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KUMAR SHRESTHA

**FOOTBALL**  
LIKE HOT CAKES: Porters carry tv sets at Indrachok on Thursday. With a month of World Cup games set to start in Germany on Friday, shops can't keep up with the demand.  
**World Cup Special p8-11**

# Goodies

## India gives Nepal NRs 16 billion in aid and debt write-offs

KANAK MANI DIXIT in NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had three main points on his agenda as he landed in New Delhi on Tuesday evening:

- Firm up a comfortable economic package to stabilise government and kick-start reconstruction
- Reassure Indian authorities of the stability of the seven party alliance government
- Address evident Indian nervousness about the Maoists

The package that the Indian side offered in talks with Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat was unparalleled: waiver of NRs 1.6 billion of pending payment for military hardware, rescheduling Nepal Oil Corporation's Rs 5

billion debt to the IOC, a Rs 7.3 billion development package plus doubling of the amount set aside for local projects under the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu.

**Editorial** p2  
**Bhai Bhai**

**Artha Beed's Economic Sense** p5  
**Leveraging India**

At a time when most Western donors are in a watch-and-wait mode, India also offered a nearly Rs 2 billion outright grant in cash. "We have never provided such budgetary support to any other country," a senior South Block official told us.

**Continued p4**



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**Times** nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll # 301

**Q. Should the House revive the local bodies?**

Total votes: 5,062

Yes 45.7%  
No 51.3%  
Don't know 2.4%

Weekly Internet Poll # 302. To vote go to: www.nepalimes.com

**Q. Should parliament be dissolved as the Maoists want?**

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# A secular Hinduism

If there is to be a monarchy it must be separated from religion

## BHAI BHAI

Listening to the rabble rousing harangues in parliament this week warning Prime Minister Koirala not to sellout to India we wondered where we had heard it all before.

Of course, it was in 1991, 1995 and 2000 before Koirala went to pay his respects at the Delhi Darbar each time he became prime minister during previous tenures. (See picture.)

To be sure, parliament has reason to be concerned. Koirala has always been notorious for not consulting. Some leaders of the seven-party alliance actually found out from the media of his plan to cancel his check-up in Bangkok and go check out Delhi instead. And, after all, the man ok'd the Tanakpur barrage in 1991 even though it needed ratification by two-thirds of the house. (Later the UML went ahead and ok'd Mahakali in similar fashion.)

Since India did behind-the-scenes spadework in the recent political transformation in Nepal, there is apprehension it will now demand a pound of flesh from a beholden Koirala. That's all right as parlour talk, but to actually believe it would be to put too little faith in our leaders and our own sense of self-worth as Nepalis.

Why are we so insecure especially after a dramatic regime change through non-violent people power? Are we so feckless and fickle to fritter away our natural resources so easily? Why do we have to always prove our nationalism by baiting India? Let's start defining ourselves by what we are rather than what we aren't.

The national economy needs immediate first aid, and here India's five-year budgetary support plan will help. But for long-term sustainability and growth India and Nepal need to work constructively on large-scale natural resource collaboration so we can benefit from India's blistering growth.

Perhaps it is the memory of Kosi and Gandaki that fuels Nepali suspicions of Indian intent, so it means future projects have to be more equitable.

Parliament has been decisive in restructuring the state, removing the raison d'être for the Maoists to keep to their violent path. No wonder the comrades want it dissolved. And that is why the house shouldn't be bogged down playing political ping pong, for instance, over who was or wasn't included in the prime minister's entourage.

It needs to be more concerned with prodding the government to reach health care to the poorest, get the school system going again, ensure good governance and implementation. We don't need permanent peace for that.

The problem in Nepal has never been money, but spending it efficiently. Let's get over our insecurities for once, and get to work.

To those agitating against the declaration of Nepal as a secular state, prepare to be left behind by logic and history. You may think you're playing a patriotic and faithful game but you're just cynical. Here's why.

HERE AND THERE  
Daniel Lak



To begin with, there's no such thing as a Hindu kingdom. Even when such entities existed thousands of years ago, there was no agreement on whether they were legitimate or not. Various tracts used to justify the absurd notion that a Shah king was an avatar of a god were misquoted or deliberately misused. Respected Hindu scholars say the kings of early Hindudom were entreated to be just and wise, *like gods*, not to be gods themselves.

In those days of wandering mendicants like Buddha, Mahavira and others, a king who claimed actual godhood would

have been laughed out of court. Even Ashoka, no shrinking violet, only referred to himself as 'blessed of the gods'.

Very few people in Nepal know that much of what has passed for palace-sponsored Hinduism here was invented by the Ranas or members of the same courtier class, cherry picked from a heterodox array of traditions that can only be described in and of themselves as secular.

A secular religion? Surely not. But it is so. Hinduism is a creed, not a faith per se. The Mahant of the Tulsi Ghat temple in Varanasi, a saint called Veer Bhadra Mishra, once told me Hindus didn't agree on any aspect of their faith save the sanctity of the family and the responsibility of individuals for their own salvation.

"We have so many schools of thought," he said, "some believe in millions of gods, some just a few, some in one God and others in no gods at all. We have atheist Hindus. Who's to say whether anyone is more correct than anyone else." Then, true to the notion of individual salvation, Mahant-ji slipped into the Ganges and took his holy bath. Tolerance is the only way to approach life under such beliefs.

Nepali Hinduism calcified under state patronage. A culturally sanctioned way of life in India that adapted and served peoples' needs for millennia became a tool of caste oppression and exclusion in Nepal. Pretending to be a force for unity, the Hinduism encouraged by the Nepali elite was largely a way to divide and rule the diverse masses.

It's no accident that the number of Hindus in the country declined in relative terms in the last census. That's because the government stopped simply

designating people by religious community and asked them what their faith ways. Magars, Tamangs and others were no longer 'automatic Hindus'.

None of the Hindu reform movements of the past have found root in Nepal, given the role of the state authorities in determining the official stature of religion. What would the Ranas have done, confronted by Swami Vivekananda or Gandhi? In India, Hindus survived Ashoka's Buddhism, centuries of Muslim overlordship and the British Evangelical Christian mission to 'civilise' them. More than surviving, Hinduism flourished. It still does. As India becomes prosperous and more modern, its people are flocking to temples and worshipping as never before.

Hinduism may similarly become relevant and supportive of change in the new Nepal. First of all, caste needs to be openly debated and discrimination ended. Some sort of affirmative action for dalits and others is essential. The status of women is a national shame in many parts of this country, particularly rural Hindu women. Their religious beliefs, and those of their husbands, have kept them in bondage. No faith justifies slavery. Finally, the endless spectacles of Hindu ritual need to be removed from state functions, including those involving the king, and put back in temples and peoples' homes where they belong.

So here's to secularism. And to Hinduism, whether Shaivite, Vaishnavite, Brahminical or any other kind. Not to mention Bonpo, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Animism, Agnosticism, Atheism and others. Most of all, here's to tolerance that can only take root when the land itself is truly united in diversity. ●



19 JULY 2000, #1

# Gross national happiness in Pokhara

Equality in politics and equity in economics are two sides of the same coin

POKHARA—Here we are in the place with the highest annual rainfall in Nepal, and yet the wet streets are slick and rainwashed. In Kathmandu they are muddy and potholed.

The fact that Pokhara can be spic and span proves that the reason Kathmandu is so scruffy is because it wallows in its own filthy abundance. In the evening, a magical monsoon puts Lakeside into an upbeat mood as a pink sun peeps out of the edge of a cloud. Even the rainy season is photogenic in Pokhara.

Conversations in Kathmandu are laden with scepticism and cynicism. Here, the air is fresher and residents optimistic. They sit around in Chiple Dhunga where the old pipal tree used to be to discuss people power. The public sphere is vibrant and forward-looking.

At the Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry the mood is upbeat. Members of the Young Entrepreneurs Society (YES!) who have been to the world's best

universities and chosen not to live in the capital have organised the program. The room is full of enthusiastic participants.

Everybody believes something needs to be done without delay. Nobody is sure who needs to do what and when. In that sense, the title of the dialogue ('What Next?') turns out to be apt. But participants are reassured that their optimism isn't completely unfounded.

Parliament's political proclamations were radical but it has been silent on an economic program. Dr Mahat's White Paper deplores the waywardness of the royal past and lists the gory details of the nation's financial woes. But instead of coming up with ideas, the good doc falls back on a knee-jerk call for budgetary support which we suppose his boss is going to get in New Delhi this week.

The government is desperately waiting for the economic package from New Delhi to bail the country out. But a sovereign parliament has yet to come up with a strategy to guide the government's budget making exercise. Surely a body bold

enough to declare the country secular and untouchability-free is competent enough to announce at least short-term measures to address the economic crisis?

On the other side of the negotiating table, the Maoists have even fewer ideas. Their jargon and slogans are shamelessly populist. In Marxist discourse, economics is politics and vice versa. Now that the rebels have committed themselves to a peaceful transition does it imply that they have also given up their rigid stance on class struggle to accept socially responsible market competition? Economic policies of Prachanda Path are badly in need of further clarification from their proponents.

A national consensus has emerged on the inevitability of a constituent assembly to frame a fresh compact of the people. The unanimity is based upon the assumption that the process and product of constitution-making will forge new unity among the people free of regional, ethnic, cultural and gender biases that pervaded all our past endeavours.

But social and political rights in the absence of economic justice is often the precursor to further upheaval. Equality in politics and equity in economics are two sides of the same coin. For stability, one can't do without the other.

We have begun to address the political inequality between the power elite and the people, and presumably a future constituent assembly will wrap up that issue. But who is going to work on economic inequality between Nepal's haves and have-nots?

Nepal is the most unequal country in the world's most unequal region. Bangladesh's Gini Coefficient is 0.34, India is at 0.42—Nepal is a stark 0.53. Four-fifth of Nepalis are subsistence farmers.

Unlike the profiteers of the Birganj-Simra industrial belt, Pokhara's young entrepreneurs are aware that they need to do much more to gain the trust and respect of society.

If eggs laid by the golden goose of economic growth are not shared equitably, those left out will be so hungry they will eat the goose itself. ●

STATE OF THE STATE  
C K Lal



**LETTERS**

**GOOD EXAMPLE**

I am not convinced by Pravin Rana's apple-with-apple comparison of the military in conflict places with Nepal's own (Guest Column, 'Loving to hate the NA', #300). The United States in World War II is hardly to be compared with Nepal and as a Colombian myself I dare say that \$6.9 billion a year spent for the military only shows how much money, not to mention lives, can be wasted in a war.

That amount is only possible because Colombia is, after Israel, the second largest recipient of US money for military purposes, directed in principle to combat the drugs trade. Apart from other strings attached to it, Colombia is completely dependent on that money for any improvement in security the government wants to achieve. In spite of it all, the drug business has not decreased and the military is implicated in gross human rights violations. Although some improvement in security has been achieved by militarising roads and parts of the country in recent years, the conflict goes on and the country remains one of the most violent in the world.

A peaceful way out is not in sight, at least for the next four years, since the president and the people who recently re-elected him still believe in a military solution. The guerrillas have ruled out any dialogue during his regime.

After watching with pain for the last eight years Nepal follow in the steps of Colombia, the recent developments in this country are, as my enthusiastic mails to friends in Colombia can give testimony, the most encouraging political changes I have ever witnessed. Now it is Nepal's example which has to be followed and not the other way round.

**Karin Eichelkraut, Dobhighat**

● Re: Pravin Rana's Guest Column ('Loving to hate the NA', #300). He has rightly conceded that hatred for the (R)NA is rife among intellectuals, civil society, media and the common people. But that it stems from their ignorance is anything but true. In fact, it is the army's own misdeeds that are to blame. Even though Mr Rana touts the NA as a messiah of democracy, I wonder how he analyses the royal coup, which would have never been possible without the military backing it to the hilt. The NA, notwithstanding the cosmetic change in its name, remains unaltered in its essence. It wasn't



'restrained' during the pro-democracy movement, soldiers opened fire at peaceful demonstrations in Pokhara, Jhapa, Banepa and Gulariya, killing and seriously injuring many. The claim that Nepal is not yet heavily militarised compared to other countries is premised on a spurious paradigm because it's not the number of arms or army per se but its use that is crucial. The incidents of Nuwakot, Belbari and Chisapani barrack, besides many others, are not just isolated events but a vivid reflection of the modus operandi of the NA that can be considered anything but 'professional'. Maoists certainly can't be sanctimonious either, but redeeming the NA just because it was fighting an insurgency is not acceptable.

**Subhash Paudel, Institute of Medicine, Maharajganj**

● I do not agree with CK 'Pundit' Lal giving the benefit of doubt ('Fear of the future', #300) to our anarchic youth. If you act like an anarchist you are an anarchist - it is as simple as that. I agree that there is a need to create jobs for youths but forget pursuits that do not offer monetary benefits, they will not be attractive enough. The problem arises as Nepal's labour law is quite unfriendly for investors and this is made much worse by the Maoists' recent demands in Birganj. No sane person would ever think of investing in such an environment.

The proposed amendment to the labour act by the 'royalist' government was more industry-friendly and could have done magic. But, unfortunately, the 'new' government chose to throw the baby along with the bath

water. Short sighted as it was, they chose to slaughter the goose for the sake of one meal.

**Armugam Ananta, Jawlakhel**

● The leadership of the insurgent revolution has repeatedly declared its acceptance of any outcome of the constituent assembly, even a u-turn back to absolute monarchy. It has also clarified that a competitive multiparty system is not similar to the party system in western democracies—but in accordance with the socialist republic established by Prachanda Path. This is the latest version of militant Marxism-Leninism-Maoism enriched by the Latin American experience of Peru and Nicaragua. If the seven-party alliance understands competitive multiparty system differently, the implementation of the 12-point agreement may face serious confusion. Besides, the performance of the honourable members of the House of Representatives in the past 15 years has never been very rosy. The common people on the basis of their representatives' performance may not be comfortable entrusting them with their destiny. Instead, a fully new constitution jointly drafted by the parties and the Maoist leadership with the expert advice of the UN Office of the Commissioner on Human Rights and ratified by the common people would be the quickest, simplest and most risk-free road ahead. We thank you for your support to the people of Nepal in their struggle for peace, happiness and freedom.

**Ravi Manandhar, Kuleswor**

● Re: your editorial 'From theocracy to democracy' (#300). Everyone has been saying that because of the recent changes the king has lost. On the contrary, it has presented King Gyanendra a golden opportunity to redeem himself in the public eye. If he sincerely sticks to his new duties and accepts the outcome of the constituent assembly polls, people will be willing to forgive him his past wrong deeds and he can go down in the history of Nepal as a prominent personality. The choice is his: does he want to be remembered as a tyrant or a statesman?

**Sagar Sharma, email**

● Thank God, we still have people like Chitra Lekha Yadav who do not believe that you need power and position to be a leader. ('Still speaking for women', #299) I salute you, Ms Yadav.

**Sandhya Sharma Amatya, email**

**STARS**

I'm glad to see people like Kedar Badu keeping up the good work in Nepal so astronomy is relevant to the people despite the political crisis ('The stars' stars', #300). There is a lot astronomers can do to work for peace and understanding much as he is doing in Nepal.

**Mike Simmons, California USA**

● After the Indonesian earthquakes, it is clear that the threat of an earthquake must be taken seriously by all media in Nepal. Every school must run awareness programs and the government must not ignore this natural threat. We ignored them in the past and regretted it. It is not if but when the next big one will come. Awareness today will help save lives tomorrow.

**Shradha Mukhiya, email**

● Kunda Dixit should stop writing Under My Hats, we now have parliament to entertain us. ('All the hearsay that's fit to print', #300).

**Gyan Subba, email**

**LETTERS**

Nepali Times welcomes 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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# A new beginning for Indo-Nepal relations



**TRAVELLING ROYAL:** Girija Prasad Koirala on board flight RA 217 to New Delhi on Tuesday.

Indian side had put up the 42-member delegation from a newly democratic Nepal.

Aside from immediate aid and debt write-offs, the Nepali delegation has also discussed hydropower projects to meet Nepal's own urgent demand. There is hope Nepal can build on this for joint river projects in future. Full details are to be unveiled in a joint communiqué on Friday, and at press time New Delhi hadn't said no to waiving a four percent countervailing duty that India places on Nepali products, which Nepali business has been seeking.

India has asked for a list of Nepali manufacturers, so third country products aren't fobbed off as export to India. Bangladesh has reportedly also approached India for similar consideration which is said to have put Delhi in a bind.

The South Block official conceded that India was trying to be less prescriptive in its relationship with Nepal, with the promised assistance to be used according to Nepal's defined priorities in highways, rural infrastructure, public health and education. Knowing of Kathmandu's sensitivities and the transitional nature of the present government, the Indian side resisted attempts by Nepali officials to ink

in reference to hydropower projects.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anand Sharma and Man Mohan Singh's National Security Adviser MK Narayanan are known to have expressed concern about the Maoists in separate meetings with Koirala. "The Indians seem nervous about the rebels being seen to be at par with the state," one Nepali official told us. "Disunity within the seven alliance can only help the Maoists."

Indeed, a Ministry of External Affairs official also confirmed that this was his government's position on the rebels. "The seven party alliance government must deal with the Maoists from a position of strength so that the rebels move towards decommissioning of arms and a free and fair election to the constituent assembly. This process must be accelerated if peaceful politics is to be consolidated in the districts," he said.

New Delhi, however, remained firmly against any kind of United Nations facilitation of peace talks between the government and the Maoists. It would prefer to see the United Nations as observer rather than monitor of the constituent assembly elections. However, Indian officials conceded that the UN had the expertise and credibility required for the 'management of arms' before the elections.

The Maoist leadership is anxious for the

release of more than 130 of its comrades presently in custody in India, some of them senior central committee members. But Delhi didn't seem to be in any great hurry to go down this road. Said one Indian official, "We see the rebels in jail as a bargaining tool that the government of Nepal needs during the negotiations."

"When asked to decide, India will of course side with the political parties," explained Indian political scientist and Nepal expert SD Muni. "New Delhi wants the Maoists to be mainstreamed but how this is to be done is up to Nepal's political parties. Girija Prasad Koirala is powerful today like never before and it his responsibility to ensure that the parties in his alliance do not complicate the peace process."

The enormous weight put by the Nepali side on Koirala's New Delhi trip and the extreme sensitivity to what the Indian side has to say is indicative of the unfinished Nepali agenda of building a competent, independent India policy.

The hope is that the self-confidence exhibited by the Nepali people during the April Uprising will also translate into Kathmandu's assertive engagement with New Delhi. Over the decades and till today, this engagement has been marked by two extremes: knee-jerk anti-Indianism and supplication. ●

from p1

KANAK MANI DIXIT

India attached great importance to the visit as evidenced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh taking the unprecedented step of coming to the airport to greet Koirala on Tuesday.

He told a visibly touched Koirala that he could not do less for one of Asia's "seniormost statesmen". But Indian media was distracted by the case of young Rahul Mahajan's run-in with cocaine and champagne to pay much attention.

Severely weakened by a failing right lung, 84-year-old Koirala was mostly bound to the Imperial Hotel where the



KIRAN PANDAY

## Here comes the rain

### Mains dry? Tubewell exhausted? Water tanker too expensive? Try rainwater harvesting

cup of tea made with rainwater harvested from the roof of his office.

Harvesting rainwater is simple. You collect it from the roof, filter it using a simple screen, collect the water in a tank, purify it and then use it for washing, cleaning, watering the garden and even drinking if you purify it properly.

Installing a simple harvesting system in a private house costs as little as Rs 3,000. The amount of water collected depends on the rainfall and the surface on which it lands. With Kathmandu's rainfall and a roof collection area of 100 sq m, a household can collect 128 cu m of water annually—more than enough for a five-person family. The only catch: you need a tank to store all that water.

Kathmandu gets an average of 1,600mm of rain a year. But 80 percent of this falls in the three monsoon months and much of it goes to waste. But with underground supplies being sucked dry by tubewells and shrinking of open spaces that help to recharge underground water, alternatives are needed.

In fact, rainwater harvesting can even help to recharge the ground water supply. Collected water can be drained into a soak pit made from layers of sand, gravel and charcoal (considered the best purifiers and filters). Water collected this way will automatically seep underground,

recharging ground water.

The Ministry of Physical Planning and Works is now finalising its urban water supply policy which aims to ensure that new housing developments include rainwater harvesting. "It could be difficult to make it mandatory but we are trying to

create awareness about the advantage of rainwater harvesting," says joint secretary Purna Das Shrestha.

In fact, rainwater collection is not something fashionable environmentalists do, it has become a necessity for survival in Kathmandu. ●

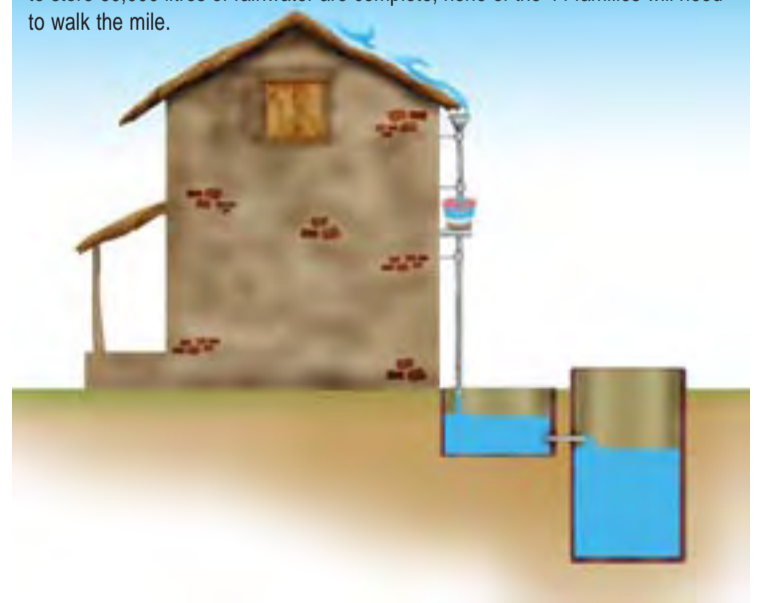
### Where it has worked

Rainwater harvesting systems have already been installed in various school buildings, campuses, housing complexes and even government departments (see pic left). And everywhere, it has been heaven-sent.

The NGO Forum for Urban Water Sanitation has even trained plumbers who will come and fix the pipes in your house for a minimum charge. All you have to do is call 2042122.

Shuvatara School installed a rainwater collection system in 2004 at a cost of Rs 50,000. The four tanks can collect 10,000 litres. "We've been using rainwater for everything," says Mohan Niraula, the ecology and environment teacher who built the system.

Residents of a housing complex recently built on the outskirts of Kirtipur for squatters removed from the banks of the Bishnumati have to journey to fetch water from a communal tap in Kirtipur, one mile away. But once three large tanks to store 60,000 litres of rainwater are complete, none of the 44 families will need to walk the mile.



BILASH RAI

### ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

One of the biggest ironies of life here in the world's most water-rich nation is the scarcity of safe drinking water for the capital's thirsty population.

The Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC) can meet less than half the capital's daily demand of 220 million litres (mlt). The corporation can only meet 165 mlt in the wet season and 100 mlt during the dry season. So most people still get their water from wells dug ages ago, stone water spouts, tube wells that pull water from underground reservoirs and tankers that fill up at streams on the outskirts of the capital and

deliver close to home.

But traditional water sources are endangered as the Valley's demand for water grows by two percent each year. Of the roughly 34 ponds in Patan, only 11 remain. Visit the 381 water spouts, or hittis, in the valley and you'll see water squirting from maybe a handful of them. Tubewells have gone dry. The only project to augment the Valley's water supply, Melamchi, is delayed and at least 10 years away. What do we do till then?

The only answer: start collecting rainwater. "Purified properly, rainwater is perfectly safe for all kinds of purposes, even drinking," says Prakash Amatya of Forum for Urban Water Sanitation, handing us a

## Balancing migration

Migration can both hurt and help developing countries, said a report released this week by the United Nations. "It is for governments to decide whether more or less migration is desirable," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the introduction to the report, *International Migration and development*. "Our focus in the international community should be on the quality and safety of the migration experience and on what can be done to maximise its development benefits." Annan proposed a standing forum of all 191 UN member states where governments could share ideas and best practices related to migration and its links to global development. People living outside their home countries numbered 191 million in 2005—115 million in developed countries and 75 million in the developing world. Developing countries earn roughly \$167 billion a year in money repatriated by migrant workers. Remittances contributed 11.7 percent of Nepal's GDP in 2004, says the report.

## International album

Nepal's rock headliners 1974AD will release their seventh album *On Air*, at a concert in Dresden, Germany on 17 June, the first time that a Nepali album has been released internationally. The event is part of the band's upcoming tour of Germany and Dubai in partnership with PartyNepal.com. 1974AD will play in various German cities 16-18 June and from 22 June till 1 July will perform for Nepalis living in Germany and Belgium before flying to Dubai for two shows.

## Unions in the movement

Eighty-five leaders and activists of the General Federation of Nepali Trade Unions (GEFONT) were arrested during April's people's movement, according to a new GEFONT report — *Nepali Trade Unions in the Loktantrik Movement*. Twenty-five GEFONT members were injured by bullets and 338 others in clashes with security forces. "The Nepali trade union movement stood against the royal takeover from the very beginning. Workers embarked on a great procession in the country's major cities on 1 May 2005, the first such event after the takeover. This was an opportunity for the Nepali people to gain confidence," says the document.

### NEW PRODUCTS



**ECO-TIME:** Japanese watchmaker Citizen has opened a showroom on the first floor of Ratna Plaza, New Road. Called 'First Citizen' the showroom will feature Citizen's *Eco Drive* model, which runs on light energy.

**JOLLY TASTES:** Gorkha Brewery has launched Nepal's first shandy and lemonade drinks, Jolly Shandy and Jolly Lemonade. Jolly Shandy is a mix of lemonade and beer with an effective alcohol content of below 1 percent. Jolly Lemonade is a non-alcoholic, thirst quencher with added Vitamin C. It is priced at Rs 25 per bottle while Jolly Shandy sells for Rs 35 for a 330 ml bottle.



# Leveraging India

## Our neighbour is an opportunity not a threat

**B**y the time this article is printed, innumerable column centimetres would have been expended discussing the PM's visit to India: how it was a sell out, how it compromised our integrity and sovereignty, etc. We have been doing this for the past 50 years and will continue to do so for another 50, or until we start seeing our neighbour in a new light.

**ECONOMIC SENSE**  
Artha Beed



Let's start by examining our approach. We look to India the way a school kid approaches a parent for pocket money. In our eyes, every India visit is about our leaders carrying an empty jute bag across the border to be filled up. We never see India as a partner nation. We never think to tell its leaders: "You need energy desperately and we have plenty of hydropower. Let us see if we can work together." No, we want India to dole out projects as it does for Bhutan, but we want to keep our self-respect at the same time.

The fact that the prime minister's entourage does not include a water resources minister is actually a shock. In the past, we have negotiated refugee issues without having a foreign minister and look where that landed us. Fifteen years of mistakes but we do not want to learn from them. If tiny Laos can benefit from its powerful neighbour Thailand, why can't Nepal benefit from India?

Our fixed exchange rate and

open border are to Nepal's advantage. The former lends stability to our macro-economic indicators but it will be interesting to watch how long India will want to keep the border open. There is a potential for Nepal to become a Mexico to India's United States, with border fences and migrants risking their lives to cross over. Instead, we need to leverage the open border

Why do we only look to India when we need to be bailed out, politically and economically, without taking into account our strengths and potential?

Rather than asking for cash handouts that would be chewed up in the cogwheels of the bureaucracy and shrouded by political cobwebs, it would be more profitable for Nepal to push Indians to invest here. Many



that allows the two nations' human resources to move freely. Remember, it was this border that absorbed the impact of the insurgency as thousands fled south in search of jobs and security.

If the world is now seeing India as a major partner in global growth, why is Nepal shy to elevate itself to partner status? Look at our advantages: the markets of north and northeast India are better served from Nepal than from India's south. We possess a young, educated workforce as the basis of our human capital and Nepal provides an easier transit to China than India's existing options.

millionaires south of our border are hungry for success and recognition. In today's India, a deal worth less than \$100 million is not even noticed but an Indian entrepreneur with \$10 million in his pocket can be a big wheeler-dealer in Nepal. We need to revise our laws and institutional framework to encourage such investments.

Instead of spitting venom about the great Indian design, isn't it time that we followed the rest of the world and started to build our partnership with India, and China? If we neglect this task and continue to brood over our shared past, future generations of Nepalis will not forgive us. ●

# "We want to make sure there is no slippage"



**Herve Jouanjean, deputy director-general Asia and Latin America at the European Commission in Brussels, was in Kathmandu last week. He spoke to**

**Nepali Times about Europe's views on the recent political transition here.**

**Nepali Times: How do you evaluate Nepal's People's Movement of April 2006?**

**Herve Jouanjean:** Very positively. The problem is that the degree of information available to the average citizen in Europe. From the media, the European public knows that the people were fed up with the royal regime, that the seven party alliance started a people's movement and that the king retreated under pressure. The public is much less aware of the intricacies within this general scenario, including the role of the Maoists in making the movement successful.

**What are the challenges ahead?**

All the energy has now to be put into the process of peace and reconciliation. The people of Nepal have said that they want a political resolution and everyone must support this 100 percent. The government is made up of some very astute politicians who have gone into this with their eyes wide open. They know the risks and have evaluated the challenge. They know how to play poker, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the partners. This is a dangerous game but what else can you do when a force that has been underground for 10 years says that it is ready to talk?

**Are you confident they can resolve their differences?**

I look at the wisdom of the Nepali people, who have told their politicians to go ahead in the dialogue with the Maoist rebels knowing there is no military solution. At the same time, this wisdom will not be well served if the elections to be held in the future are not free and fair.

The European Union represents one of the finest examples of reconciliation and reconstruction of modern times. Despite so many deaths, the enemies of the Second World War learnt to courageously work together. We learnt to sit across the table and have dialogue, which led to reconciliation and reconstruction.

**How do you propose to help Nepal now?**

After the royal coup of 1 February 2005, we suspended all assistance except in the humanitarian arena, including assistance to UNHCR and the Office of the High

Commissioner on Human Rights. We provide fully 80 percent of the assistance for the OHCHR. The Commission has now decided to resume all assistance so about 20 million euros halted in the pipeline will immediately begin to flow. And after 1 January 2007, you can expect a new phase of program assistance for Nepal. We will watch the peace and democracy restoration process closely to make sure there is no slippage. If everything goes well, then we will bring forth an extensive new package of EC assistance for Nepal, which will seek to target rural areas.

**What if there is slippage?**

If, for example, the Maoists do not cooperate on the path to peace and democracy, we will be forced to reconsider the support promised after January 2007. This will also be true of other donors, I believe.

**What is your level of confidence in Nepal's future?**

My answer is simple—let us do it, let us move ahead with the best of expectations. Among the politicians there is a roadmap and a political vision. However, we are not blind to the fact that there are so many complex details to be managed. This includes demobilisation, decommissioning of arms, rehabilitation of the violence-affected population and reconciliation. The rebel fighters will have to be rehabilitated as well, for they will not easily go back to the village. At the Commission, we have experience with this kind of situation in Latin America and in Aceh.

# “Make Nepal the Switzerland of Asia”

Interview with Janardan Sharma (Comrade Prabhakar), deputy commander of the Maoist western division, by Kiran Pokhrel on Radio Sagarmatha's 'Aja ka Kura', 3 June

**Radio Sagarmatha: What is your troop strength?**

**Comrade Prabhakar:** We have seven divisions at present, this is our national army. At the local level there are hundreds of thousands of militia.

**How about regular guerrillas?**

This is an internal matter. It is not necessary to give you the exact figure. You can calculate yourself from the fact that we have seven divisions. What I can say is that we have enough strength to challenge the royal army.

**When will you declare your exact troop strength and your weapons?**

When Comrade Prachanda is involved in negotiations and when the subject of arms management comes up, headquarters will announce it.

**Would you include your militia under a future arms management agreement?**

It can be done separately from the PLA because it is not part of our main force.

**Are you trying to hide your true strength?**

No, we don't need to do that. It is not our intention to hide true numbers to hatch another conspiracy. We are trying to move towards a democratic republic as per the wishes of the people and that is what our party and our headquarters are involved in under the leadership of Comrade Prachanda. Guns aren't as important as ideas. We amassed weapons with our ideas. We started from zero weapons.

**So how many weapons do you have?**

I don't need to answer that either. This much I can say: we have captured some from the army and some we manufacture ourselves.

**You stuck to your slogan of people's democracy and started your people's war and now you have changed the slogan to democratic republic. Why?**

We have not lost our way. We have a dream of socialism-communism. But we have to move with the times. For the moment the Nepali people want an end to feudalism and to set up a capitalist democratic republic. Comrade Prachanda has publicly expressed a commitment to a peaceful, prosperous and great Nepal. And we want to do it with the political parties, civil society and the people.

**So your armed struggle was a mistake?**

As I said, we want to end feudalism and we want an inclusive democracy so that all the marginalised, suppressed and discriminated classes and groups are represented so they can participate in governance.

**How do you aim to get there, through federalism?**

We have suppressed classes, gender, ethnic and regional groups. We need to grant them autonomy and set up a united federal Nepal. We need to include all their needs, their cultures, their languages by giving them a say in the new constitution. The development of Nepal means the development of the janajatis. If they don't have a say in the state power structure they'll never have development. We have a dream of making Nepal into the Switzerland of Asia.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

**Couldn't this have been achieved without the loss of 13 or 14 thousand lives?**

Even the 1990 constitution couldn't resolve these contradictions, it couldn't address the people's concerns. If we hadn't taken up arms, even the 19-day andolan wouldn't have happened. Let me ask you this: if it was possible without armed struggle why didn't it happen? The people understand this. The uprising was something the war brought about. Back when we made our 40-point demand no one listened to us. We didn't want to drag this country into conflict, but we had no choice.

**People are confused: the parties who were your class enemies are now your allies. Baburam Bhattarai even said in 2001 that your party had worked closely with the palace. Why the change?**

We didn't have an official agreement with the palace but at a time when the parties were trying to suppress us we had certain convergence to look for a solution. King Birendra perhaps had a vision for the future and didn't want the army involved. But the andolan changed the parties and changed their behaviour. They understood that we reflected the aspirations of the people and they should work with us. We also understood coming out of war that we had to work with the parties towards setting up a republic. It was a mutual transformation.

**What are your views on demobilisation and conflict resolution?**

One aspect of it is to define the chain of command of the Nepal Army—a feudal army can't work towards a loktantrik Nepal. And just by removing the king as supreme commander you don't change the structure of the royal army. As for us, we have to figure out a way to ensure there are resources for the upkeep of the PLA. And then there is the question of what to do with weapons when we go for constituent assembly—and for this we'd like international supervision.

**Why can't we do that ourselves?**

People may not trust us, the best would be for the UN to take the lead because everyone trusts the UN. And then in the second phase after a new constitution is set up, we need to ensure that it is a Nepali Republican Army.

## Secularism

Yubaraj Ghimire in *Samaya*, 1 June

Secularism is a noble idea, its main tenet is the separation of religion and state. The state should treat all religions equally and it shouldn't allow religion to be used by a political force to perpetuate itself. Parliament passed a resolution on secularism but doesn't seem to have done enough homework on how to implement this. Because of this, elements opposed to secularism are spreading rumours that this is against Hinduism and could use these rumours to push the country towards communalism. Despite being a Hindu kingdom, secularism has been the character of the Nepali state.

Especially after 1 February 2005, anti-democratic forces have used Hindu fundamentalism to legitimise themselves. The king's ADC was the chairman of the Vishwa Hindu parishad and the entire state apparatus was mobilised for a jamboree in Birganj while the pro-democracy movement was getting underway. The holy men who were brought to Birganj preached that democracy was anti-Hindu. And the king ordered that Rs 5 million be given to Gen Bharat Keshar Simha to organise the meeting.

Because the king used his Hinduness to legitimise this traditional power it was necessary to declare Nepal secular. But this declaration should not be limited to paper. It must be vigilant about Islamic and Christian groups who may try to use religion for political ends. The government hasn't even given the minimum caution against those who may take secularism to mean conversion or disturb communal harmony. Secularism also doesn't mean taking revenge on any particular religion, including Hindusim.



**PRESSED TO ATTEND:** Students, teachers and common folks from various districts in Gandaki and Dhaulagiri zones were forced to attend the recently held Maoist assembly in Pokhara on 29 May.

Ram Gurung, *Samaya*, 9 June



Peoples Movement

हिमाल Robin Sayami in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, June

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“If India invited the prime minister to prove that parliament is everything, then that will be harmful to the country. There is a deep conspiracy to make parliament supreme.”

-Chairman Prachanda on *Kantipur Television*, 8 June



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This is also a warning against the Maoists. They shouldn't be hurt religious sentiments of the people by slaughtering cows, demolishing temples setting fire to Sanskrit University. In fact, by being involved in the murder of Hindu social reformer Narayan Prasad Pokhrel, the Maoists have actually allied themselves with the Hindu fundamentalists. By not carrying out self-criticism, the Maoists are helping the anti-secular forces in this country. The government must immediately prohibit organisations that spread religious hatred. It must invest in education that emphasises tolerance and secularism so future generations of Nepalis will grow up with that culture. It's time to put secularism into practice.

## House rules

Jana Aastha, 7 June

समाचार

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala had held up the passing of Parliamentary Rules 2063, so the house debated it while he was in New Delhi. Koirala had wanted the prime minister to be the caretaker in the event of the death or incapacitation of the monarch, while others wanted the speaker of the house to have the authority. Parliament seems to be in a tearing hurry to decide on royal succession, while Koirala had been delaying it. The rival proposal is for a 17-member interim committee lead by the speaker to be caretaker if the king dies. The state affairs committee of parliament had felt that the prime minister's head of government shouldn't be the caretaker.

Interestingly, if the king dies while parliament is not in session and succession has to be decided, there is a provision to reconvene parliament for the sole purpose of choosing a new monarch. Under Rule 205 of the draft rules of parliament, a king can also be dethroned if one-fourth of parliament signs an affidavit declaring him of unsound mind. Such a declaration will be passed on to the cabinet for decision. The rules also allow parliamentary decisions and resolutions by the security council to be passed without the formality of a royal seal of approval.

# People's budget

Finance Ministry Secretary Bhoj Raj Ghimire in *Deshantar*, 4 June

समाचार

**Deshantar: What are the main challenges for the economy at present?**

**Bhoj Raj Ghimire:** The biggest challenge is maintaining financial stability. The second challenge is to increase investment and to use it to benefit the poor. We also need to create opportunities for employment and income generation.

**How are the government's financial plans progressing?**

We are nearing the end of the financial year so it's not possible to make big changes. We are now working on cutting unproductive expenses and investing the savings in future development activities. The coming year's budget is being prepared. The white paper addressing the country's economic problems and the government's future economic programs has already been issued. Priority will be given to rural areas and making various services more accessible to the people. The government will focus on meeting the people's needs and promoting their participation in development activities such as building roads. These activities will not only increase facilities but also help people earn an income.

**Previous governments also talked of pro-poor budgets but failed to raise living standards.**

Most reforms since 1990 have focused on changing the economy's structure by increasing private investment and adopting an open market policy. However, the expectation that commerce and trade in urban areas would spread to rural regions did not happen. Only the urban areas developed, excluding a large chunk of the country



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from the economy. Fifteen districts still don't have access to roads and many lack basic minimum infrastructure. If roads and electricity are prioritised, there is no doubt this will have multiplier effects and boost the income of the poor. Past programs might have been called pro-poor but they were not distributed accordingly.

**Tax revenue is not meeting targets. How are talks progressing with donors about replacing that lost revenue?**

We have got positive signs from our foreign friends who have accepted the political change. They said that they are ready to help and that the government should produce a package of proposals. Denmark has already announced an aid package of Rs 200 million. We have also spoken to the World Bank, the ADB and bilateral donors.

**Will the Maoists also be considered in the coming budget?**

After decisions have been taken at the political level, we will have no problem with that.

## ENTRY CALL FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photographers with pictures of Nepal's conflict are requested to submit a portfolio of 10 images. The selected images will be exhibited and pictures selected there will be published in a Pictorial Book.

Selections to both the exhibition and book will be made by a jury of professional international photo editors. Images should depict not just the sufferings and despair caused by the conflict but also show hope and survival.

### Photographs Types & Formats:

Any size print or in CD (for digital images), can be B/W or colour. Specify original format in which photograph has been captured.

### Who can apply:

Amateur photographers, Photojournalists, and enthusiasts.

Photographs can only be submitted by the original photographers themselves. If selected, copyright of the photographs will remain with the photographer.

**Deadline:** 30 June 2006

**Send entries to:**

**Publication nepa-lyaya**

P.O.Box 8975

EPC 1275

Kathmandu, Nepal

nepa-lyaya

Digital Image can be sent to  
[nepalayapress@gmail.com](mailto:nepalayapress@gmail.com) or [nepalayapress@yahoo.com](mailto:nepalayapress@yahoo.com)

For further information - [nepalaya@wlink.com.np](mailto:nepalaya@wlink.com.np)

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# 2006

## GROUP A

- GERMANY vs COSTA RICA   
9:45 PM | 9 June
- POLAND vs ECUADOR   
12:45 AM | 10 June
- GERMANY vs POLAND   
12:45 AM | 15 June
- ECUADOR vs COSTA RICA   
6:45 PM | 15 June
- ECUADOR vs GERMANY   
7:45 PM | 20 June
- COSTA RICA vs POLAND   
7:45 PM | 20 June

## GROUP B

- ENGLAND vs PARAGUAY   
6:45 PM | 10 June
- TRINIDAD & T. vs SWEDEN   
9:45 PM | 10 June
- ENGLAND vs TRINIDAD & T.   
9:45 PM | 15 June
- SWEDEN vs PARAGUAY   
12:45 AM | 16 June
- SWEDEN vs ENGLAND   
12:45 AM | 21 June
- PARAGUAY vs TRINIDAD & T.   
12:45 AM | 21 June

## GROUP C

- ARGENTINA vs IVORY COAST   
12:45 AM | 11 June
- SERBIA & M. vs NETHERLANDS   
6:45 PM | 11 June
- ARGENTINA vs SERBIA & M.   
6:45 PM | 16 June
- NETHERLANDS vs IVORY COAST   
9:45 PM | 16 June
- NETHERLANDS vs ARGENTINA   
12:45 AM | 22 June
- IVORY COAST vs SERBIA & M.   
12:45 AM | 22 June

## GROUP D

- MEXICO vs IRAN   
9:45 PM | 11 June
- ANGOLA vs PORTUGAL   
12:45 AM | 12 June
- ANGOLA vs MEXICO   
12:45 AM | 17 June
- PORTUGAL vs IRAN   
6:45 PM | 17 June
- PORTUGAL vs MEXICO   
7:45 PM | 21 June
- IRAN vs ANGOLA   
7:45 PM | 21 June



# Round of 16

## MATCH 1

- WINNER A vs RUNNER UP B   
8:45 PM | 24 June

## MATCH 2

- WINNER C vs RUNNER UP D   
12:45 AM | 25 June

## MATCH 3

- WINNER B vs RUNNER UP A   
8:45 PM | 25 June

## MATCH 4

- WINNER D vs RUNNER UP C   
12:45 AM | 26 June



## MATCH A

- WINNER MATCH 1 vs WINNER MATCH 2  
8:45 PM | 30 June

## MATCH B

- WINNER MATCH 5 vs WINNER MATCH 6  
12:45 AM | 1 July



# Semifinals

## MATCH 1

- WINNER A vs WINNER B  
12:45 AM | 5 July



## THIRD PLACE

- LOSER 1 vs LOSER 2  
12:45 AM | 9 July







# Football World Cup

## GROUP E

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>ITALY vs GHANA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   13 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>USA vs CZECH REP.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   12 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>USA vs ITALY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   18 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CZECH REP. vs GHANA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   17 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CZECH REP. vs ITALY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7:45 PM   22 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>GHANA vs USA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7:45 PM   22 June	

## GROUP F

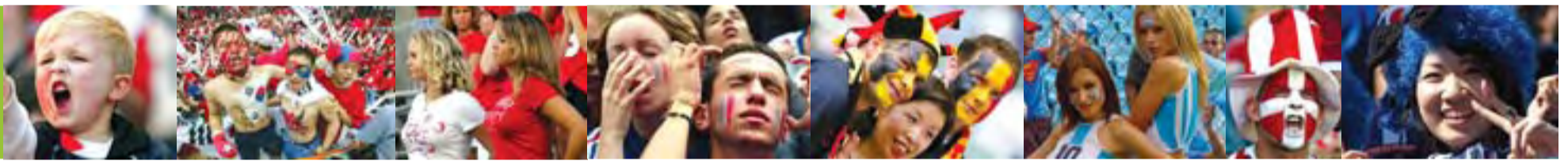
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BRAZIL vs CROATIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   14 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>AUSTRALIA vs JAPAN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6:45 PM   12 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BRAZIL vs AUSTRALIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   18 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>JAPAN vs CROATIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6:45 PM   18 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>JAPAN vs BRAZIL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 PM   23 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CROATIA vs AUSTRALIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 PM   23 June	

## GROUP G

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FRANCE vs SWITZERLAND</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   13 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SOUTH KOREA vs TOGO</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6:45 PM   13 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>FRANCE vs SOUTH KOREA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   19 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TOGO vs SWITZERLAND</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6:45 PM   19 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TOGO vs FRANCE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   24 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SWITZERLAND vs SOUTH KOREA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   24 June	

## GROUP H

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SPAIN vs UKRAINE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6:45 PM   14 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TUNISIA vs SAUDI ARABIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   14 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TUNISIA vs SPAIN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   20 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SAUDI ARABIA vs UKRAINE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9:45 PM   19 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SAUDI ARABIA vs SPAIN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7:45 PM   23 June	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>UKRAINE vs TUNISIA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7:45 PM   23 June	



## MATCH 5

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WINNER E vs RUNNER UP F</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8:45 PM   26 June	

## MATCH 6

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WINNER G vs RUNNER UP H</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   27 June	

## MATCH 7

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WINNER F vs RUNNER UP E</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8:45 PM   27 June	

## MATCH 8

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>WINNER H vs RUNNER UP G</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12:45 AM   28 June	

# Quarterfinals

## MATCH C

<b>WINNER MATCH 3 vs WINNER MATCH 4</b>
8:45 PM   1 July

## MATCH D

<b>WINNER MATCH 7 vs WINNER MATCH 8</b>
12:45 AM   2 July



## MATCH 2

<b>WINNER C vs WINNER D</b>
12:45 AM   6 July

# Finals

## FINAL

<b>WINNER MATCH 1 vs WINNER MATCH 2</b>
11:45 PM   9 July

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parlour and a small lounge area. This is the place to be if you're looking for some real action. No cover charge until the quarterfinals. **4438017**

## Hotel Himalaya

Having transformed its lobby into a football arena complete with a stadium-like parapet for spectators, life size posters of soccer superstars and a giant 24.5-foot screen, Hotel Himalaya is already mentally in Germany. Special snacks have been added to the menu



including Zizu's French Fries, Frank Frankfurters, Patrick Burger, Beck Ham & Cheese S/W, Crespo's Crispy spring roll, Pak Ji Momo and Carlos banana split. World Cup cocktails include Ruud Punch, Shevchenko Screwdriver, Gin Terry's Tonic, Martini a la Totti, Ronaldo Samba

Special, Rooney Metatarsal Sling and Thierry Thunderbolt. Cover charge is Rs 300 per person per evening and includes a free beer or large peg of whisky. Rs 150 for children (not the whiskey, the cover charge). A 'Season's ticket' costs Rs 5,500 per person. Rooms are also available at a special price for spectators camping in. Sony Cybershot prize in competition. **5523900**

## Imago Dei

This newly opened café in the centre of town, across from the



east gate of Narayanhiti Palace, has a relaxed friendly atmosphere, perfect if you want to watch the games with a like-minded crowd. You'll be viewing the game on an Epson EMP-S3 1600 lumens projector with a 250-watt sound system. Like other venues, it is offering World

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## to town

Cup cocktails as well as special snacks by Chef Alicia. There is no cover charge but Imago Dei seats only 50, so come early and stay late.

4442464

### Club Himalaya

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### Le Meridien

If you really want to focus on the bouncing ball, where better than in the middle of the Gokarna forest? The serenity of the jungle in the monsoon will put you in a zone so you can concentrate, or keep calm if your team loses. With a sitting capacity of 50, Le Meridian's Agni Bar has the only 42-inch Sony Bravia, a new high end LCD that will team up with a 42-inch Sony Wega projection tv and home theatre. Pay a cover charge of Rs 500 and you'll get free unlimited munchies and one complimentary beer. Or stay overnight and enjoy a round of



golf the next morning to cure your hangover.

4451212

### Soaltee Crowne Plaza

The Rodi Bar is offering prizes galore for Cup watchers, including the grand prize of a round trip for two to New Delhi, with two nights' stay at the Inter Continental Eros. The special package is priced at Rs 1,500 per person, sharing, and Rs 2,500 for singly occupancy (only for

Nepali nationals, so no Brazilians allowed). It also includes a buffet breakfast and late checkout in case you want to dive into the hotel's pool to cool off.

4273999

### Maki Newa Bhutu Hotel Royal Singhi

Enjoy the Cup here with a combination of authentic Japanese and traditional Newari cuisine in the heart of the city. Games will be shown on a 60-inch Optima screen to a maximum 100 people. Also includes special discounts on food and beverages and no cover charge.

4439784

# Want power?

## Practice keeping your legs quiet

Stand on any driving range and you will witness an oddly recurring event: golfers moving their legs right to left, front to back and in all directions in between as they swing, in a bid to generate more power. Trust me, I have seen this phenomenon in all levels of golfers, from seasoned hackers right up to single handicappers.

Obviously we all want to hit the ball a few yards longer. But while trying to generate more power, most golfers because they lack proper technique, 'sway' their legs to put more punch into their swing. When you move your legs as you

take your backswing, you lose your centre of gravity. The result—a loss of 30-70 yards on your drives! Even though you swing the clubs with your hands, the role that your legs play is equally vital.

This week I want to give you some tips on controlling your legs so you can both generate more power and stay connected to the swing. When swinging correctly, you should be able to use your legs as pivots, right leg on the backswing and left leg on the downswing. As you turn your upper torso and hips, the legs should load up the power and keep the swing intact. Remember, you will only be able to generate power if your legs work as pivots.

### So, how to keep your legs quiet?

**Drill 1** - Kneel on the ground and take a practice swing. Feel the turn of your shoulders and hips. Get in tune with this sensation and build it into your real swings.

**Drill 2** - Practice your swing standing with a pole two inches away from your right thigh and make sure that you don't touch it during the backswing. This will help you to develop tremendous balance and generate more speed on the downswing. Do the similar exercise on the downswing and follow-through. This will help you maintain the correct body angle and suddenly you will find your ball flying straighter and longer down the line.

I have successfully refined my golf swing focusing heavily on these drills, as have a lot of my students. So don't wait—visit the practice range to hit a few hundred balls keeping the above advice in mind and see the improvement! ●

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Le Meridien Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu. [prodeepak@hotmail.com](mailto:prodeepak@hotmail.com)

### TEE BREAK

Deepak Acharya



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# Lese majeste in Thailand

As King Bhumibol celebrates 60 years on the throne, Thailand breaks the taboo on discussing royal matters

MARWAAN MACAN-MARKAR  
in BANGKOK

Age has not softened the rebellious streak in Sulak Sivaraksa, nominated for the Nobel Peace prize for among other things airing controversial views about Thailand's royal family and about the threat to individual freedom posed by strict lese majeste laws. He even fled the country once.

The May edition of *Seeds of Peace*, a journal the 73-year-old Buddhist scholar publishes, has once again put his views in the national spotlight for reproducing a controversial interview.

"The monarchy must be open to criticism, must go along with democracy, must not be sacred," said Sulak at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand (FCCT) in Bangkok last week. "I feel if the monarchy is to survive, we must be able to speak more of the truth."

In Thailand expressing such comments publicly takes great courage because of strict lese majeste laws and the universal respect that King Bhumibol commands among the public. Thais and foreigners who violate the law face prison terms of up to 15 years.

Sulak has been charged twice under the law for making comments deemed to have hurt the king's reputation. But the devout Buddhist still speaks critically of the monarchy and even published a popular book *Loyalty Demands Dissent*.

"People who are conservative royalists will think he is terrible," said Sumallee Virayaidyai, member of a committee that drafted the Thai constitution in the 1970s. "He is unique. There are others who may think like him but they don't speak out due to fear." Sumallee was himself charged in 1973 and had to apologise after being given a two-year suspended sentence.

The issue of lese majeste has gained increased prominence in the wake of the recent political crisis that pitched anti-government protesters against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's government. Sondhi Limthongkul, an outspoken media mogul who led demonstrators against Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party, has recently been served with 37 lese majeste charges for comments he allegedly made at public protests.

Thai police have declined to file similar charges urged by Sondhi's People's Alliance for



Democracy movement against Thaksin. Filing lese majeste charges in Thailand begins with a complaint lodged by any citizen to the police about an alleged act committed by word or deed by another that tarnishes the reputation of the monarchy.

The harsh penalties attached

have had an effect on freedom of expression, often resulting in censored views in public discussions and independent media reportage on the palace. Even powerful Western media organisations, that elsewhere reportedly champion the cause of press freedom, respect this law

when operating in Thailand.

Of Thailand's several military dictators since the country became a constitutional monarchy in 1932, many have taken cover behind lese majeste charges to target their critics. Since last December, Sulak has found an unlikely ally in his quest to place Thailand's monarchy within the spirit of democracy: King Bhumibol himself. During his annual nationally televised birthday speech, the 78-year-old monarch appealed to his subjects for the first time to be critical of his actions.

This was hailed by the local media but so far there has been no hint in the press of anyone willing to act on the revered monarch's appeal. The custom of venerating King Bhumibol, who celebrates his 60th anniversary on the throne this week, has intensified in the runup to the celebrations.

Sulak, himself a self-admitted monarchist, welcomes the message conveyed in the king's unprecedented birthday speech. "I hope once we have good government this law is abolished," he said. "We must have more criticism and I am glad that the present king agrees with that." ● IPS

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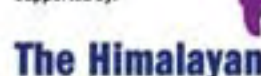
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# Memory of mass murder in Madi



KANAK MANI DIXIT



PICS: EKAL SILWAL

**EKAL SILWAL** in MADI

Exactly one year ago this week, the Maoists detonated a roadside bomb in this isolated valley in Chitwan that killed 38 people.

It was by far the worst terrorist attack perpetrated by the Maoists in the conflict and the scars of that tragedy are still so raw in this lush land that no Maoist has been allowed into this sliver of Nepali territory between Chitwan National Park and the Indian border.

Three of the dead were security personnel riding the bus but 72 civilians were wounded in the blast and many of them have been physically disabled for life. Villagers have said they won't allow any rebels into the territory until the Maoists meet their nine-point demand for an apology, punishment for perpetrators and compensation.

Five Maoists did go to Kalyanpur last month to try to sort things out but they were roughed up, detained for three hours and let go only after they promised that they would relay the demands to the party leadership.

"We won't allow the Maoists and their leaders even to step into our village unless they bring those responsible in front of us," says Krishna Adhikari who used his crutches to hit out at the Maoists who visited the village to stick up posters of Prachanda.

"They claim that they are now powerful so in that case they must address our demand of treatment, compensation and education for the families affected," adds Sashidhar Lamichane.

The bus bomb shocked the nation and drew major condemnation from all over. Even Comrade Prachanda admitted in an interview recently that he was shocked and had trouble sleeping for two days after the attack.

Local Maoists like Jagatraj Adhikari quit the movement after the blast saying they didn't want to be associated with a terrorist outfit.

The Shaligram Travels bus was crossing a dry river bed 70km south of Bharatpur at 8AM when a wire-guided explosive was detonated underneath it. The bomb was so powerful it literally lifted the bus metres into the air, killing many of the women and children inside. The men who had clambered to the top of the bus survived. Of the 12 soldiers who had hitched a ride, three were killed. (See: 'Mass murder in Madi', #251)

Locals say they want to talk face-to-face with Baburam and Prachanda and ask them for an explanation and apology. Narayan Prasad Subedi lost his father and tells us: "We want to know how killing 35 innocent bus passengers helped their cause." ●



10 JUNE 2005, #251



**GROUND ZERO:** Madi school children (above) show a visitor the exact spot of the riverbed at Bandarmudhe where the bus was blown up last year (left). Above: Dhankumari Paudel is wheelchair bound and has finished all her savings in treatment, Krishna Adhikari used his crutch to shoo away Maoists last month and Sabitri Dhakal is still in bed in Bharatpur Hospital. Below: Megh and Januka Tiwari who lost their mother in the blast.



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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Watercolours from Nepal** annual exhibition of watercolour society till 18 June.
- ❖ **People's Power 1990-2006** by Ragini Upadhyay Grela at NAFA, Naxal, 9-25 June, 10AM-5PM. 411729

EVENTS

- ❖ **Women In Art: A Personal View** by Genevieve Bloomfield, CSGN's monthly lecture, 9 June, 9.30 AM, Radisson Hotel.
- ❖ **10<sup>th</sup> Education and Book Fair** at Bhrikuti Mandap till 10 June.
- ❖ **Art class** learn to make traditional Nepali drums at Chusyabahal, 10 June, meet in front of Nabil Bank, Kantipath 8.30 AM.
- ❖ **Restructuring of the state** and road map of ANNFSU-Revolutionary with Lekhnath Neupane at Martin Chautari, 9 June, 3PM. 4238050
- ❖ **Postmodernism** with Sanjeev Pokhrel, 10 June, 4PM, Martin Chautari. **Up hill challenge** half Marathon and 10km -Men/ Women, 10 June. 9851096123
- ❖ **Inner Journeys: what is mind, what is a thought**, teaching, meditation, discussion at HBMC, 10 June at 10AM. 4414843
- ❖ **Fashion Fusion** featuring Nepali designers at Hyatt Regency, 16 June, 7.30 PM
- ❖ **Communication and leadership program** with Toastmasters, meeting every Tuesday at IEM building, Tripureswor.
- ❖ **Bagmati River Festival** 3 June – 20 August. 5011013
- ❖ **Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2006**, 7-10 December, calling for entries. Forms available at: www.himalassociation.org/kimff

MUSIC

- ❖ **Inferno the Rockconcert** with Robin and the New Revolution, Abhaya and the Steam Injuns and 1974 AD, on 9 June BICC grounds, 3.30 PM. Rs 100
- ❖ **World Cup** at Moksh Live 9 June, 8PM, no cover charge.
- ❖ **Heartbreakers** live every Friday at Rum Doodle Bar.
- ❖ **Cadenza Collective** live every Wednesday and Saturday 8PM at Upstairs.
- ❖ **Live Music** at New Orleans Café. 4700311
- ❖ **Jatra Friday** nights, live music by Siron. 4256622
- ❖ **Unplugged** sessions with Strings, Jatra Saturday nights. 4256622

DINING

- ❖ **Floats and Fantasies** desserts at Juneli Bar till 24 June.
- ❖ **Brunch from the east** weekend brunch till 29 July.
- ❖ **The Fun Café** for set buffet breakfast, lunch or dinner, Olive Bar & Bistro, Radisson Hotel. 4411818
- ❖ **World Cup at K-too!** games available with meal and free Irish Coffee. 4470043
- ❖ **Hi Spirit** serving 350 ml liquor on a higher side at Juneli Bar, Hotel De L' Annapurna till 2 June. 4221711
- ❖ **Mezza and Margarita** at Dwarika's Fusion bar every Wednesday
- ❖ **Vineyard Gallery Lounge** for wines and cocktails at Babar Mahal Revisited.
- ❖ **Malaysian and Italian** food at Jalan Jalan Restaurant. 5544872



- ❖ **Mango Masti** at all restaurants in Soaltee Crowne Plaza.
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- ❖ **Café U** for organic Japanese homecooking. Near International Club, Sanepa. 11AM-6PM. Closed on Tuesdays. 5524202
- ❖ **Wet & Wild Summer Splash** at Godavari Village Resort, a special package of Swimming & Lunch. 5560675
- ❖ **Breakfast** at Singma Restaurant. 8.30 – 11.00AM daily. 5520004

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NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



Singing in the rain, yes, we forgive you for that. The monsoon's one week early but no one is complaining. This satellite picture on Thursday morning shows the moisture-laden air from the Bay of Bengal creeping up the Himalaya from east to west and has reached Pokhara. The existing pressure patterns have formed in such a way that they ensure a robust monsoon with a good distribution of precipitation across the mountains and tarai, and from eastern to western Nepal. The pattern of the monsoon is: clear mornings with bright sunshine, gathering clouds and rain by evenings that continue in heavy bursts into the night. The humidity levels have soared, that's why you're sweating so much. Enjoy.

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KIRAN PANDAY

**MOUNTAIN MEMORIES:** Pakistani Ambassador to Nepal Sohail Amin poses next to the Dudh Koshi on the Namche-Lukla trek last week.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

**SWINGING JERRY:** Jazz outfit Stupa performed at the J-Bar on Wednesday evening as part of the Surya Classic Encounters, along with Caribbean Jerry, seen here belting out reggae numbers.



PRERANA MARASINI

**GREEN WITH BEAUTY:** Miss Nepal Sugarika KC, conservation ambassador for WWF Nepal, speaks at New Padampur, Chitwan to mark World Environment Day on 5 June.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

**LUCKY BREAK:** An electricity pole was the only serious casualty when this school bus left the downhill section of the road at Hatiban on Wednesday.

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PRAGYA SHRESTHA

# Brick by brick

**B**him Kumari Biswokarma is 21 and came from Rolpa to work at a brick kiln in Patan five years ago. There are many like her from the war-torn midwest among the 63,000 seasonal workers in the Valley's 150 brick kilns.

They earn just enough to support their families and Bhim Kumari used to have to work and look after her three-year-old daughter simultaneously. Now, some brick kiln owners have started child care centres so babies of their workers can play in a safe environment while their mothers work.

Some of these brick factory owners had recently converted to less-polluting technology with help from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and they were open to the suggestion that they also open crèches.

"We convinced the entrepreneurs about the importance of corporate social responsibility and both parties benefited. It is a win-win situation," says Usha Manandhar of SDC.

The cost of the child care centres is borne by the owners and workers. Each worker contributes Rs 5 per day per child and the brick company provides child caretakers and the building.

Mangal Maharjan, manager of the Satyanarayan brick kiln in Imadol, has calculated that with his Rs 160,000 upfront investment he has 60 percent more productivity when the children are in daycare. Maharjan is now proud to present himself as a socially responsible entrepreneur and is happy that he and his employees benefit when

children are better taken care of. Others like Maharjan now want to start schools when the children grow up.

It is no coincidence that the brick kilns where management was most concerned about emissions and converted to less-polluting technology are also the ones that have invested in child care centres. There are an estimated 10,000 children aged below 10 at the brick kilns in the Valley. "The challenge now is to expand the program to the other brick factories," says Manandhar.

The kilns bake Rs 2.5 billion worth of bricks to meet the demand of Nepal's burgeoning construction industry. Says Bhim Kumari: "It is hard back-breaking work but at least now I don't have to worry about my daughter injuring herself while I'm busy." ●

Pragya Shrestha

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# Getting along like a House on fire

At the rate our all-powerful parliament is transmogrifying Nepal's socio-political landscape, it is only a question of time before it declares Nepal a superstition-free zone, re-legalizes marijuana and legislates in favour of same sex marriage.

This is the beauty of living in a restored democracy, parliament can make any proclamation it wants as long as it doesn't have to actually implement it in practice. So, as we make this dramatic transition from the Tantrik Kingdom of Nepal to a Loktantrik Republic, us good citizens can sit back and let the good times roll. Drinks are on the House.

**UNDER MY HAT**  
Kunda Dixit



But while fully applauding the audacious decisions undertaken by the august house lately, we do have some creeping doubts about whether the honourable members

aren't slacking off a bit. They seem to be resting on their laurels, basking in reflected glory and refusing to bring the House down.

It took off 'His Majesty' and 'Royal' from signboards and government stationery, but left it at that. We will not be satisfied with such token gestures, there are still lots of vestiges of the old regime that have to be abolished.

It has been brought to my attention that Kathmandu's casinos still serve decks of cards at the roulette that have kings, queens and a joker. These should immediately be replaced by royal-free packs.

There are still some bee hives at the Proletarian Botanical Gardens in Godavari that have vestiges of a feudal governance structure and are ruled by queen bees. The Comrade Drones need to declare themselves republican hives forthwith. And expeditions desirous of climbing Mt Everest will no longer have to pay \$65,000 'royalty', hereinafter the fee will be a 'voluntary donation'.

And we take strong umbrage over the fact that the prime minister's official entourage to New Delhi did not include any representatives from the All-Nepal Federation of Martial Arts Societies (R), the Bar, FNJ and Association of Gobar Gas User Groups. How can we call ourselves an inclusive people's democracy if the marginalised are left out? But we'd like to give credit where it's due: it's a good thing a country that owes Rs 3 billion to Indian Oil Corporation included in its delegation prominent wilful defaulters. They could teach us a few tricks of the trade.

And when is parliament going to get around to changing our flag so it is more inclusive? It's a sacrilege that the banner of the old regime yet waves. Time we moved from double triangle to multi-triangle.



How come we're still using the HMG coat of arms in government stationery, let's immediately start using this new one:



How long do we have to wait for bank notes to represent the new symbols of a people's republic?



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