suggests that Mr Thapa could be an asset for the Congress party but perhaps he should also make sure that the party is an asset for him as well and not a liability. As the saying goes, 'You can never fly with the eagles, if you mess around with the turkeys'. Is this political party with such a tarnished image a good vehicle to take him to the next level or is it time for a vibrant new party under him with some young blood and a concrete agenda?

Sushil Bogati, email

● People may wish to view Gagan Thapa as an opponent of the palace, Maoist extremism or democratic mismanagement. One thing is clear: unlike the old generation of politicians, including the king and other leaders, Gagan Thapa pioneers a new kind of politics that requires reasoning and examination. Some may feel threatened that our history is being questioned by this young leader. Our history has remained moulded by our rulers for a long time. The future may be difficult to predict but it is achievable only through understanding where we came from. Other leaders may feel threatened because this leader has the ability to think and speak intelligently.

D Mahat, email

NOT ROYAL

Regarding the article 'Reviving Patan's royal canal' (#273) I'd like to inform you that 'Raj Kulo' is a technical term meaning 'main' or 'trunk canal' and has nothing to do with royalty, even though it may in the past have had royal patronage.

Girish Kharel, email

POORER

The mountains of far west Nepal have always held a fascination for me so it was with an eager sense of anticipation that I arrived in Jumla at the end of September. I expected some 'interaction' with the Maoists but I was unprepared for the events of the following weeks. Having trekked all over Nepal I am familiar with the rhetoric and practices of the Maoists so I was surprised to be detained for two days in Sinja. However, after endless discussions our small 'donation' of Rs 500 was surprisingly refunded and we were free to go. The Maoists of Mugu were far less friendly. Teenagers pointed rifles at us as they refused to accept Prachanda or Baburam as their leaders: this was an 'autonomous region', Comrade Sagar insisted that we part with Rs 18,000 at gunpoint. In Dolpo, Comrade Sagar's authority is not accepted and we found ourselves once again having to plead our case. In Dho, the Maoists boasted of how much money they make buying and selling goods from China while they sit in the filthiest village in the region. Again, we coughed up our final reserves and parted with Rs 14,000. It is obvious that not a paisa will ever reach the local communities in these regions: profiteering, guns and ammunition are the only outlets for tourist 'donations'. Consequently, I am appalled to hear trekkers in Kathmandu comparing their souvenir 'receipts'. But I am equally upset by the extortionate trekking permit fees. Where does the \$ 90 Mugu fee go? Where does the \$ 700 Upper Dolpo fee get spent? Certainly not in the regions that we visited. If the government of Nepal wants to encourage tourism to remote areas of this extraordinary country then maybe it should consider how many 'sticky fingers' a trekker's pocket has to accommodate? And how about making the fees in Kathmandu transparent? This may just force the Maoists to do the same and just maybe, some money will end up where it should be going: to the villagers and VDCs. Yours, all the poorer,

Robin Boustead, Australia

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Demand outstrips supply

Get your candles, torches and generators ready for a long, dark winter

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

The arithmetic just doesn't add up: the demand for electricity will outstrip supply at peak hour this winter. There is no other way for Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to deal with it than load shedding.

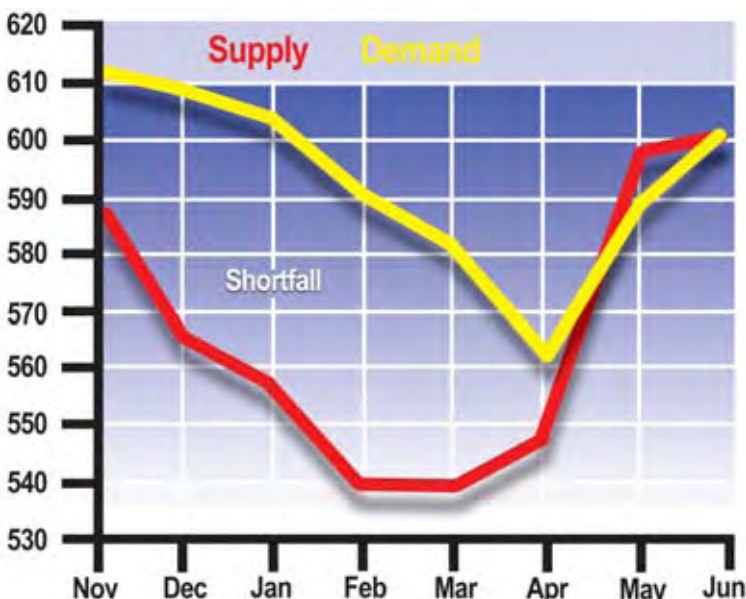
While they may shed the load, however, it can't shed the blame. Everyone knew this was coming, yet the government and the NEA did nothing to pre-empt it by adding capacity or implementing demand side management.

By mid-December the shortfall in peak-hour power supply in the evenings will be 10 megawatt (MW). By January, the deficit will be 40 MW and could reach 54 MW by March. Even if new power plants are added, at the rate demand is increasing the power shortfall at peak hour in winter will exceed 100 MW by 2010.

"The situation is quite serious," admits Soorya Bahadur Shrestha, corporate planning director at NEA, "we are trying our best to manage supply but load shedding seems unavoidable from January and it will get worse in the coming years."

In fact, an unofficial load shedding has already started. The industrial belt between Simara and Birganj and other parts of the country are already suffering unannounced power cuts. But for political reasons, Kathmandu is being spared. But not for much longer.

In a controversial move, the government recently appointed Harishchandra Shah as the new



managing director of NEA. Shah told us he has a list of measures to avert the power crisis: supplementing more than 20MW peak power to the grid from private businesses, importing more power from India, cutting off power supply to billboards, and push sales of energy-saving lights to replace incandescent bulbs.

Even if these plans work, and it looks iffy, the gap between supply and demand will be too great by mid-December. From then on power cuts at peak hour are here to stay for at least five years, experts say.

The problem isn't lack of power, it is shortfall at the evening peak hours in winter. During the rest of the day and during the monsoon the grid has more energy than it can handle. Most of it is wasted and the NEA suffers huge losses because it is power it has to buy but can't sell.

Three years ago, the Ministry of Water Resources was ready to implement time-of-day tariff to reduce demand at peak hour, but the government changed and it went into limbo. Had demand management measures been put in place, the supply deficit would be only 9MW in January. But without it, the shortfall will be 40 MW.

The only reason for this crisis is poor planning. To be sure, the conflict has delayed the Middle Marsyangdi project that was originally supposed to come online this year, adding 70 MW to the grid. The delays have doubled the cost of the German-aided project and it is still two years away from completion.

But even with Marsyangdi, energy experts feel that it is now time for Nepal to have another reservoir project to meet peak demand and to offset the monsoon-winter imbalance.



STILL TWO YEARS AWAY: Even when it comes online in 2007, the 70 MW Middle Marsyangdi will be too little too late.

Except for the two Kulekhanis, most of Nepal's power comes from run-of-the-river schemes which means their power output depends on the flow of the river. This, in turn, means they generate most power (in the monsoon) when demand is lowest and least power (in winter) when demand is highest. This year's poor monsoon has added to the woes because water level on the Kulekhani reservoir is ten metres below normal.

Apart from bungling in the power generation front, the NEA has also failed to upgrade transmission and distribution systems to send power to deficit areas. Nepal's system loss due to power poaching is 30 percent—one of the highest in the world. Even if this was halved, load shedding could have been averted.

The NEA's generation expansion plan list has more than

30 projects but construction has not even begun. The ones that have started are too small to make an impact. Kulekhani III is being mulled, but can't be completed before 2009. The Japanese are said to be working on a detailed study of the 122MW Upper Seti, another storage project but that will take even longer.

India is eyeing Upper Karnali and Budi Gandaki but strained bilateral relations after 1 February have stalled negotiations. The much-delayed West Seti dam will take ten years to build but its 600 MW is for export only.

NEA officials say they are now relying on buying more than the current 50 MW power from India which itself is bizarre given the power shortage on the north Indian grid. Transmission lines from the Nepal side are in place but there are doubts about India coming to the rescue in the present circumstances.

Private power producers like Butwal Power Company (BPC) are interested in increasing generation by 20 gigawatts at Rs 3 per unit. But NEA officials fear buying power at such a cheap rate may set a precedence and they don't want to sign a deal that would expose them to possible investigation by the corruption watchdog, CIAA.

Other private producers also want to invest but are backing off because they say NEA is not offering them the same lucrative deals as Khmiti and Bhote Kosi. ●

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Homage to Drucker

Guru taught that good management was a power for good

Peter Drucker, the man who invented the art of management, died in his sleep at home in California on 11 November. He was 95. Though most tenured professors at top-tier US business schools do not respect him enough to assign his

STRICTLY BUSINESS

Ashutosh Tiwari



writings to students, the ideas that Drucker put forth in his 38 books, many essays and lectures have long resonated with managers in for-profit and non-profit organisations worldwide. In my own spare-time reading of Drucker—with books bought from an extensive collection at Kantipath’s Educational Book House—I have come away with three ideas that have influenced my thinking about business and management.

Long before the widespread use of the internet, Drucker saw the rise of knowledge workers. He pointed out that a baker’s son today need not grow up to be a baker as he would have done 40 years ago. That son might be a lawyer, an X-ray technician or an artist. This freedom to change one’s profession from that of one’s forefathers, argued Drucker, is a relatively new phenomenon in human history. And it has positive implications for the nature of work and management.

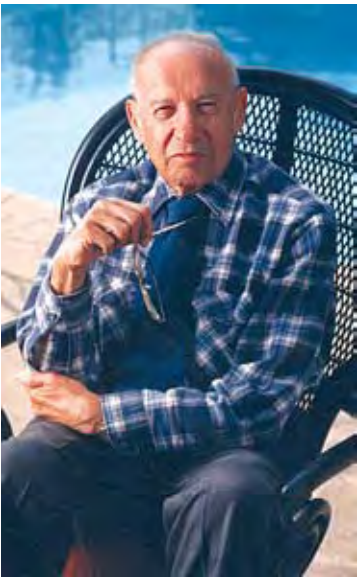
A member of a hospital management, for example, can express dissatisfaction over an X-ray technician’s tardiness. But the management cannot do the technician’s work, which is specialised. Given this, the challenge for anyone in management is to figure out how to get the best out of specialists or knowledge workers who work for their organisation. Viewed this

way, being in management is akin to being a conductor who has to coax music out of orchestra members, each of whom is a specialist in playing an instrument.

Drucker’s second insight was that managerial effectiveness can be learned through consistent practice. He had no use for CEOs as glamorous cover boys. Instead, he drew upon his consulting experiences to assert that managers’ personalities, attitudes, values, strengths, weaknesses, extroversion or generosity made little difference if they were not effective and if they did not deliver the results for their organisations. He argued that a manager’s job was to ask the right questions about what needs to be done, how to do it through action plans, assign people to do it and then get it done by keeping communications open. Anything else was simply a distraction.

Drucker wrote much on the art of self-management. He understood that different people learn the same thing differently. Some enjoy reading, some learn by writing, while others master new ideas by talking things over with many people. Drucker encouraged all to discover their own learning style and put that to work by honing their strengths. It is easier, he observed, to go from strength to strength than to try to turn a weakness into strength. He realised that knowledge workers do not necessarily do their best work within the traditional nine-to-five work schedule and suggested that management think out of the box to get more productivity out of employees, whose creativity would drive the innovations that businesses everywhere need today.

Drucker saw ambitious, highly educated and competent young people becoming partners of law or consulting firms at the age of 35 and then getting thoroughly bored with the work they do, while remaining too scared to leave work to find their true calling in life. He suggested that they spend several hours a week



volunteering at non-profit entities—schools, museums, hospitals, theatre groups, music ensembles—so that they could share their expertise with organisations that desperately need management skills but couldn’t afford them.

Indeed, all of Drucker’s writings point to one conclusion: that the art of management, regardless of where it is applied, has the power to do much good for humankind. May his soul rest in peace. ●

Serving minds

Ashish Kapoor, president of Serving Minds, global services and BPO provider from Nepal has been recently appointed to the Advisory Council of the World HRD Congress. The Congress is a global body of Human Resource Development Organisations from around the world. This is the first time that a professional from a Nepali corporate has been nominated to the council, which will plan and execute the next World HRD Conference and Exhibition in Mumbai from 3-4 February 2006.

Free to be fair

Emami has launched the first fairness cream for men, Fair and Handsome, this week. In a research conducted on user-ship of fairness cream it has been found by the company that more than 25 percent of fairness cream users are men. This has prompted the company to develop double strength peptide complex in association with Activor Corp. USA. Emami Fair and Handsome is targeted at the urban male consumers between 15-35. The company expects to sell half a million tubes in Nepal this year.

Honour for Qatar

Qatar Airways has won four key awards at the 12th World Travel Awards. The airline picked up awards for World’s Leading Flat Bed Seat, Best Inflight Meal Service, Leading Airline in the Middle East and World Travel Global Award.

New NIB branch

Nepal Investment Bank has opened its 13th branch in Narayangarh. This branch will offer products and services to meet the needs of its customers in Narayangarh, Bharatpur and surrounding areas. The branch will be linked ‘on line’ to the other 12 existing branches and clients in Narayangarh can access their funds from any of these 12 branches.



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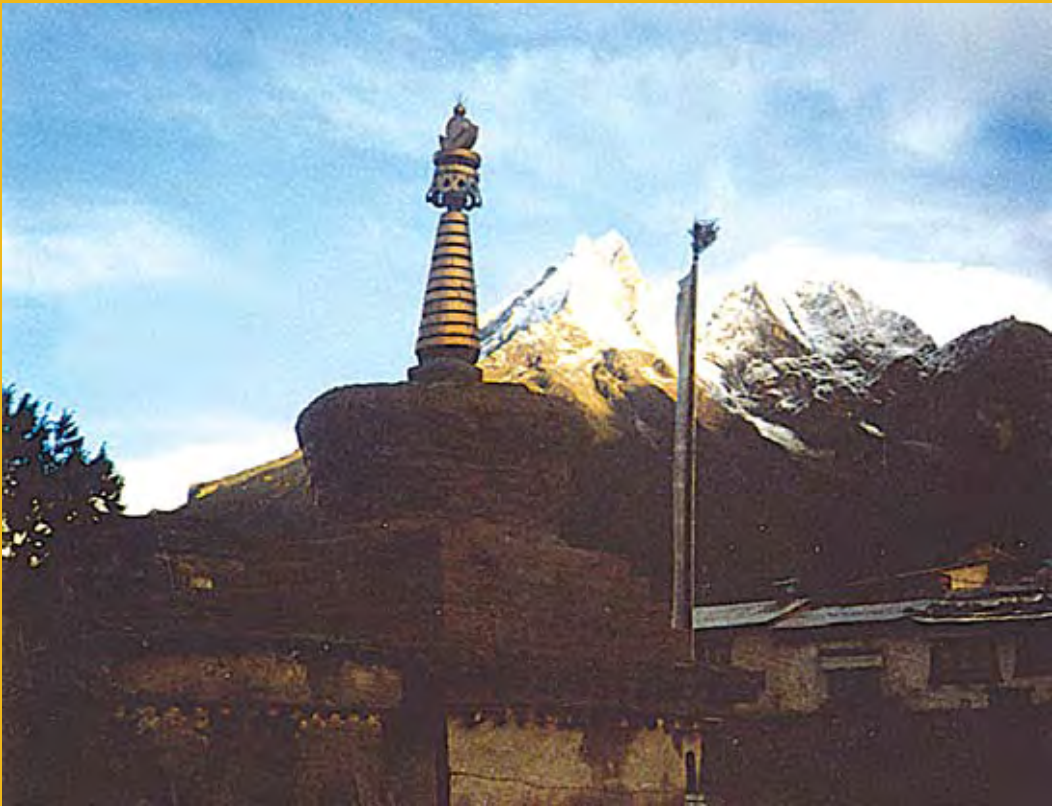
We create value through Prakriti, our environment preservation initiative. Our projects include massive afforestation and tree plantation drives, adapting environmentally safe industrial practices as well as imparting training to farmers on sustainable practices.

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KUNDA DIXIT

Trekking, more than other types of tourism, benefits local communities because it injects money directly into rural areas. Properly handled, trekking can play an important role in poverty alleviation. Guides and porters get jobs, lodges and restaurants along the trails get business.

But trekking and tourism also isolate sections of the poor, benefitting mainly the already privileged segments of society. Often, communities living in and around tourist destinations are still neglected. Then there is also the worrying impact of mass tourism on the environment and culture of trekking destinations.

This is where community-based eco-tourism (CBT) comes in: motivating local people to be proactive in tackling the threats and problems associated with tourism, livelihood and conservation. It also asks how tourism can inspire local people to retain their cultural assets and protect the environment?

A form of community-based eco-tourism is currently being tried out in the Khumbu region where villagers are actively engaged in natural and cultural heritage conservation. The aim is to reduce trekking's ecological and cultural footprint while maximising its benefit for marginalised communities

The Sagarmatha National Park (SNP) is Nepal's most visited national park and is of global cultural and environmental importance. The region saw 3,600 trekkers in 1979 and by 2001 the numbers had soared to nearly 22,000. This means the ecological equilibrium that existed in the park area for centuries is under increasing strain.

Trekking tourism has helped boost the local economy and standard of living with better health care, education and housing. But it has also degraded the region's fragile ecology and cultural traditions. Moreover, the benefits of trekking tourism are not distributed equally throughout the parks as many areas remain culturally and economically isolated.

Trekking tourism has not lead to the preservation of the region's vibrant culture. Economic benefits have taken precedence over the conservation of natural and cultural sacred sites. Many groves, trees, water sources and caves that are regarded as holy are being neglected. The rich oral traditions, rituals,



ANG RITA SHERPA

KHUMBU MANI

A unique project in the Khumbu region aims to promote pilgrimages and benefit people

SARAH SUBBA and



KUNDA DIXIT

OFF THE BEATEN

The Sacred Sites Trail is a circular tourism trail created to encourage tourists to visit six lesser known sacred sites and villages in the Khumbu area. Initiated and implemented by the local people with financial support from The Mountain Institute (TMI) the program hopes to reinvigorate and enhance local cultural skills and traditions and distribute tourism benefits more widely by encouraging tourists to visit villages off the established trekking trails and to stay longer.

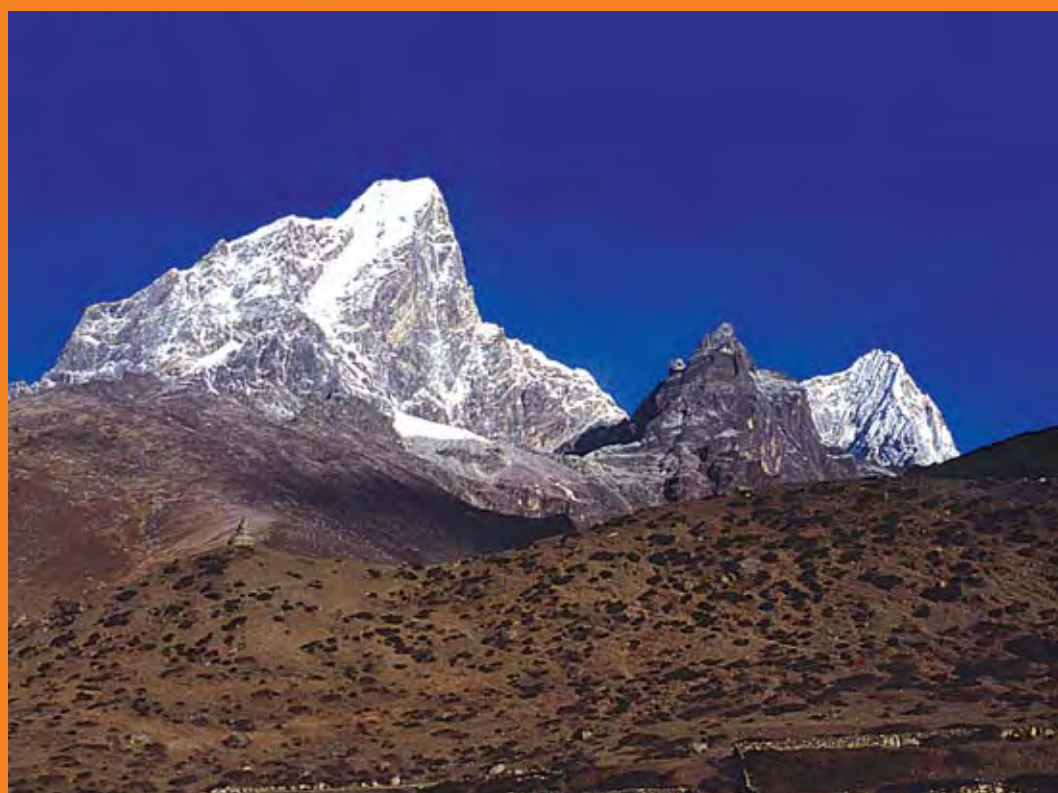
The route takes one to Thame, Gendukpa, Phortse, Pangboche and Debuche. The natural assets of these areas are spectacular and less well known. All along the trails, ancient gombas, mani walls, chortens and kanis give travellers a feeling of being in sacred surroundings. giving a spiritual feel to the trail's pristine mountain environment.

The trail passes through 12 monasteries and nunneries, passing clockwise from Namche visiting

KHUMBU DALA

Khumbu tries to turn treks into
people outside the tourism loop

ANG RITA SHERPA



KUNDA DIXIT

dances, clothes and stories are not properly documented and are suffering erosion.

In 2003, a unique initiative called the 'Sacred Sites Trail to Khumbu' was launched. This community-based tourism initiative tries to integrate multi-thematic conservation needs, diversify tourism benefits and preserve cultural values and stages of development.

At a time when indigenous culture is under increasing threat from encroachment of modern civilisation, loss of livelihood opportunities and Maoist conflict, the hope lies in replicating strategies like the Sacred Sites Trail in other parts of Nepal as well. Already, a 'Sacred Himalayan Landscape' project encompassing national parks and biodiversity regions from Langtang north of Kathmandu to the eastern slopes of Kangchenjunga in Sikkim is being proposed to conserve the cultural, religious and environmental treasures of the eastern Himalaya.

At a 'Sacred Himalayan Landscape in Nepal' conference in April, participants said traditional conservation measures taken to safeguard biodiversity alone are inadequate, the goal should be to also preserve the cultures and traditions that nurture and revere nature.

And once local communities are mobilised to preserve traditional value systems, culture and religion, the environment is automatically protected. After all, only by strengthening society's moorings can society benefit from protecting the environment and from tourism. ●

Sarah Subba and Ang Rita Sherpa work for The Mountain Institute's Himal Program.
www.mountain.org

HEAVENLY TREK: (Clockwise from below, overleaf) The renovated monastery at Phortse with the mountains of the Gokyo Valley in the background
Sunrise from Tengboche
The summit of Taboche seems to peer down at its own valley
Sherpa pilgrims do the sacred walk in Thame
(Centre) Moss-covered mani wall in the walk up to Khumjung

EATEN TREK

several sites in the Thame Valley and ending at the Tengboche Monastery. The Sacred Sites Trail feeds into and complements existing trekking routes.

The trail builds on the notion of sustainability that entails maximum consideration to local communities, providing them with livelihood opportunities, involving them in the management and protection of cultural heritage and natural resources.

The confluence of religion, culture and environmental conservation invariably contributes and promotes tourism and development of the area therefore, 'Sacred Sites Trails to Khumbu' builds on the very rich religious and cultural heritage of the region to attract tourists also to isolated areas.

This in turn could help revive traditions such as the belief that springs and lakes and some trees are inhabited by spirits called the Lu—beliefs that were important in conserving water sources, protecting slopes, conserving forests and biodiversity.



KUNDA DIXIT



ANG RITA SHERPA

Join Jane

Renowned primatologist and UN Messenger of Peace, Jane Goodall, will speak in Kathmandu on 'Reason to Hope'



Jane Goodall loved animals even as a child. When she was just over a year old, her father gave her a toy chimpanzee which she named Jubilee. She carried Jubilee with her everywhere. Today, more than 65 years later, Jubilee—now completely bald from so many hugs—sits on Jane's dresser in England.

In the summer of 1960, Jane arrived in Tanganyika (later to become Tanzania) to study chimpanzees. At first, the Gombe chimps fled whenever they saw Jane. But she persisted, watching from a distance with binoculars and gradually the chimps allowed her closer. One day in October 1960 she saw chimps David Greybeard and Goliath strip leaves off twigs to make tools for fishing termites out of a termite mound. Up until this time, scientists thought humans were the only species to make tools but here was evidence to the contrary.

In 1965, Jane and her husband started the Gombe Stream Research Centre, which meant graduate students and others could come and assist

with the chimpanzee observations. The Centre became a place where students could learn about wild chimpanzees and how to study them. The Centre still trains primatologists to this day. Jane visits Gombe every year and is very involved in the research but she no longer does the actual day-to-day field work.

As the research went on at Gombe, it became clear that chimpanzees had a dark side, just like human beings. Jane and the other researchers were surprised when the female chimpanzee Passion and her daughter Pom killed and ate several infant chimpanzees, ripping them from their mothers' arms. They also observed a period of conflict between different chimpanzee groups. Chimpanzees may be capable of cruelty but they also demonstrate cooperation, affection, happiness, sometimes even seem to help each other just for the sake of helping, not to get a reward.

The Jane Goodall Institute, which she founded in 1977, has programs designed to benefit people who are living in poverty in Africa and to spread the word about the importance of conserving the forests and animal populations. The Institute also has the Roots & Shoots global youth program, which helps young people learn about problems in their communities and the world and then take action towards solving them.

Says Jane: "Young people, when informed and empowered, when they realise that what they do truly makes a difference, can indeed change the world. They are changing it already." Jane is a dedicated scientist and has been designated by Kofi Annan as a 'UN Messenger of Peace'.

While in Nepal, Jane Goodall will address a Public Forum at Patan Museum on Wednesday, 30 November 4 - 5.30 PM sponsored by *Nepali Times* and Resources Nepal. Later that evening, Jane will take part in a Candle Lighting Ceremony at the Peace Mandala in Maitighar organised by the Roots and Shoots youth group. ●

Public Forum 'Reason for Hope' with Dr Jane Goodall Sponsored by the *Nepali Times* and Resources Nepal in association with Roots and Shoots Nepal

Wednesday 30 November 4PM Patan Museum. No admission charge but seating is limited to the first 250 people

DOIG



He came, he saw and he painted. Desmond Doig, author, journalist, architect, landscape designer, artist left crowded and crumbling Calcutta to the emerald valley of Kathmandu in 1975 and made it his home.

In the next eight years Doig painted hundreds of water colours of Kathmandu's temples, bahals, street scenes. His artist eyes were mesmerised by Kathmandu's beauty, especially its colours and light. It was love at first sight and the paintings



A tribute to the legendary Swiss aviator in Nepal

Last flypast for



Hardy Furer was a familiar figure in the skies over Nepal for nearly two decades from 1966-1984 flying his single-engine Pilatus Turbo Porter ferrying school books for UNICEF, Merino sheep to Jumla or iodised salt to remote districts.

REMEMBRANCE
Barbara Adams



Unable to stay away, Hardy had returned to Nepal in 2000 after being promised a job ferrying tourists to the Everest View Hotel in Syangboche. But that job never

materialised and Hardy began to suffer money and health problems. The reluctance of the government to grant him a long-term visa frustrated him and pushed him to depression. He was found dead in his rented flat in Baudha on 16 November and was cremated in a simple Buddhist ceremony that day.

When lung problems, due to many years of excessive smoking worsened and an operation became imperative, it was his Nepali friends who came to his rescue. Dr Damodar Pokhrel agreed to remove one lung and then part of another lung free of

cost. His old friend Krishna Lama of the Civil Aviation Authority stayed with Hardy at Bir Hospital until he recuperated. Lama's eyes glistened as he described Furer's condition before his death. And it was in the house of Shaligram Pudasini that he died.

For those of us who knew him before he fell upon hard times

Hardy was an extraordinary character: at home with classical music, especially opera and European art. He opened 30 airfields in previously inaccessible areas of Nepal, among them Simikot, Bajhang, Dhorpatan, Ramechhap. He drew up the earliest pilot's charts for approaches and departures for these airports because he was always the first to make a test landing.

Like fellow-Swiss Pilatus pilot, Emil Wick, Hardy was a legend even in his time. He was idiosyncratic and would sometimes fly off and leave his passengers standing in the tarmac if they didn't arrive on time. He never took chances and never had an accident even though he sometimes flew 10 hours a day. Once his engine cut out on an early morning ferry and he had to glide back to the airport in Dhangadi.

I never missed the chance to fly with Hardy Furer even though I was terrified of flying. He was

often referred to as a 'White Knuckle Pilot'—it was the passenger's knuckles that were white, not Hardy's. He was blunt, provocative and spoke his mind. This often got him into trouble and was the reason he quit the United Nations for whom he flew development flights on the UN's blue-tailed Pilatus Turbo-porter, 9N-AAW (also known as 'Alpha Whiskey').

Hardy was devastated when the UN decided to go for a Twin Otter and turn over its flight needs to Royal Nepal Airlines in 1984. He lingered for a few months in Kathmandu hoping that reasons to stay back would turn up. He began to drink heavily, his friends tried to help him but failed. Hardy reluctantly returned to Switzerland where he spent some time in therapy.

He loved art and collected paintings of Lain Singh Bangdel and Laxman Shrestha among others and by the time he returned to Nepal had himself

An exhibition of Desmond Doig’s less-concrete kind of Kathmandu



and sketches on display at Siddhartha Art Gallery this week show Doig’s view of the Valley was coloured by this affair.

When he died in 1983 the artist left behind a trove of sketches and water colours. Some of them went into private collections, others were in the safekeeping of Desmond’s friend Dubby Bhagat who put them together in the book of drawings and writings, *My Kind of Kathmandu* in 1995.

“What distinguishes Doig as

an artist is his spontaneity,” explains Siddhartha’s Sangeeta Thapa who organised the exhibit, “Doig did not copy these images from photographs or other paintings. He painted them as he saw them.”

Indeed, the exhibition is a pilgrimage to Kathmandu’s past and a glimpse of the treasures that were vanishing even back then in the early 1980s. Desmond had fled Calcutta to escape the squalour and because he could do nothing to stem the rot because, as he told us, “I am

neither a revolutionary nor a missionary”.

But he saw the blight spreading to his beloved Valley as well. He yearned for the less-concrete previous Kathmandu where the streets were all flagstoned and the houses were “all mellowed brick and russet tile and weathered wood”.

The Doigs display a fascination for Kathmandu’s light: the explosion of emerald in the monsoon, the ochre-and-white doll houses at Baudhha, the blinding white cumulus towering over purple hills on the Valley rim, the mysterious holy light that bathes a Pashupati morning.

You notice that Doig studiously avoids the ugly. The loving brush strokes on temples, the meticulous detail of tufts of grass growing out of their tiles, the mounds of golden harvest drying on the square. The paintings capture Kathmandu before the rot set in: the texture of the fields, trees and hills the languid sky, harvests suffused in gold, the dreamlike quality of late afternoon light on Ganesh Himal framed in red-yellow farm houses and the near-impressionistic jumble of triangulated temple roofs. The paintings record for posterity the light and colours that struck the retina of an artist’s eye 25 years ago in Kathmandu.

On a rare clear evening these days when the smog does not envelop the Valley, you can still see what Desmond saw: the snow peaks to the north turning from silver to gold to lavender and the past still shines through. ●

Kunda Dixit

The Desmond Doig Exhibition
At the Siddhartha Art Galley, 4411122
22 November-6 December

Hardy

become an accomplished artist. Hardy has left behind books and paintings now locked in his room and it would be fitting if they were distributed to the Nepali friends who cared for him.

In his small rented room in Sanepa he spent time painting, puffing endlessly on cigarettes waiting for a job and a visa that never came. He was trying to work on a memoirs of the early days of aviation in Nepal.

Most of his foreign friends were not aware of his financial problems, his loneliness and physical suffering during the last years of his life. And it was his Nepali friends who cared for him towards the end. ●

See also:
Flying into the past with Hardy Furer, #24
Emil wick’s adventures in a Pilatus Porter, #7

HARDY PILOT: Hardy Furer pours over an airways map of Nepal in 2001 (*right*) and waving from his Pilatus ‘Alpha Whiskey’ over Nepal (*overleaf*).



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Chungi on the Chowrasta

DANIEL HABER in DARJEELING

Unlike earlier Darjeeling Carnivals, this year’s event seemed more geared to the local Darj crowd. It showcased local bands and musicians, with precious little for outside visitors.

Darjeeling’s Mall, Chowrasta, was packed shoulder to shoulder and visitors couldn’t move much. Sponsors Reliance India Mobile and other phone companies erected their oversized billboards which marred the view. It is bad enough that certain fast food outlets have created an architectural eyesore next to the Victorian-style Chalet Hotel in what was once termed the ‘Queen of the Hills’.

It’s a shame, really, that Chowrasta has been turned into mini Calcutta. With all the boisterous Bengali tourists and crowds of local youth milling around, Chowrasta during the 10-day Carnival was not a pleasant place.

Carnival organiser, Ajay Edwards, better known as the man behind Glenary’s restaurants and bakeries, recently led a delegation of Darjeeling businessmen to meet India’s Minister of Civil Aviation, Praful Patel who promised to allow international airlines to land in Bagdogra for tourists heading up to Darjeeling and Sikkim. Sounds like a golden opportunity for regional carriers such as Cosmic, if they pay their fuel bills.

There was one redeeming feature of Carnival 2005 and it had nothing to do with mobile phones and the blaring music. It was the simple, humble game of *chungi*—that quintessential Nepali low-tech ‘time pass’.

No one knows the origin of *chungi* in Nepal. Some say it may have come from East Asia as it is related to the Thai and Burmese foot-kick, wicker-ball games. But when I first arrived in Kathmandu in the early 1980s—well before satellite tv and even televisions for most people—before FM radios, wide-screen movies and mobiles, before internet, before democracy there was *chungi*. Boys in the quiet, traffic-less streets idly kicking a small ball of rubber bands, sometimes it seemed for hours. There was nothing else to do.

So, on a Sunday afternoon after the ‘Dogs Day Out’ event in which the proud owners of dogs paraded their pets (the winner was a Saint Bernard owned by the proprietor of Mayfair Hotel) the *chungi* competition began.

For some reason it was all boys, all of them local youths who it seemed had a lot of practice. The MC counted their kicks and disqualified them if they dropped the rubberband ball. The average count was about 40 or 50 kicks. Only two got over 100 but one 15-year-old dressed in a knit yellow, black and red Rasta cap and a jacket emblazoned ironically with ‘England’ (during the British colonial era no natives were allowed to set foot on the Chowrasta) paced himself and rhythmically kept kicking that aerial black rubber projectile into the air. When he passed 200 the crowd gasped and it was 268 kicks before he finally lost it.

The winner, one Sagar Roka, happily accepted his prize, a Darjeeling Carnival t-shirt and disappeared into the crowd.

The next event was a momo-eating contest. The carnival was supposed to close with fireworks and more loud music. But that’s not what I came to Darjeeling for. Call me quirky, even old-fashioned but I prefer the soft whooshing sound of the *chungi* and the whispering of the cryptomeria.

The Darjeeling I love is more about the tinkling temple bells of Mahakal Mandir atop the hill dubbed Dorje Ling—the place of the thunderbolt—with its rustling prayer flags. And somewhere below, the rustle of pines punctuated by the steam-whistle shriek of the toy train. ●



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The down-side-up map

Not everyone likes it when the south comes on top

Maps define the boundaries of our physical lives and give us inflexible notions of the spaces we inhabit. The national weather forecasts stop at our frontiers, the rivers flow into or out from terra incognita.

Meanwhile, territory lost long ago remains in the schoolbooks out of wounded pride, giving the population a false notion of the shape of the

SOUTHASIA BEAT
Kanak Mani Dixit



realm. Especially in a region of fuzzy historical boundaries such as Southasia, maps feed national chauvinism.

The map of Southasia has other peculiarities as well. The most distinctive aspect of the region is the protrusion of peninsular India, so that when you see Southasia you tend to see the outline of 'India'. The parts of the seashore defined by Pakistan's Makran coast westward from Karachi and the Sundarban delta of Bangladesh are non-descript by comparison.

For decades, the hands of cartographers have trembled as they traced the outer boundaries of historical Jammu and Kashmir, for fear of the disfiguring rubber stamp of some disdainful bureaucrat's assistant declaring, 'The boundaries as depicted in this map are neither correct nor authentic, by order of the Home Ministry of Blah'.

Our maps segregate not only the natural



landscape (the Thar on that side and Thar on this side, Sundarban on that side and Sundarban on this) but more significantly the communities on the ground. The Sindhi speaker is separated from Sindhi speaker and the Bangla from Bangla.

The Muslim is cut off from Muslim, the Vajrayana Buddhist from Vajrayana Buddhist. The fuzzy boundary that is the defining feature of Southasia since Gandharan times is anathema to the cartographers' craft, which demands sharp lines in a region where all that history offers is a grey zone where the societies meet in a penumbra.

Himal Southasian, the bimonthly regional magazine which seeks to be occasionally irreverent, some years ago commissioned a map that would turn our assumptions downside-up. Artist Subhas Rai rotated the existing projections by 180 degrees so Sri Lanka came out on top and the Himalaya underside. Rai spent three months meticulously working on the project, for it had to be accurate in all aspects, including place names, topographical features, transport networks and boundaries. (Download: www.himalmag.com/images/map_poster.jpg)

When the map went out, the instinctive reaction was for everyone to unfold it the usual way and stare at the upsidedown place names. Open-minded teachers of geography and political science used it to shake up students' worldviews. But the more common reaction was negative, as if the interpretation had dared challenge an article of faith.

AJNU professor of international relations, no less, confronted one of the map's perpetrators, demanding, "Why have you turned India upside down?!" Reply:

"Arreh madamji, dekhiye all of Southasia is upside down, not just your India." At the Delhi Book Fair, in what were the days of post-Kargil ultra-nationalistic fervour, the map was perceived as a slight to the Bharatiya nation. The bookstall attendants felt intimidated enough by the public reaction to pull the offering from the racks.

Unlike the indigenous Delhi-wallah, the South Indian visitor to the book fair was more inclined to accept the map, for putting the peninsula on top. But it was the Sri Lankans who were most pleased, happy to be heading the heap rather than trailing the edge of the Subcontinent. Residents of the town of Matara at the tip of the island's convexity welcomed a projection that put them at the uppermost tip.

Delhi's denizens, so used to being in the centre of things, decided that the 'right-side-up' representation relegated them to the netherworld. The fact that even here the Indian peninsula remains the dominant feature seemed not to wash with this north-Indian audience. The Madras journalist who saw the map for the first time, on the other hand, had a gleam in his eye.

All in all, the map has served to shake viewers' moorings just enough for them to begin to think about another world, another Southasia. If upside-down can be right-side-up, then as Faiz Ahmed Faiz said, perhaps the day will dawn when the downtrodden will rule the territories. Or words to that effect. ●

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Golf mega month

Lots of golf in coming weeks

I grew up playing golf at the Royal Nepal Golf Club and in those days, golf was about trying to win club level tournaments. The biggest accomplishment was to win the 'Club Championship', the most prestigious event of all, played off scratch (no handicap) in a matchplay format (one against one).

Back then, very rarely did anyone travel abroad to participate in international tournaments. Things changed in 1993 after Surya's international tournament commenced in Kathmandu. After this, Nepal's golf outlook changed dramatically for everyone involved with the sport, from professionals to general golfers, right up to those

developing golfing facilities. Just over 20 golfers have made this sport their profession. Likewise, the number of golfers have multiplied five-fold, hand-in-hand

many more golfing facilities are now available.

Spinal Injury Rehabilitations Centre Golf Tournament has certainly helped raise the level of golf in Nepal. We don't have many professional tournaments, so every pro golfer and even weekend golfers, spend the whole year in anticipation. Some wait to participate, some just want to witness it.

Even with such interest and enthusiasm, we have yet to see a Nepali winning. In my opinion, the lack of tournaments for professionals is a main reason that one of our own has not been able to come out tops.

Pro golfers in Nepal have very few opportunities to compete—hardly five tournaments in a year. This is just not enough for a person to consider making golf their profession. Compare this to the Indian professionals who have almost 30 major events a year to play in.



DEEPAK ACHARYA

BIRDIE: Gyanu Thapa receiving the prize for best putting at the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre Golf Tournament from Sonika Dahal at the Gokarna Resort on Saturday.

The result is that Indian standard of golf has grown tremendously and their players have been performing better every year. As expected, the Indian pros dominate at the Surya Nepal Masters.

To try and raise the Nepali professional from the position of the underdog to that of the contender, Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd has sponsored two Nepali professionals to compete in four tournaments in the Indian PGA tour before the Surya Masters. Right now Pashupati Sharma and Sabin Sapkota are pitting their skills against fellow professionals on the golf circuit.

For the rest of the professionals quite a bit of golf will be played in the coming weeks. From 1 to 3 December, the Surya Nepal Western Open will be played at the picturesque Himalayan Golf Course in Pokhara. The following week the Mercantile Classic will be played at the venue of the Surya Nepal Masters, The Gokarna Golf Club.

We are hoping these tournaments will boost local players, help fine tune their game and give them that overall sharper edge to succeed. We may just be fortunate this year and see a local professional win the country's biggest golfing event which will be played from 14-17 December 2005. ●

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.
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P.O. Box 19477

"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a woman with un-fair & not-so-lovely skin can be a heroni - as translated by UNACO, the United Nation's Assn. of Cartoonists)

The Adventures of HEROJIGette

HELLO. NAMASSTHAY!

by jesse gaton

At the Royal Enfield Rave our Heroni discovers that her new boyfriend, who works nights at a local NGO, just doesn't have the "sustainability" that she desires...

ALL NIGHT RAVE KE GARNE? WHATEVER.

But be a Heroni - and "Get This Party Started"

"I have a lot of boyfriends...Every country I visit, I have a different boyfriend. And I kiss them all."

~ Anna Kournikova ~ Russian Tennis Star, currently dating Enrique Iglesias.

Notice: Come to the 4th Ride and Rave this weekend @ The Last Resort - Call 4440462 - Seriously.

Strip #49 ♣ 2061 by jigme gaton - read. love. write.

All the Adventures can be seen at www.extreme-nepal.com ♣ #49 REPRINTED FROM THE VAST ARCHIVES AT WWW.EXTREME-NEPAL.COM ♣

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Virtual Mustang**, photographs by Susan M Griffith-Jones at Lajimpat Gallery Café, 25 November, 5.30 PM.
- ❖ **Around Annapurna** panorama photographs by Andreas Stimm until 27 November at Indigo Gallery. 4413580
- ❖ **Nature's Fantasy** based on Oriental art technique by Hare Ram Joju at Park Gallery, until 2 December. 4419353
- ❖ **Images of a Lifetime** featuring the works of the late Tej Bahadur Chitrakar at NAFA Balmandir, till 5 December.
- ❖ **The Desmond Doig Exhibition** featuring watercolors and drawings, until 6 December at Siddhartha Art Gallery. 4438979
- ❖ **Photographs** by Susan Griffiths Jones, until 7 December, Lajimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Rhythm of Forms and Colours** solo exhibition by Surendra Pradhan, at Buddha Gallery till 9 December. 4441689



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

- ❖ **Life Behind the Camera** by Diane Summers on 25 November, 9.30 AM, Shankar Hotel.
- ❖ **WTO and Hong Kong Ministerial**, 25 November 3PM at Martin Chautari.
- ❖ **Spanish Film Festival** at Russian Cultural Centre, 25-27 November
 - The Lovers of the Arctic Circle*, 25 November, 4PM.
 - The Spirit of the Hive*, 26 November, 3PM
 - Pellet El Bola*, 27 November, 3PM
- ❖ **Ride and Rage** bikers ride up to the Last Resort, 25-26 November. 4700525
- ❖ **Public Dog Training** at 1905 Sunday 27 November, Rs 150 per session. 10-12AM. 9841-334537.
- ❖ **Memo & Letter Writing at ELD** 28-30 November. 5555071
- ❖ **Reiki 1** by Elif Koksai 29 and 30 November at HBMC. 4414843
- ❖ **Jane Goodall Public Forum** at Patan Museum, 30 November at 4PM, no admission charge, seating limited to 250 people.
- ❖ **Mean Streets with De Niro and Scorsese** film festival at Lajimpat Gallery Café, till 30 November. 4428549
- ❖ **World AIDS Day** 1 December.
- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bajar**, 3 December at Hotel Hyatt Regency. Rs 100.
- ❖ **Variety Show** to raise funds for the earthquake victims of Kashmir. 3 and 4 December at Rato Bangala School and Dhokaima Café. 5522614

MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

- ❖ **Aavas Paleti** at Nepalaya R-sala 25 November, 5.30 PM
- ❖ **Traditional Newa Music Concert** by Tanani Bajan Khala from Jyapu Tole 27 November at Hotel Vajra. 4271545
- ❖ **Ramailo Saanjh** at Dwarika's with Maya Mantra 1 December. Rs 1000 per person, 7PM-10PM. 4479488
- ❖ **Winter Concert** at the British School, 10 December, 3.30 PM and 6PM.
- ❖ **JCS Quintet** at Moksh every Tuesday. 5526212
- ❖ **Unplugged** sessions with Strings, Jatra Saturday nights. 4256622
- ❖ **Live Music** at Juneli Bar, Hotel de l'Annapurna. 4221711
- ❖ **Live Jazz** by the pond at 1905, Kantipath. 4225272

FOOD

- ❖ **Thanksgiving Dinner** with free Irish Coffee, 24, 25 and 26 November at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse. 4700043
- ❖ **Culinary Journey** around the world in one day at Hyatt Regency 26 November.
- ❖ **The Sidewalk BBQ** with Shades of Blue, Wednesdays, Shangri-La. 4412999
- ❖ **Ciney and Par-e-jat** every Friday 7PM at Dwarika's.
- ❖ **Thanksgiving Dinner** at Kilroy's of Kathmandu 24, 25 and 26 November. 4250440
- ❖ **The Chimney Restaurant** Signature dishes at Hotel Yak and Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Jazz Gourmet** fine dining redefined at Hotel Shangri-La. 4412999

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge**, call for reservations. 4361500
- ❖ **Escape Kathmandu** at Shivapuri Heights Cottage. steve@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Junglewalks**, rafting, elephant rides all at Jungle Base Camp Lodge, Bardia. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
- ❖ **Conferences** at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675

Quest Entertainment

Deewane Huye Paagal begins as a sweet romance between cute boy-next-door Karan and the ravishing Tanya. When Tanya moves to Dubai, Karan's friend coaxes him to track her down. Karan enlists the aid of a deceptively handsome investigator, Rocky. But Rocky ends up falling in love with her at first sight. Meanwhile, Tanya's physically disabled friend Sanju also has a soft spot for her and tries thwarting Rocky's attempts at getting close to Tanya. The plot thickens when yet another unexpected party falls in love with Tanya, thus setting up a hilarious love pentagon.

Call 4442220 for show timings www.jainepal.com

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नपडी सुले छैन !

NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED

Every winter, be thankful we have the Himalaya to stop the cold air blowing down from Siberia. But the mountains also form a barrier for the inversion haze from the Gangetic plains, damming the dust when the wind is from the southwest as it has been all this week. Winds associated with a cyclone over the Bay of Bengal are the reason for this. But the plummeting temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley will also have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9AM next week, delaying morning flights. The weakening sun is further filtered by the haze, and this will bring the maximum temperature down to 21 degrees next week. The sky will continue to be cloudless, though, and December in the Valley will be rainless.

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श्री ५ को सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग



ANUP PRAKASH

PRINCELY GAZE: Crown Prince Paras chats with the vice-president of the Cricket Association of Nepal, Srinivas Rana, at the final match of the U-19 Asian Cricket Cup between Nepal and Malaysia, on Saturday.



KIRAN PANDAY

MOONIE MEET: Speaker of the House of Representatives Taranath Ranabhat deep in conversation with UML leader Madab Kumar Nepal on Tuesday during the International Peace Convocation at BICC organised by Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church.



KUMAR SHRESTHA/NEPALNEWS.COM

UNNATURAL: Former Commander-in-Chief, Satchit SJB Rana, at the Reporters Club on Wednesday, where he called the Maoist-party agreement "unnatural".



KIRAN PANDAY

NATURE MAN: Artist Hare Ram Joju with Korean Ambassador to Nepal Park Sang-Hoon at the opening of his art exhibit Nature's Fantasy at Park Gallery, Lajimpat last week.



KIRAN PANDAY

FREE FUTURE: In a novel advertising gimmick, Digi Plus studio chartered a bus service and drove recent TU graduates to their studio in Sundhara for free to have their pictures taken on Tuesday.

First Children's Bank, Unlimited



KESHAVA LAMICHHANE

Street children everywhere, including in Pokhara, live from their day-to-day earnings. Whatever they can scrounge, beg or earn they spend. There is nothing left for tomorrow.

Now, Pokhara's street kids have set up their own Bal Bikash Bank, where they are depositing savings so that they have a tomorrow.

They are not just the depositors but also the owners, the board of directors and the CEO of this unique bank. The boys and girls convince other children to deposit money and maintain the accounts. Now, they are even thinking of paying interest and re-investing and giving out loans. All this gives a new meaning to microcredit: little credit for little people.

Two child rights groups, Balhitkari Pariyojana Nepal and Balshram Unmulan Karyakram, are supporting the venture and say the idea is to give the children something to work towards in the future.

Started in August with 26 depositors, the number has grown to 85 and the total capital deposited is Rs 24,000. Twelve-year-old Sunil KC, a depositor who also serves as bank manager, tells us: "We are

thinking of investing the money in some worthwhile venture."

"Some of the children earn more than Rs 100 a day working on the streets," says Bina Silwal of the Balhit Pariyojana, "but we have guidelines so that children have to reveal where they got their money from."

Most of the children earn their money scavenging plastic, paper and metal from garbage piles and selling it to recycling companies. Earlier, they used to buy cigarettes and fritter away the money. Now they come

running to put the cash in the bank. Says 14-year-old Milan Nepali: "this way I know my money is safe and no one will steal it."

This Dasain some of the children withdrew money and took their earnings home to their families. Marvels Parsuram Khawas of the Samayabaddha Karyakram: "When they know how much money they have in the bank, I have seen a new sense of purpose and a new hope in the children."

● Durga Humagain in Pokhara



हॉन्सुस् त मज्जाले — हॉन्सुस् —

Close Up's vitamin flouride system gives you strong, white teeth and fresher breath. So go ahead, get the confidence to laugh out loud.

NLL/80028/05

Being fair to the unfair sex

This week's column is a Special Advertorial Supplement sponsored by Pale Face™ brand fairness cream for men. Registered Trade Mark, Imitators Will Be Persecuted.

Now that multinational cosmetic companies have finally recognised the potentially lucrative market for their lotions and potions among Nepali maledom, we can safely say that this country is well on its way towards true gender equality that has eluded us for aeons. Finally, we men will not be discriminated against any more on grounds of sex—especially when one of us has a headache.

UNDER MY HAT
Kunda Dixit



As our womenfolk become more and more empowered and self-reliant and less and less dependent on various beauty products, it is up to us boys to take up the cudgels to preserve our craggy good looks and sturdy masculine complexion from the ravages of time and the Earth's gravitational pull. (Editor's note: Make sure 'cudgel' isn't a rude word and report back to me immediately.)

After fulfilling the onerous duty of holding up the sky for most of human history, we men can now safely bequeath to the womenfolk the responsibility of holding up not just their half of the sky, but also our half. This will free up our free time so we men can engage in various pursuits that we have previously neglected like powdering our noses and plucking our armpit hair.

Which is why it is a landmark event when a beauty product conglomerate decides after its astounding success in the challenging sub-Saharan African market that the Nepali male consumers are also mature enough to use its White Man's Burden™ brand fairness cream.

After all, recent surveys have shown that 80 percent of the men in the subcontinent have had to sneak into their wives' dressing tables to steal fairness creams meant for women. (The other 20 percent dressed up as women and bought the cream from their neighbourhood drug store, according to reliable reports.)

Bio-engineers who designed the cream said at a press conference in Kathmandu this week that since us men tend to be more thick-skinned and more hirsute, female creams were just not strong enough for us which is why the oinkment was not yielding desirable results.

Hence this new industrial-grade White Elephant™ brand skin bleacher and exfoliator designed especially for he-men like us. That is actually made up of a mixture of concentrated white enamel paint with a paraffin-based emulsion fixer. Directions for use: apply liberally on the affected dark areas twice a day after meals. And, voila, within just two days you won't be dark and ugly anymore, you will be fair and handsome like Michael Jackson.

So, what are you waiting for? Visit your neighbourhood paint shop today and buy yourself a tube of our extra-strength male-only Albino Crème-de-la-Crème™. It's only fair that society takes up the cudgels to be fair to the unfair sex. ●



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