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Weekly Internet Poll # 315

Q. Do you think the peace process will hold after Tihar?

Total votes: 4,455

Yes 33.8%

No 57.2%

Don't know 7.2%

Weekly Internet Poll # 316. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Rate the current relief efforts in the flood-ravaged districts.

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STAKING A CLAIM: This welcome sign to the 'Republican Zone' of Masuriya seems ironic, given the anarchy Maoists, 'democrats', republicans, and dacoits are creating along the East-West Highway.

KIRAN NEPAL

KIRAN NEPAL on the EAST-WEST HIGHWAY

It's four months into the peace process, but you wouldn't know that along Nepal's 1,100km-long lifeline, the East-West Highway. We travelled along the highway for ten days starting 1 September, and every day, and along every stretch heard stories and saw Maoist intimidation, as well as extortion, kidnapping, smuggling, turf wars between the rebels, 'democrats', and dacoits. Police and the local administration can do little to ensure security amid all the lawlessness, and in many places the Maoists have taken law enforcement into their own hands. On and around the highway, there appears to be a complete breakdown of the state. 'Voluntary donations'—in reality anything but—are common in places like Siraha, and Lahan, where local businessmen shut down the market last month until Maoist district leaders assured them the intimidation would stop. The extortion takes different forms, such as forced 'voluntary' contributions of Rs 100,000 to support Maoist 'cultural events', protection rackets, checkpoints,

Non-government

Along the nation's lifeline, lawlessness is the norm

tollbooths, and 'taxation'. No businessperson we spoke to would dream of refusing, because they're faced with guns. Maoist-condoned smuggling and illegal felling of timber have resulted in suddenly-sparse forests in Samling, near Urlabari. Toll booths and blockades are everywhere, some openly run by the Maoists, and others in the name of 'pujas'. The price of a 45km bus ride has almost doubled to Rs 145. Trucks ferrying goods between Birganj and Urlabari pay 300 percent more than a few months ago. In ten days we saw five *chakka jam*, and disturbances and shutdowns in Butwal, Hetauda, Itahari, Mechinagar, Kakarbhitta, and other stops along the way. Unable to cross the Rapti river after last year's Badarmude killings, the Maoists have intensified activities in areas they have access to. Trade unions are polarised, and the Maoists have taken over and destroyed

property and service areas belonging to DDCs and VDCs. There are PLA camps along the highway, particularly between the Koshi and Kamala rivers, and the soldiers are out in full force, conducting march-pasts, armed and in full battle regalia. Students are taken for forced militia training, as we saw in Bharatpur and Manahari. Local residents are forced to attend rallies and local political party working committees are subject to intimidation. Self-determination and the Maoists entering the mainstream are moot. In Rautahat, when the rebels were asked to join a village meeting, they said they had no 'central directive' to work with other parties and instead asked for half the development budget to carry out projects themselves. People live under the shadow of guns here. Face-offs between the Maoists, party members, police, and dacoits play out in crowded marketplaces and private

homes. Sometimes the police intervenes and promises safety, but often they also claim to not know what is going on. Meanwhile, the Maoists are also trying to run a hearts and minds campaign to win over middle-class sentiment. They are building 'people's hospitals' (often using illegally felled timber for beds), repairing stretches of road, and 'punishing' looters. But as long as guns are present, no one believes they mean it. Many people we spoke to said it was all just 'for show', pointing out that a rebel-run hospital in Mangalbare, Morang, is a stone's throw from a government health care centre. People are fed up with the anarchy. The feeling along the 1,100 km we travelled was that whether or not dacoits were responsible for much of the mayhem, the Maoists will have a lot to answer for if and when they are disarmed. ●

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BACK TO THE URBAN JUNGLE

The weekly nepalnews.com-Nepali Times opinion poll, despite voting on the internet, has a fairly accurate correlation with past nationwide polls. Results in the past month show that the Nepali public is fully behind pluralism and democracy, they reject Maoist violence, threats and extortion, and that they are impatient with the pace of the peace process.

But this week, nearly six months after the April Uprising, they have for the first time turned pessimistic about the chances of a return to peace. More than 57 percent of the 4,455 who voted believe the ceasefire wouldn't last beyond Tihar.

Part of the reason for this is the public perception that the seven-party government is lost in its usual bickering. The other part is that they believe the Maoists have no intention of staying the peace course.

To a certain extent disagreements are usual, even necessary, in a democracy. But the parties' lack of credibility is their biggest drawback. It doesn't help that the biggest whiner of them all, Madhab Nepal, keeps threatening to quit the seven-party alliance. Parliament passing radical laws is all very fine but that doesn't make a big, immediate difference in the lives of desperate people.

Never before have we seen the kind of lawlessness and anarchy that we see today. On any given day there are strikes, road blockages, and sit-ins by up to a dozen different groups. Rebels or other shady outfits either block the main highways, or improvise illegal toll collection. The state doesn't exist, and it has become a free-for-all.

As for the Maoists, it is clear the comrades now have no regard, or need, for public opinion. They are taking full advantage of the disarray of the government and forcing high school children and hotel workers to join their rallies, and they seem all set for a Lenin-style power grab. Tyre-burning over cooked-up reasons, as happened this week shows just how easy it is for them to bring the capital to a standstill. It's a small step from that to storming Singha Darbar.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal has been all over the media this week promising not to go back to the jungle. He doesn't have to. The rebel strategy now is to concentrate on the urban jungle. A stage-managed People Power III will be much more effective.

The planned meeting between Chairman Dahal and Prime Minister Koirala is a last chance to sort this one out. It is time for the seven parties to recognise this challenge to their legitimacy and unite against a threatened totalitarian takeover.

Far left, far right

Both sides could abuse a 'peaceful' resolution

Outperformed by Pushpa Dahal, SPA leadership seems is in disarray.

While the Maoist leader goes on a BBC international call-in show, SPA cabinet members speak out against their own government. An ill-considered interim constitution draft is released and criticised. This draft includes, without debate, due process, or a



GUEST COLUMN
Alok Bohara

broad mandate, prescriptive fiscal micro-management, social engineering, and division along ethnic lines. One of the drafters himself is now a critic.

The Maoist leadership baits the SPA with threats of an October Revolution, but they aren't thinking of the Bolshevik model. They might be laying the groundwork to follow Maoist China's post-revolutionary purging. To do this, they will cajole people, appear on call-in shows and, importantly, change the goalposts often. They could also concede something the SPA never really wanted—election to a

constituent assembly. They might even tolerate a de-fanged civilian monarchy, since a direct takeover seems unlikely. They don't expect an outright victory in the constituent assembly election without their armed militia policing the polling stations. Their eyes are on the ultimate prize, and backup—a PLA unit within the national army. This is how Mao came to power, by banishing his political rivals, with his People's Army, led by children of his revolution.

The BBC call-in show is thus revealing. The remarkable thing about the callers was that they were real people, honestly speaking their minds. They asked tough questions, unlike many in Kathmandu. They put Dahal on the spot for his killing tactics, and questioned the guilt of unarmed women and children. Pushpa Dahal's coldness was astounding: "I feel sorry for you, but s*** happens during nation building." When asked why he keeps changing the goalposts, including the latest about their commitment to the UN on arms management, he trivialised it saying, "Blame Girija first for starting it in Biratnagar."

The rebel commander did not mention rehabilitation and reconstruction, or truth and reconciliation using the UN. He seemed irritated when asked about the educational aspirations of children under 20 in his rebel army (70 percent), especially by the suggestion that they should be free to go to school to be doctors and engineers, not forced into his army. He focused instead on reformulating the rebels' role within the national security arrangement, emphasising that a merger was not enough.

The SPA leadership has noticed, why else would Girija

Koirala risk appointing Rukmangat Katuwal Chief of Army Staff? The SPA knows mainstream political parties can't allow the CPN (Maoist), as a rival political party, to have its own indoctrinated PLA unit in the national army, ready to pounce, as happened in Mao's Cultural Revolution. Yet, the Maoists' 75-point manifesto and the ongoing rhetoric leave space for that. Such a provision for a peaceful resolution worries many. Thus, PM Koirala may have appointed Katuwal as insurance against the Maoists' ultimate goal.

Many in civil society warn against an insurrection in the extreme right, and that may be a real danger. But politicians are adept at doing cost-benefit analyses for their survival and new alliances constantly emerge in power politics. Not long ago, for example, the Maoists wanted to deal with King Gyanendra, not with the very parties they are talking to now. By taking a gamble on pro-ceremonial monarchy line, Prime Minister Koirala may have wanted to create a separate identity for his party and himself, distinct from republican sloganeering including the one coming from his own party rank and file.

Many people, including me, will remain sceptical about the Maoists' intentions as long as they run a parallel government and break the agreement made with the SPA and UN, and ramp up extortion, parallel taxation, kidnapping, and killing. Worse, the extreme right may be using this as a chance to slowly build strength for another showdown with the extreme left. ●

Alok Bohara, PhD, is professor of economics at the University of New Mexico. He can be contacted at bohara@unm.edu.



KUMAR SHRESTHA

Big gamble

Koirala's appointment of Katuwal may backfire

As the country was celebrating the 93rd BP Koirala Memorial Day, Prime Minister Koirala decided to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious elder brother. In the teeth of opposition from parliamentarians, human rights activists and his own party cadres, he appointed General Rukmangat Katuwal as the new Chief of Staff of the Nepal Army.



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

Katuwal received the official insignia of his post from the man he had done everything to deride, defame, and denigrate. The Chief assures us that he will not deceive the democratic leadership. But if his past utterances are anything to go by, he will need to make a tremendous effort to outgrow his pathological distaste for

pluralistic politics.

BP had put himself and his party at risk by reposing his trust in a member of the old ruling elite. Stakes in GPs' decisions are much higher. It's going to be either a secured loktantra backed unquestionably by an army under civilian control or military dominance leading towards protracted civil war, anarchy and loss of sovereignty. Almost at the end of his political career, he has gambled big. (Koirala has promised to retire from politics once elections for a constituent assembly are over.)

The choice of Katuwal was controversial right from the beginning. Whatever the reality, the perception is that he was instrumental in the ruthless suppression of the April Uprising. The commission formed to investigate the excesses of the security forces during King Gyanendra's direct rule has already quizzed him.

Rewarding an alleged perpetrator is akin to rubbing salt on the wounds of the victims of the uprising. But a quest for stability seems to have prevailed over the need for retributive justice. Koirala probably figured he could overlook the past by looking to the future.

The validity of his judgement is open to question, but it's not without international precedence.

In post-Franco Spain, the Pact of Oblivion was reached between the military and the political elite to ensure the democratic government was free from the possibilities of mutinies and coups, which may have been incited had the government insisted on prosecuting Franco's trusted lieutenants in the security forces. For any transitional government, it's quite difficult to pursue perpetrators when there are too many to convict and when most remain socially, culturally, and materially powerful.

At the risk of being seen as patronising the culture of impunity, transitional governments often make peace with the old elite and allow the political process to take its own course.

In Nepal, the case is slightly more complicated. For one, loyal royals have repeatedly betrayed trust reposed in them by democratic forces. Second, international meddlers as donors and loaners play an exaggerated role in the country's internal affairs while remaining traditionally soft towards the military's adventurous tendencies. Third, the Maoists are still armed and their concerns can't be just wished away. And to top it all, even though the king has been divested of his powers, his mere presence is frightening to a populace frequently trampled upon by three generations of Shaha kings since the 50s. In autocratic experiments of every monarch, the then Royal Nepali Army was complicit in the crimes of ruthless repression.

Amnesty requires selective amnesia. It takes fortitude to forget and foresight to project the future potential of suspicious individuals. Premier Koirala probably believes that his fellow countrymen possess the gift of resilience and forgiveness in excess. We can only hope his intuition in taking a calculated risk turns out safer than the selection of his late elder brother. ●

LETTERS

PLAIN SPEAKING

The outpourings in most Nepali media demonstrate that épolitical hogwash is the opiate of the massesí. From Comrade Awesome with his claims that he érulesí 80 percent of Nepal, to Ram Sharan Mahatís unlikely claims that the coffers will overflow now that heís in charge, I think the Nepali people have trouble coping with the verbal diarrhoea.

Can Comrade Awesome enlighten us about his 80 percent of Nepal? Does he know that 15 percent is under permanent snow and 18 percent is barren rock? Towns and urban areas account for 30 percent and he can hardly claim to éruleí them. Simple arithmetic leaves him or anyone else 37 percent of the country, of which he claims 80 percent. But only ignorance would claim that it comes in a neat, ready-to-be-ruled package.

Is his realpolitik for real, or will he get by as before, preaching to the uninformed? As a non resident Nepali (NRN) whose family survived by working abroad, I want to know, in straightforward, un-doctored statistics, what achievements result from small groups of badly-informed but thoroughly indoctrinated cadres threatening rural householders with guns, not to mention other atrocities ever-so-diligent éhuman rightsí folks have not picked up on. Have harvests increased over the last ten years? Are more children, particularly girls, in school, or out toting guns, their adolescent hormones raging against an adult world that has failed them? In the areas he érulesí, has income increased (without counting our remittances, or the money received from daughters trafficked into the flesh trade)? Weíd like to hear more policy and less political twaddle.

And to Mahat: does he know the impact on the economy if NRNs stopped sending remittances?†Does he plan to create jobs so people have the satisfaction of earning their own living instead of relying on éaidí? Can he guarantee that everyone who should pay taxes? I ask this because the other gentleman is swift to condemn donors for imperialism, but how many Nepalis realise that aid money comes for the most part from the taxes of people very like themselves? They are ordinary people with ordinary pleasures and they work darned hard for their livelihoods. Our politicians and Comrade Awesome talk as if this éassistanceí comes from some kind of imperial cash cow. If they realised how hard those working classes who support aid programs actually work, theyíd be a little less liberal with their labels.

†KA Tamang, Middlesborough

#314

Good piece by Suman Pradhan (éImpasseí, Meanwhile, #314). My reliable info is that while India may have éaccededí to the UN coming in,†it was beyond fury†at having†its flank turned. Hence the resort to the old éindirect approachí to thwart Ian Martin and his team from making any progressóput GPK in an arm lock and the emergence of émasterly inactivityí as a policy. A UN success in monitoring a peace process so close to home is more than Delhi thinks it can bear. It would have much preferred to manage it itself. Pradhanís éback offí message was spot on.

Bravo to Michael Hutt for writing in so few but brilliant words everything that needs saying about the Bhutani refugee problem (éGross national griefí).

Cracking start to éRed Flag to Bullí (Backside, #314)!†Now that I get the drift, Iíll be emailing the address helpfully provided!

Reader, via email

WANNABE ECONOMISTS

Your two mediocre wannabe economic columns (Economic Sense and Strictly Business) havenít communicated anything of substance for months. Neither writer has the data to back their arguments nor do they use economic theories to explain their anecdotal analyses. The two pieces on oil politics and the NOC are prime examples of the mediocrity (éOily ruckusí, Economic Sense, #313 and éFuelling discontentí, Strictly Businessí, #312). They list out the problems, which Nepalis are good at, without telling us how opening up the market will ease the problems of pricing, adulteration, corruption, cartels and above all, building trust. Please find more substantive business analysis delivered in a crisper and more intelligent manner. Or shut down columns that donít add value to your paper.

Sunil Sharma, Teku

NATIONAL HEROES

We look abroad for medical consultation and facilities as a matter of habit. Yet, the other day, a fellow Nepali who lives in London consulted a specialist for his eye ailment. After a thorough investigation the specialist commented, íYouíre from Nepal, you have the renowned Dr Ruit and Tilganga for treatment.† Weíve always identified ourselves with Gurkhas and Everest. Now we have another reference point, Dr Ruit and Tilganga.

Ajindra Singh, via email

HATS AND ASSES

I really miss Under My Hat. Youíve done a fantastic job of producing it week after week for so many years and I think itís become habit to look for that column first thing on Fridays. Now ím bewildered to not find it. I know you must be enjoying the break, but at some point, I hope youíll think of coming back. There really was nothing like that column in our English press.

Anjana Newar, via email

• I am a Nepal *bhakta* and frequent reader of *Nepali Times* who likes the last humoristic bit a lot. This week I particularly enjoyed the more serious note (éShowing a red flag to a bullí, Backside, #314) and wondered who the writer is. Would be good to have a chat over a cup of coffee.

Gil Daryn, SOAS, University of London

• I am very sorry to hear that Kunda Dixit may be forced to stop his Under My Hat column. He has brought years of good humour and insight into Nepal and journalism that was and still is very much needed. I do hope that this is just a short épen-downí and that the column isnít shunted into early retirement for that would be a crying shame. I guess I will just have to read over the vast collection of your columns instead.

Matt Hogg, via email

All past columns can be viewed by clicking éUnder My Hatí on www.nepalitimes.com - Ed

CORRECTION

• Due to an editing error, the reference in Ashutosh Tiwariís Strictly Business column (éLoan blowsí, #314) to Jagannath Adhikari was a mistake. The name should have been Jogendra Ghimire.

• In éSalt of the earthí (#314) the proportion of Nepalis still consuming non-iodised salt should have been 9 percent and not 17 percent as mistakenly reported.

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GEN 2

Waja

LOTUS

Kamlaris in Dang

Young Tharu girls sold into indentured labour are slowly being brought home



Srijana with kamlari welfare worker Sadhna DC (left), rescued kamlari girls in a charity-run school in Dang

SUMAN PRADHAN

SUMAN PRADHAN in DANG

Deep inside Deukhuri Valley, in a small hut on the banks of a river, lives Sudhani Chaudhary with her husband, his two brothers, and their families. The extended family ekes out a living as sharecroppers.

Sudhani is only 30, but she already has four daughters. One, not quite 10 years old, lives in Ghorahi, working as a housemaid for a family. “I am told she is in school,” says Sudhani. Five other young daughters of the family are in faraway cities like Surkhet, Pokhara and Kathmandu. All work in households or restaurants and are thought to be attending school too, though no one is certain.

“They have gone as *kamlaris*,”

says Sunder Chaudhary, one of the brothers. “It is difficult to feed ourselves as it is. At least they have food and clothes. And they can go to school.”

Sending young daughters as kamlaris (girl-child indentured labourers) is widespread in the Tharu community of lower Dang Valley (also called Deukhuri Valley) and adjoining districts. The reason often cited is poverty, and this tradition began when hill-people descended upon the fertile plains of the western tarai and slowly usurped the land once inhabited by the Tharus.

Loss of land brought associated social ills as it changed the power equation within the communities. Mostly poor and illiterate, Tharus found themselves tilling the landlords’

farms in a sharecropping agreement so lopsided that they were in bondage as *kamaiyas*. And even then, many offered their daughters as household help to entice the *maalik* to give them sharecropping opportunities. Lack of family planning awareness contributed to large Tharu families, and sending a few daughters away became the norm.

“The kamlari system grew out of this,” says Dhaniram Chaudhary, the son of a former *kamaiya* and now vice president

of Society Welfare Action Nepal (SWAN), which works to eradicate the kamlari practice in lower Dang. “It is servitude and exploitation.”

Tharu girls from Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, and Kanchanpur are sent out as kamlaris, and in Bardiya, boys are also sent. Informal surveys by involved charities show that nearly 3,000 Tharu girls from lower Dang valley alone worked as kamlaris until their recent rehabilitation. They estimate a national figure of 20,000 to 25,000 from the five Tharu districts of western Nepal.

Tharu intellectuals in Dang say the kamlari system became institutionalised when middlemen entered the scene. Daughters, who were previously being given to local landlords, were soon being sent off to cities and towns as favours for government and police officers.

The kamlari girl is ‘sold’ through middlemen to far-off homes and businesses after a verbal contract with the parents during the winter festival of Maaghi, and down payment of

Rs 4,000-6,000. The contract is for one year, but it continues as parents receive annual payments through middlemen who are often the only ones who know where the girl is. The girls get just food and clothes, and in rare cases, some education.

Srijana Chaudhary, 11, works as a helper at a roadside tea stall in Ghorahi, and also helps the owner’s family with household chores. Last Maaghi, Srijana was bought for Rs 4,000 and brought to Ghorahi from Deukhuri Valley. A shy girl with a sad and frightened demeanour, she attended an informal education class two hours every day until recently. “My name was cut off from the list,” she said. Asked if she wanted to go back to school, she nodded vigorously.

The owner and his family, who watched the conversation intently, were incensed. “Why are you bothering this poor family? Go and ask all the rich hotel owners and businessmen in Ghorahi who have dozens of kamlaris in their households.”

He had a point. Ghorahi has a growing kamlari problem. “Every other household here has a kamlari,” says Sadhna DC, a motivator for Friends of Needy Children (FNC) who travels trying to convince families and owners to let the girls go.

“Traders, government officials, businessmen, almost all keep kamlaris. It is entrenched here.”

Many parents say one reason they send their daughters out is because buyers promise them education. But SWAN and FNC claim that nearly 90 percent of the girls are never sent to school. “These are false promises. We have found only a few who are treated well and actually sent to school,” says Man Bahadur Chhettri of FNC, which works to rescue and rehabilitate the girls.

SWAN and FNC have had great success in checking the practice in lower Dang valley. In Gobardiya village of Khaira VDC, for example, a number of girls once sent as kamlaris have been brought back and rehabilitated. Most now attend local schools or vocational training classes in surrounding areas. But this success has also invited controversy, ill-will, and threats.

The Maoists, who initially supported kamlari eradication measures, got suspicious of the organisational activities of FNC and SWAN and forced them to withdraw their program last year. The rebels only relented five months later after Tharu families pressured the local Maoist leadership to allow the program to continue.

On 3 September, an association of local hoteliers and restaurateurs in Lamahi banned FNC and SWAN members from their eateries because of “unfounded allegations that we exploit children.” The owners instead argued they were providing employment for the girls. ●

BANNED

On 9 September, the Supreme Court directed the government to ban the kamlari system, much as the *kamaiya* system was banned five years ago. The Court also ordered the government to set up a kamlari rehabilitation fund for the welfare of the girls and their families. The order resulted from a writ petition filed two years ago by the FNC.

United Nations Children's Fund
Nepal Country Office

VACANCY NOTICE

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Vacancy No : VN/NEPA/2006/03	Vacancy closing date : 22 September 2006

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Minimum Qualifications and Experience Required:

- University degree in the social/humanities sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Health Education).
- Two years professional work experience in social development, preferably in the areas of public policy, communication, community development and social mobilization, behaviour change and community empowerment, at either the national or international level.
- Knowledge of current developments in the field of adult learning, literacy, community organization and participation.
- Training in community planning, behaviour analysis, formative research and evaluation of communication interventions.
- Ability to research, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.
- Ability to express clearly and concisely ideas and concepts in written and oral form.
- Proven skills in communication, networking, advocacy and negotiation, especially at the community level.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective working relationships, both within and outside the organization.
- Fluency in English and Nepali required.
- Ability to organize and implement training.
- Computer skills including internet navigation and various office user patterns.

The application should include curriculum CV, names of references (contactable), etc. (see conditions in the job advertisement) along with a recent photograph. Application should also enclose a self-written course essay in English with 300 words (one page) describing the greatest challenge they have faced in implementing a programme communication campaign and how they overcame it.

Please send your application to the following address along with all the required documents and a clear indication of the vacancy number on the envelope:

Chief of Operations

(Vacancy No. : VN/NEPA/2006-03)

UNICEF-Nepal Country Office, UN House

P.O. Box 1187, Kathmandu, Nepal

* QUALIFIED FEMALE CANDIDATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY *

** Only short-listed candidates will be informed **

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FOSSible

The third open Software Freedom Day (SFD) on 16 September will be held from 10AM-5PM at the Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka and features giveaways, tutorials and troubleshooting help. Bring your computer along and the techies will do the rest. Over 90 percent of Nepalis computers run on pirated software, and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) has long been seen as a solution. Users of such programs may freely use, study, and even alter them. In December 2005, Subhir Pradhanang, a founding member of Nepalis FOSS community, released Nepalinux, a full-fledged operating system with desktop applications for Nepali home users. www.fossnepal.org

Bankers code

The Nepal Bankers Association's annual general meeting, held under president Radhesh Pant, passed the yearly budget and passed a 'business code' to institutionalise minimal service standards for banks. Member banks have committed to clearly outlined rules regarding protection of customer interests, including a directive stating that clients have the right to be informed of all choices and services offered by the bank and that information regarding a client or account is to be kept secret. The meeting also passed a 'code of conduct' to be followed by every member bank for healthy competition within the industry.

NIBL charity

Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) has contributed Rs 640,000 to help the UNHCR with the Jhapa Bhutani refugee camps. Compassion fatigue among donors has meant falling assistance for the 110,000 refugees living in seven camps since 1991, many of whom were born here. "We are pleased to support UNHCR's noble cause of educating the refugees. This is part of our corporate social responsibility," said Prithvi Pandey, NIBL chairman and CEO. The contribution will be used for primary schools in the camps. UNHCR Nepal rep Abraham Abraham called the grant "landmark private sector support".

Pumori

A new version of Pumori Banking Software, called Pumori Enterprise, will soon hit the market. Mercantile, the company behind the software, says Enterprise will address the automating of all banking functions. The earlier version addressed only bank accounting functions and was based on multiple databases. Enterprise is scalable to handle hundreds of branches spanning the globe. The software interfaces with delivery channels like Any Branch Banking, ATM, POS, Pumori Data Exchange (PDX), Internet, and mobile telephony.

Tourism blues

Let's build a solid industry on the famous Nepali smile

It's the season for that favourite Nepali catchphrase, 'guests are like gods'. All well and good, but what about those who work to bring these guests here and make them feel at home? In the news this week are two telling items: the good and bad news that all



ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

airlines seats to Nepal are sold out, and that a delegation of tourism entrepreneurs felt obliged to go to the prime minister's office to ask for an end to pseudo-militant unions and the extortion racket. Nepal's tourism has over the past decade run into problems the second things start to look up: the IC 849 hijacking, riots sparked by a rumour about what some Indian actor said, the royal massacre, 9/11, Gulf War II, SARS, Maoists, blockades, and travel advisories. If

that weren't enough, in March 2001 hotels shut down due to a labour row over the service charge and in August 2004 a hotel was bombed. We just can't get it right. If our tourism sector wants a boost, the government, entrepreneurs, and workers all need to wake up. the government needs to revive Airline Seat Agreements to allow more airlines to fly in. With one-and-a-half aircraft, our flag carrier will not get anywhere. Why can't we have 25 flights from different Indian cities everyday? Let's hand over management of the airport to global experts. Better yet, let's give international players good concessions to build an international airport. Nepal Tourism Board needs to sort out its internal personality clashes without resorting to lawsuits. Tourism entrepreneurs can do the most, by first getting away from the politicking of their



KIRAN PANDAY

various associations. Constructing hotels was a way to get bank loans and upgrade an individual's lifestyle, then the bleak tourism scenario was a way to default on debt. Time to stop that. Time also to take advantage of the branding exercise underway ('Visit Nepal again, and again', #309). It may not be perfect, but it's the only one we've got. When Incredible India was launched, there was a lot of naysaying, but it's turned out to be a positive, enduring

brand. The Beed has devoted enough column inches to our labour force. But it's a fact that political forces manipulate labour, especially in the tourism sector, to their own ends. Labour can only exist if enterprises do. Why do we Nepalis not mind working in sub-human conditions outside Nepal, but in our own country demand the sky? Of course, the industry needs to respect labour and related laws, but unions can do their bit by not disrupting operations or staging demonstrations in hotel lobbies, or holding owners to ransom. Our core competencies in this service sector are our famous smile and politeness. Lose those, and our chances of doing well look pretty bleak. Political leaders may sway the minds of the labour force in the short run, but for long-term growth we need a workforce that enterprise can trust and work with. Tourism is and can continue to be one of our pillars of growth. It's time now to strengthen, not hammer at, its foundations, so we can pick up where the golden run of the early 90s left off. ●

www.arthabeed.com

United Nations Children's Fund
Nepal Country Office

VACANCY NOTICE

Post Title	Project Officer - Programme Communication	Post Level	National Officer (NO C level)
Post Duration	Fixed Term	Post Location	Kathmandu
Vacancy No.	VN-NEPA-2006-02	Vacancy closing date	2 September 2006

Purpose of the post:
Under the general guidance of the Director/Programme Officer, and in close coordination with the Communication Officer, responsible for the design, implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of a behavior change and social mobilization strategy in support of the country programme. The incumbent will have a cross-cutting support role for programme work of the Nepal Country Office (NCOO). The primary responsibilities will be: first, to develop the UNICEF Nepal Country Office strategy for Programme Communication; second, to ensure full coordination between sections on their respective programme communication activities; and third, to ensure comprehensive evaluation of programme communication outputs and that they align with the relevant section result statement.

Major Duties and Responsibilities include:

- In collaboration with UNICEF and government programme officers, design and manage/coordinate the implementation of communication plans of action among all target behavior development/change at individual/household levels, at social mobilization of civil society organizations and at targeted community participation in development programmes.
- Monitor and evaluate activities on the basis of applied communication research and frequent visits to project sites. Disseminate findings and research findings, ensure exchange of experience and new methods to government officials, programme staff and other UNICEF partners.
- In collaboration with partners, organize/manage the formative research, development, pre-testing and production of culturally relevant communication materials to ensure effective and efficient programme delivery, including facilitating behavior change where necessary.
- Develop partnerships with various religious groups, traditional leaders, teachers, artists and other organized groups in the community, as well as civil society organizations, to orient them on country programme goals and to guide their involvement in the implementation of the country programme.
- Develop training materials and activities to build capacity in participatory & behavior communication at various administrative levels in support of programme sustainability.
- Provide technical support to government counterparts in the development and appropriate use of communication for social development aimed at behavior change and collective action.

Minimum Qualifications and Experience Required:

- Advanced university degree in the social behavioral sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Health Education) with emphasis on public health communication planning, social mobilization, participatory research, training and impact evaluation at behavioral and community levels.
- Five years progressively responsible work experience in the planning and management of social development programmes, including two years in development planning, with practical experience in the adaptation and application of communication planning processes to specific populations.
- Versatility, judgement, creativity, and the ability to work on a team. Ability to cope with stressful and difficult conditions, and political/cultural sensitivity.
- Knowledge of current developments in the fields of communication theory, motivational psychology, adult learning theory, and primary media, community organization and participation.
- Good analytical, negotiating, communication and advisory skills.
- Computer skills including internet navigation and various office applications.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective working relationships both within and outside the organization.
- Training in strategic communication planning, behavior analysis, formative research and evaluation of communication interventions.
- Fluency in English and Nepali required.
- Ability to organize and implement training, including development of curriculum and methodologies.
- Ability to express clearly and concisely ideas and concepts in written and oral form.
- Computer skills including internet navigation and various office applications.

The application should include cover letter, CV, names of referees, contact telephone numbers, e-mail and full address along with a recent passport photo. Application should also enclose a self-written, concise essay in English within 300 words (one page) describing the greatest challenge they have faced in implementing a programme communication campaign, and how they overcame it.

Please send in your application to the following address along with all the required documents with a clear indication of the vacancy number on the envelope:

Chief of Operations
(Vacancy No.: VN-NEPA-2006-02)
UNICEF-Nepal Country Office, UN House
P.O. Box 1187, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Interview with Prachanda on *Bahas*, Kantipur Television, 9 September

You've come a long way from two rifles and a pistol. Would things be different if the parties had done right by the people?

No, there are other countries where political parties are corrupt too. Why isn't there a revolution in those countries?

Could we say the political parties and the palace gathered the tinder and straw, and you just lit the spark?

I wouldn't say that, it's unscientific. There was a basis for a revolution, our ideology.

Did you think you'd succeed as much in ten years?

We knew the revolution would pick up speed, and we'd either fail or succeed very quickly. But we couldn't predict reaching this state in ten years.

Your revolution has shaken the nation, even the world, but

'Let's not call it guilt'

what about all the bloodshed and lives lost?

Every great nation has been formed through great sacrifice. No nation can go forward without it.

What your heart says is more important?

I don't think your question is right. This success is not mine. It is the Nepali people who were oppressed for hundreds of years who have succeeded.

Which side is weightier, the nation's success or the loss of lives?

We are definitely saddened by the tears and blood. I am a very sensitive person. I'm not just talking about our comrades, I was equally sentimental when policemen and soldiers from the enemy camp died in large numbers.

So you do have guilt?

Let's not call it guilt. I always wanted to minimise human losses. That's why we started peace talks the first time. It wasn't necessary then, it was my sensitivity to the people's wishes. Gyanendra staged his coup last year; he's from a class that doesn't care how many Nepalis die and perhaps he as a man is a bit cruel. People wouldn't have believed in the seven party protests then. I thought deeply for three days, sleeping very little, and came to the conclusion that a ceasefire must be declared. I wasn't under any pressure from the party or from outside. The decision was purely from the soul. We decided that, as a party fighting for the working class, we must take the first step. I felt great satisfaction after the decision, and that the ceasefire became a bigger weapon than the war itself.

Why did you torture those found guilty of committing crimes?

That was a mistake, against party policy. In war it is necessary to take action against those directly involved in killing our comrades and the people. But since the people's war started, we have party central office directives, which I myself drafted, that if it is necessary to annihilate anyone, there must be no torture. But it did happen anyway. There

were some pictures of people our friends killed that I couldn't even look at. I myself was terrorised when I saw these pictures.

What action did you take against your party members found guilty of committing these barbaric murders?

I can't give you details now, but we took very serious action. Otherwise the movement would have lost its base.

We hear the political parties suggested you use your weapons during the April Jana Andolan.

When Gyanendra was trying to hold his local level elections the seven parties requested that we mobilise our PLA to attack and make the elections a failure.

Now we don't know what kind of pressure the parties are under, maybe from foreign powers. Because of the five-point agreement, we felt secure, but within two or three days Girija Babu went to Biratnagar and said repeatedly at press conferences that the Maoists can't be considered a political party until we give up our weapons. He shouldn't have. He also kept talking about a ceremonial monarchy, which he needn't have done, whatever his own beliefs. At the time we were holding talks and the interim constitution was being prepared. His comments only roused unnecessary suspicion.

Third, the most important and sensitive issue for Nepal at this moment is the democratisation of the army, yet he rewarded the old regime by making Rukmangat Katuwal chief and confirmed our suspicions. In Kamidanda we said that unless the government is pressured by the street, it is going to regress.

So Girija Prasad's words and actions made you decide that they must be attacked?

Attack is not the right word, but the conclusion was that unless the people were brought on the streets once again, the government would turn back. Girija Prasad Koirala is the prime minister of a country in a state of emergency. Whatever he says cannot be taken as a personal statement. Girija is not an individual at this moment. †

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Adulteration

Kantipur, 10 September

Adulteration of diesel and petrol has increased after the Nepal Oil Corporation stopped monitoring the purity of fuel at gas stations. Mechanical engineers who inspected the fuels said diesel sold at pumps had 75 percent kerosene mixed in and petrol had 40 percent diesel. Fuel adulteration is why many motorcycles and trucks, even new ones, break down. “After the Kantipur story on adulteration came out, it went down for 15 days, but now it’s as bad as it was,” says chief mechanic of Syakar, Sitaram Neupane. NOC’s monitoring was terminated after the government was forced to roll back price hikes last month. Sources said the Ministry of Industries and Supplies had instructed NOC not to do anything until the committee on fuel prices submits its report. Meanwhile, reports say up to 3,000 litres of petrol are smuggled into India every day from Nepalganj alone because of the price differential between India and Nepal.

Rebel spies

Dristi, 12 September

After the Maoist central committee meeting decided that they would embark on an urban

uprising if the talks do not resume, the rebels have started deploying spies to better understand the daily activities of the SPA, government, and security forces. Their intelligence section, INT, is under the direct command of top-level Maoist leaders. Our sources say the Maoist spies in the INT are to keep tabs on ministers, party leaders, high-level army and police officers, and diplomats who are against their policies. Before this, the INT was used to keep tabs on some of the Maoists’ own leaders, and to monitor the field situation before a big attack. INT cadres went out to rural areas equipped with satellite phones and attacks were carried out based on the news they sent back. Maoist sources say that to control the situation during the urban uprising they will use the intelligence against those conspiring to suppress the movement. Most Maoist leaders are in the capital right now, and INT cadres will also be helpful to monitor their movement, to see if they are forming alliances with those who tarnish the party’s name. The Maoists say the spies will be especially useful because the district level offices have sent their people, and the special command theirs, and none of them recognise each other. This will work to the party’s advantage, as no one will know who is spying on whom.

Rumours

Editorial in Nepal Samacharpatra, 14 September

The news that weapons were being imported despite peace talks between the government and the Maoists being underway raised concerns throughout the nation on Wednesday. The Maoists were on high alert from Tuesday evening, claiming that the government was importing large quantities of weapons via the eastern border. Over three dozen vehicles carrying tents, clothing, vehicle spare parts, and helicopters for the Nepal Army were brought to Gajuri, Dhading, on the way to Kathmandu, with strict orders to remove every obstacle along the Mugling-Naryanghat and Mugling-Thankot stretches. Neither the government nor the Nepal Army issued a statement before these supplies were moved, causing suspicion and mistrust amongst both the people and the Maoists. The Ceasefire Monitoring Committee has gone to Gajuri and said that the trucks did not contain any weapons, and the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu also claims the trucks were empty. Hopefully the confusion will clear up now. If there was any need to import goods for the Nepal Army, the government should have discussed it with the ruling parties and the Maoists. However, no official of the government or Nepal Army thought that was necessary. Perhaps in the past there was no need to do so, but these are different times. At a time when the Maoists are preparing to enter mainstream politics and all the political parties and the people are focusing on a constituent assembly, any activity that might rouse suspicion is not acceptable. It was the people of Kathmandu and its surrounding areas that had to bear the brunt of things when the Maoists suddenly declared a strike on Wednesday to protest the alleged import of weapons. Although the strike was cancelled later that day, it took time for things to settle down. The Maoists also need to think about the effect such decisions will have on the country and the people. Decisions made in haste may be regretted, or be detrimental to the party itself.



ANUP PRAKASH

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(First published date : 1st September 2006)

Practical Action is a not-for-profit international NGO with head Office in the UK and working in South Asia, Southern and East Africa and Latin America. It works to alleviate poverty through the development and use of appropriate technologies. It is also deeply involved in developing countries by introducing appropriate technologies for the environment, for transforming business, for education building and fully employing and empowering others for a vibrant future. For instance, we are currently by implementing water supply projects in rural areas of Nepal, and in the Kathmandu Valley. We are also involved in providing education and training to the poor in the Kathmandu Valley. For the last 10 years, Practical Action has been working in Nepal, and has a long history of successful implementation of various projects in the country. Practical Action Nepal is now looking for the following positions:

Team Leader - Markets and Livelihood – One (Kathmandu Based)

This position is a part of the team of livelihoods, who will lead the development and implementation of Practical Action's work in Nepal towards the Markets and Livelihood Programme, ensuring consistency with the national strategic framework. The incumbent will also develop input and strategic plan of the international programme, by ensuring coherence in approaches and maximising Practical Action Nepal's knowledge, impact and influence.

Major Responsibilities:

- Provide strategic direction to develop and implement the projects, programmes for Markets and Livelihood Programme, in line with national and international policies.
- Ensure the strategic priority of the programme and the financial and budgetary requirements for the work by developing and projects, as well as sector research and dissemination projects.
- Coordinate high standard of management, synthesis and leadership in the field of the projects and programmes within the Markets and Livelihood Programme, and to ensure knowledge of the national and international policy and other relevant issues of the programme.
- Represent the organization at national level, including making presentations and influencing the policies of the government and other stakeholders.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Master's Degree in Development Studies, Economics, Social Sciences, Business Studies or a related field, with a minimum of 10 years of work experience in the field.
- Strong communication and management skills, especially in leading a team of markets workers, to work together with national level workers, to develop and implement the programme.
- Experience of at least 10 years in research and research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative analyses.
- Experience of project and programme management, supervision and financial management.
- Excellent report and proposal writing skills and experience.
- Excellent communication and negotiation skills, with a strong ability to work with the government and other stakeholders.

Project Manager- Mainstreaming Livelihood approaches to Disaster Management- One (Chitwan based)

The Project Manager will have to manage specific projects, to ensure that the project is implemented in a timely and strategic manner, and to ensure that the project is implemented in a timely and strategic manner, and to ensure that the project is implemented in a timely and strategic manner.

Major Responsibilities:

- Manage the project, to ensure that the project is implemented in a timely and strategic manner, and to ensure that the project is implemented in a timely and strategic manner.
- Coordinate with the national level workers, to develop and implement the programme.
- Coordinate with the national level workers, to develop and implement the programme.

Minimum Qualifications:

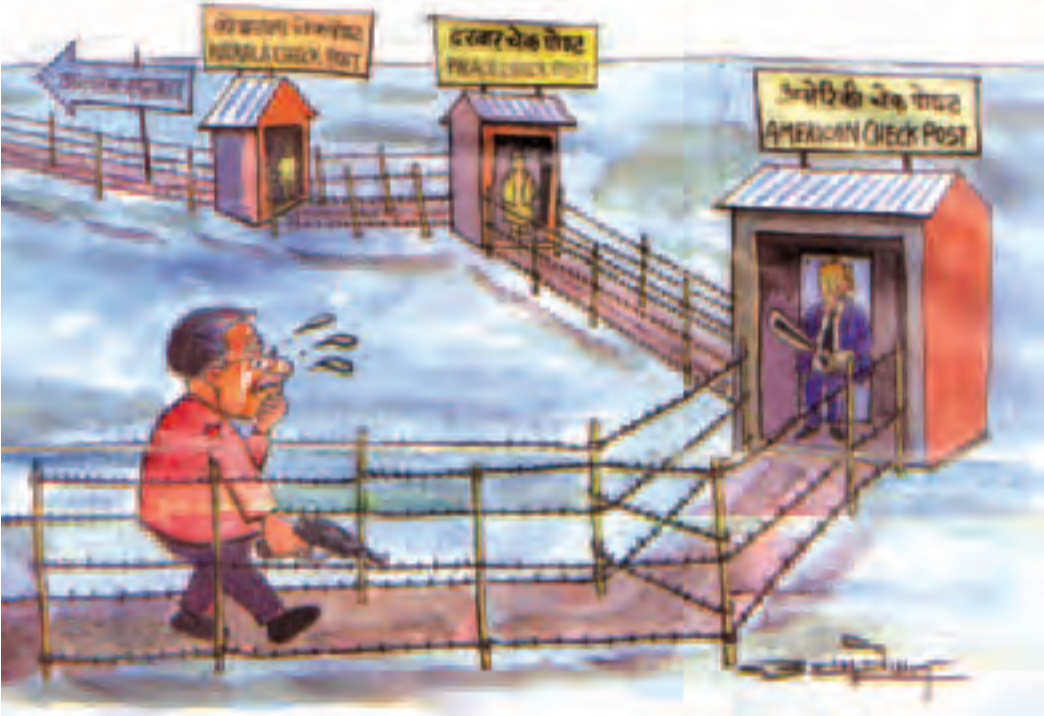
- Master's Degree in Natural Resource Management or a related field, with a minimum of 10 years of work experience in the field.
- Strong communication and management skills, especially in leading a team of markets workers, to work together with national level workers, to develop and implement the programme.
- Experience of at least 10 years in research and research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative analyses.

For detail job description and further information on these jobs please send an e-mail to HR@practicalaction.org.np

Applicants from the Nepalese citizen fulfilling the above requirements, should send to the following address with detailed CV including two references and a pass photo 2x2 inch size, no later than Friday 22 September 2006 to:

PRACTICAL ACTION

For more information and details from us at our website www.practicalaction.org.np, the above mentioned jobs are highly encouraged to apply.



Last signboard: Constituent Assembly

राजधानी *Rajdhani*, 10 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Perhaps the protest came spontaneously from the people. Our party did not call the protest on Wednesday in the capital.”

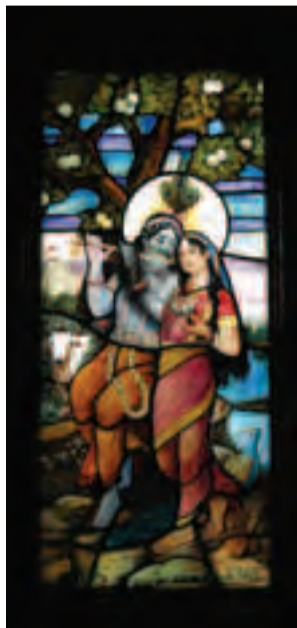
CPN (Maoist) spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara speaking to *himalkhabar.com* about the protests on Wednesday, on 13 September.



ANUP PRAKASH

Garden of Dreams

This Dasain, a dream comes true



MIN BAJRACHARYA



ANUP PRAKASH



MIN BAJRACHARYA

SOPHIA TAMOT

After much anticipation, the Garden of Dreams is finally opening its gates to the public on 8 October. For six years, extensive restoration work went on hidden behind the huge wall along Tridevi Marg in Thamel. Soon, the entrance gate opposite the SAARC Secretariat should be lined with visitors queuing to enter the historical garden.

A special zebra crossing now provides easy access to visitors crossing the street to enter the main gate. Götz Hagnmüller, chief architect of the project and the man behind the Patan Museum restoration is excited

that the big day is just around the corner. “We are sure the garden will be a huge success. In fact, we are worried that it might be so popular that it might turn into a fair ground,” says Hagnmüller. A lot of thought has gone into setting the admission fees. “The cost of maintaining the garden will be very high, so we can’t afford to have people mess it up,” shrugs Hagnmüller.

He is also very strict about the kind of activities that will be allowed inside the park. “No rock concerts. No weddings. No fashion shows,” he says. Instead, the garden will accept bookings for cultural events and private functions at the three restored pavilions. The basic idea is to

have the garden generate its own income through admission fees, rent collected from the Basanta Café and Kaiser Bar and from events.

Restored after 80 years, the \$ 1 million project funded by Austrian Development Aid and implemented by Eco Himal covers 4070 meter; is a testament to the extraordinary vision and talent of one man—Field Marshall Kaiser Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana. If he were alive today, he would have been pleased with all the restoration work and the extensive innovations added to the garden.

Stone slabs have been replaced with fountains. A moat has been constructed

around the stage and a multipurpose amphitheatre, seating 300 people, built around it. Decaying wooden pillars of a pergola have been swapped with historical looking iron cast ones. A rotunda has been built, remodelled after one of the lost buildings in the garden. Numerous water bodies have been constructed, and the main pond has four copper lotuses that emit gas flames during the night. Night illumination has been carefully planned.

Another innovative idea is the use of aluminium foil in the high ceilings of the pavilion to get a polished silver look. And not to worry, Hagnmüller says, it’s durable because no dust collects there.

During restoration work, Hagnmüller

October 8, Sunday
6.30 PM hours | Ticket: Rs 500
CLASSICAL NEPALI CONCERT
Coordinated by Sangeeta Mishra of Kirateshor
Mahadev Sangeet Ashram

October 11, Wednesday
6.30 PM | Ticket: Rs1500
THE JAZZ AFFAIR
By the Saskia Laroo Band (Netherlands) and
Stupa (Nepal)

October 14, Saturday
10.30 AM ñ 10PM hours | Ticket: Rs 500
JAPANESE DAY
Display of Ikebana, Bonsai, Japanese dolls,
Kendo, Kimonos
Chrysanthemum Festival, Tea Ceremony &
Musical Concert

October 15, Sunday
6.30 hours
CHILDREN'S DAY
Music concert by children

October 17, Tuesday
7PM hours | Ticket: Rs 300
FIRE IN THE MONASTERY
A play in Nepali, Directed by Sunil
Pokharel presented by Gurukul

October 18, Wednesday
6.30 hours | Ticket: Rs 500
FUSION NIGHT
By Trikaal, Salil on the Didgeridoo
and An FainneñKathmanduís
expatriate Irish Band

October 20, Friday
7PM hours | Ticket: RS 500
RAMAILO SANJH WITH HAVAAS
IN CONCERT
Presented by Nepa~laya

FOR MORE DETAILS
Kaiser Mahal Garden of Dreams,
Kathmandu | Tel.: 4425340
Email: kmahal@mos.com.np



MIN BAJRACHARYA



ANUP PRAKASH

and his team discovered a narrow space between two walls in the south that had been lying unused and covered by overgrown flora. He devised a way to make use of it by having a water cascade flows from one narrow end of the wall towards a slightly bigger area—creating the optical illusion of a long waterfall. An oriental feature, Hagmüller says this is also a ‘hidden garden,’ which is a characteristic of many European historical gardens. One big advantage of the water cascade is that it

masks the noise from the streets of Thamel. In the summer months, this area is also the coolest in the entire garden. So if you’re headed for shade and a quiet corner, this is the spot you want. One problem the garden did have was with the water supply. With so many water bodies and foliage to take care of, they needed something they could depend on. So the project team dug two ground wells, to provide the garden with water. Although most of the garden is

complete, further restoration work and training of staff will continue up to September 2007. These days, the team of over 100 staff, are extremely busy with preparations for the opening. The project estimates that it will take about Rs 300,000 to maintain the garden and pay staff each month. More than half of that amount will hopefully come from the rent while the rest should be covered through admission fees. ●

Tickets

- Single admission:** Nepalis Rs 80, foreigners Rs 160, children, disabled persons and senior citizens Rs 40
- 10 admissions:** Locals Rs 400, foreigners Rs 800
- Annual membership:** RS 2000, including 10% discount on all restaurant bills and free parking
- Corporate membership:** RS 1000 for a minimum of 10 members, 10% discount on all restaurant bills



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KU's quality education

After 15 years, Kathmandu University looks ahead to the next 15



KIRAN PANDAY

MALLIKA ARYAL

Since it was formed by an act of parliament after the pro-democracy movement in 1991, Kathmandu University (KU) has been selective about students and faculty, and has aimed for excellence.

But, as with most institutions started with one man's vision, KU faces the same challenges as the nation itself: how to adjust to the new demands of a new generation.

When Suresh Raj Sharma got together with like-minded friends retired from academia, all they

had was an idea. Today that idea stands in the form of a university that has more than 5,000 students in its departments and affiliated colleges.

"We all complain that the government doesn't do enough for us, but KU is the perfect example of what we can give back to the country," says the silver haired professor, who worked his way up from an impoverished Sindhuli village to get a PhD and devote his life to education. "The country made me what I am, I have no right to complain."

Sharma has always been a doer, overcoming obstacles to

ensure that Nepal can provide an international standard university education so students don't have to go abroad to study. Today KU offers intermediate, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level programs in science, engineering, medicine, management, education, pharmacy, environment, music, human and natural resources, information technology, and biotechnology through six schools.

Sharma's biggest challenge is ensuring quality and he admits that he is worried about making sure that new departments like

biotechnology and media meet the highest standards. KU has an enviable record of student retention (85 percent), three-fourths of all students have jobs within three months of graduating, and up to 20 percent go on to further studies.

"Just providing education is never enough," says Sharma, "we have to make sure that there are jobs out there for our graduates." Since 1998, the pharmacy department alone has produced 350 graduates who are the backbone of Nepal's budding pharmaceutical industry. KU-affiliated medical schools in Nepal save the country at least Rs 40 million a year in fees that would have otherwise have gone abroad, in addition to attracting medical students from abroad.

KU also has the only hydropower energy program in this part of the world, set up with Norwegian help. It is the perfect example of capacity building: setting up a hydropower training institute in Nepal instead of sending students to Norway. Other than Nepalis, 15 students from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and Bangladesh are also presently enrolled in the program.

Students come to KU because they want to study. With rigorous curricula and the pressure to do well, students have little time for politics, unlike in other

universities. "My parents are paying so much money for me to study in KU, I came here because I want regular classes and I want to study," says Anuroop Manandhar, a fourth year biotechnology student.

Unlike other colleges, at KU it's not the students but the teachers who are on the warpath. Following the April pro-democracy uprising, faculty members at KU have been pressuring the administration to address long-standing grievances on promotion and job security. When the administration refused to allow staff to form a union in May, the university shut down for two weeks—the first time in its history.

Sharma concedes there may be legitimate demands, and says he is willing to consider them. But even for a chronic optimist like Sharma this episode has been a bitter reality check. "I gave it all I had, we made this institution brick-by-brick," he says, "it is very painful to see people trying to destroy what you have built so carefully."

Oddly enough, it was KU students who mediated between administration and agitating staff. "When the classes stopped we knew our semester calendar was going to be affected, so we pressured both sides to sit for talks and not fool around with our future," says Deepak Sharma, a student. The university accepted some of the demands, which are in the process of being implemented.

Perhaps now KU can go back to doing what it does best: using the next 15 years to build on the last 15 to produce a workforce of homegrown talent that is truly world class. ●

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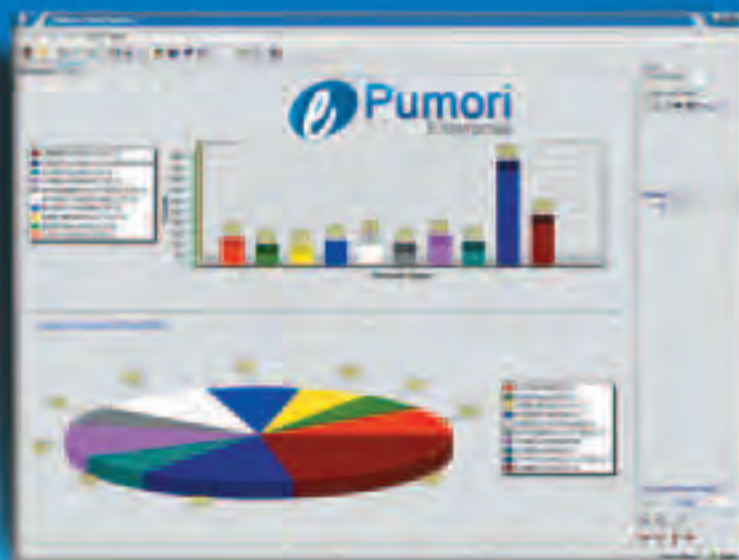
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MERCANTILE

Man of the House

Speaker Subhash Nembang puts parliament to work

SOPHIA TAMOT

It is easy to overlook parliament’s dramatic transformation of Nepal’s state structure since the April Uprising. But that is because parliament made it look so easy.

Using the mandate of the people power movement, the house of representatives has dismantled the powers of a feudal monarchy and pushed through progressive legislation at a breathtaking pace: vested the powers of royal succession in parliament’s state affairs committee, stripped the king of his role as supreme commander of the army, declared Nepal a secular state, ratified the Rome Statute, and amended the citizenship act.

Critics say parliament has overstepped its mandate and is trying to substitute real progress with pseudo-radical legislation. Conspiracy-minded republicans even say dismantling the powers of the monarchy is a way to save it. The Maoists, who have no representation in parliament, have definitely felt the rug pulled from under them as the House makes decisions on issues that have always been their agenda.

The man driving this activist parliament is Speaker Subash Chandra Nembang, and he has no qualms about going too far. The soft-spoken and suave speaker has gathered a formidable reputation for integrity since he burst upon the political stage as chairman of



KIRAN PANDAY

the public accounts committee five years ago.

The committee came down hard on allegations of corruption in the lease of aircraft by then-Royal Nepal Airlines in a deal initiated by Girija Prasad Koirala when he was prime minister in 2000. Nembang did not even hesitate to investigate a minister from his own UML in another lease scandal, even though it upset his party colleagues.

Says Nembang: “What matters most to me is justice. I have taken an oath to work for the people.” Nembang is a bit worried that the slew of reform legislations passed

by parliament will face delays in implementation. For example, the ratification of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 169 should give indigenous people more rights by law, but will it in practice?

Nembang himself comes from a line of Limbu nobility from eastern Nepal and learnt early on what discrimination does to people. His father, a lawyer, had been pro-Congress, but Nembang was attracted to communist ideology. He became a student activist during the Panchayat years, and turned towards politics as an elected MP from Ilam. He is also an attorney with 20

years of experience.

Despite being a communist, Nembang has no reservations when it comes to his own family’s beliefs. His liberalism is apparent when he discloses that his wife is a fashion designer who runs Hama, a popular boutique in Durbar Marg.

While being interviewed, a group of constituents from Ilam arrive unannounced. He doesn’t turn them away, and welcomes them politely. They garland him and sit down for a chat about conditions on the ground in his home district.

In a country where politicians are known for feathering their own nests, it is refreshing to come across one who has vision and is driven by a strong commitment to democracy and development.

“My job is to weaken the forces of regression and strengthen people power,” says Nembang, “my job is also to ensure that the constituent assembly elections take place soon and that they are a success.” The speaker is so busy, he has declined more than a dozen speaking invitations and junkets abroad to take care of things here. The peace process is still fragile, but with politicians like Nembang steering the House of Representatives there is hope. But how positive is he?

“Oh I am positive,” he replies with conviction, “because the people are on our side.” ●

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"50 percent of the noise is posturing"



GÜNTHER BÄCHLER is a Special Adviser for Peace Building in Nepal of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs. He has experiences in peace building in the Balkans, Horn of Africa, Ivory Coast and Rwanda. He spoke to *Nepali Times* about the road ahead in the peace process.

Nepali Times: Things seem stuck in the peace process.

Günther Bächler: The process is on track. Put it in perspective: the unilateral ceasefire of the CPN (Maoist), the seven-party alliance, the 12-point understanding, the April Jana Andolan, the 25-point code of conduct, the letters to the UN, the fact that there is a Special Representative of Kofi Annan here at the invitation of both sides. All this is progress, now it needs implementation. The interim constitution, although it couldn't be finalised, proved that political issues must be settled in the political arena. If both sides refrain from expanding their positions, and instead concentrate on their common interest to elect a constituent assembly then the open questions can be settled soon.

But there seems to be a wide trust gap.

There are suspicions, but 50 percent of the noise is posturing, bargaining, and campaigning, common for political parties. Only 50 percent is disagreement on real issues. Without continuous dialogue or a clear roadmap, growing mistrust will lead to a divergence of views and perceptions, and hardening of positions. After 27 August 2003, armed violence resumed despite political agreement on a six-point agenda. To avoid a repeat, building confidence and strengthening both talks teams is essential.

What influence does the international community have?

The peace process has been and is Nepali-driven, which is good. The international community expresses its views, but has limited influence on the process as a whole, which is also good. There are two concerns in the international community's statements. The continuation of violence, which drives statements about disarming the rebels

before they join the political mainstream. Second, concern about the peace process as a whole, which promotes statements about a clear roadmap based on a more systematic approach to the talks that minimises suspicion and mistrust.

Yours is the second position, but isn't it different for those with geopolitical interest in Nepal and those without?

I don't think there are too many geopolitical interests at stake. The most important actor is India, and the complex, historically-grown relationship can be an asset for both sides. Of course there are different international views about how a democratic and peaceful Nepal would look. Some fear a left-wing alliance government more than others. Nepal is a sovereign country and we should help create a situation where voters can decide in a free and fair manner, without external political interference.

What is the Swiss interest?

For 50 years we've been engaged at the local level with the people of Nepal, with the excluded and marginalised. So we often see the peace process from the perspective of our partners in rural areas. If any political elite puts the process at risk, that jeopardises the positive transformation of the country. We all need to be committed to the peace process, spend time to make it sustainable, not just complain about failure of any side, or engage in business, politics, and development work as usual.

But is there still the political will for peace?

Yes, but there is also pressure to engage in parallel strategies that nourish suspicion and self-fulfilling prophecies of failure. Instead, we should ask: what is the source of the lack of confidence and erosion of trust, and how can it be re-built?

Constituent assembly elections are the major step to legitimise a representative body and draft a new constitution with full participation of all Nepalis. The focus should be on free and fair elections, but all sides are overloading the formation of an interim government with conditions. The interim government is becoming a barrier to a new constitution when it is in fact a temporary arrangement not yet been legitimised by the electorate. Political parties denying people their right to vote will lose credibility and pave the way for those who'd like to run the country with an iron hand.

What does your job entail?

I contribute ideas and help create an enabling environment for dialogue, support negotiations, and peace initiatives. I should not interfere in the process owned by Nepalis. I am confident, as I have established good relationships with all sides. My expertise in conflict resolution and negotiation, peace and constitution-making processes, and federalist state structures, is on offer. For example, I am now coaching a group of 20 Nepali women to strengthen their negotiation skills.

Do you think Nepal is unique?

Nepal has a remarkable conflict-carrying capacity compared to other countries, where armed violence has triggered complete state failure. There was never a full-fledged war and no extreme violence. Some ethical barriers, the focus on political options, and a strong, organised civil society helped prevent the worst. The media and human rights defenders also contributed. Finally, the society at large has enormous self-help capacity. The ability to handle the most difficult challenges provides a sound basis for building a peaceful democracy in Nepal.

स्तरीय पत्रिकाले दिन्छ गुणस्तरीय उत्पादनहरू













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Classic Encounters

Jazz aficionados have a double treat at tonight's Surya Classic Encounters. Nepal's very own jazz legends Cadenza will be performing at the Radisson Hotel's Olive Bar while Stupa—an up-and-coming jazz outfit to watch out for—will be playing at the Rodi Bar in Soaltee Hotel.

Last week's edition of Surya Classic Encounters featured guitar maestro Anil Shahi and his troupe fusing the elite crowd with their mix of western and eastern instrumental music at Absolute Bar in Pulchowk (pictured) while Stupa wowed Jatra with their jazz. The Absolute encounter was subtler and suited a quiet dinner type affair, while at Jatra jazz lovers just couldn't get enough and were asking for more even after the last number.

Double treat with Cadenza and Stupa

This week is packed as well, with two events on Friday, one on Saturday and the last of the Surya Classic Encounters on Wednesday at the Liquid Lounge. Besides Friday's event at Olive Bar, jazz masters Cadenza—with vocalist and drummer Navin Chettri, Samir Chettri on congos, Rajat Rai on guitars, Roshan Gurung on bass, and Marino on saxophone—will be playing on Saturday at the Fusion bar in Dwarika's as well. Although Cadenza needs no introduction for most, those new to jazz need to understand that this is the band that not only introduced the genre in Nepal but also took Nepali musicians to regional and international fame with their world class style and innovation. They've played in gigs at home and abroad, and have been major contributors to Jazzmandu, the annual jazz extravaganza, ever since it began in 2002.

The final episode of Surya Classic Encounters series will be held at Liquid Lounge on Wednesday 20 September with Nepal rockers 1974AD playing unplugged. The band that began more than ten years ago has produced more hit numbers than any other modern Nepali rock outfit. Their newest album *On Air* is completed and will soon be released by Santana Records.

Cadenza @ Olive Bar, Radisson Hotel, 8PM Friday 15 September
Stupa @ Rodi Bar, Soaltee Hotel, 8PM Friday 15 September
Cadenza @ Fusion Bar, Dwarikas Hotel, 7PM Saturday 16 September
1974AD unplugged @ Liquid Lounge, Lajimpat, 8PM Wednesday 20 September



blow the blue monk

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15th SEP @ RADISSON HOTEL
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15th SEP @ RODI BAR, SOALTEE HOTEL
WITH STUPA, 8PM ONWARDS

16th SEP @ FUSION BAR, DWARIKA'S
WITH CADENZA, 7PM ONWARDS

20th SEP @ LIQUID LOUNGE, LAZIMPAT
WITH 1974AD, UNPLUGGED
8PM ONWARDS

Classic ENCOUNTERS

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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Green Apple** exhibition of Saroj Kushwahais works, 17 September at Bandana. 4428694
- ❖ **Reflections** paintings by Chanda Shah at The Art Shop till 18 September. 4267063
- ❖ **3000 Trail Bridges** photo exhibition of trail bridges at Patan Museum Café till 19 September
- ❖ **Sparsh** exhibition of Bhim Prasad Sharma's works at Gallery Nine till 20 September. 4428694
- ❖ **A Retrospective** exhibition of RN Joshi's work at Park Gallery, Pulchok, till 25 September. 5522307
- ❖ **Impressions of Manang** till 28 September, Nepal Tourism Board



EVENTS

- ❖ **Surya Kala Super Model Contest 2006** at Hotel Yak & Yeti, 15 September, 6PM
- ❖ **Tuborg MaHa Gaijatra** at Pragya Pratisthan, Kamaladi, 15 September, 5.30 PM
- ❖ **Jacques Derrida and Deconstructionism** with Arun Gupto, 16 September, 4PM at Martin Chautari. 4238050
- ❖ **Garment Industry in Nepal Under WTO Framework** with Chiranjibi Tiwari, 16 September, 3PM at Martin Chautari
- ❖ **Water colour painting, visual presentation, discussion, workshop** organised by Nepal Water Colour Society, 16 September at Park Gallery. 5522307
- ❖ **Bandana** a new space for arts and creativity below Gallery Nine, Lajimpat opening on 17 September
- ❖ **Jeewan Dekhi Jeewan Samma** written by Abhi Subedi and directed by Sunil Pokhrel at Sama Natakghar, Gurukul till 20 September
- ❖ **Lux Supermodel Hunt** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 22 September
- ❖ **Films Out of Mind** at Lazimpat Gallery Café, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* 19 September, *Touching the Void* 21 September, *Harvey* 26 September, *Psycho* 28 September, 7PM
- ❖ **Ghatasthapana** 23 September
- ❖ **Naya Nepal Conference** organised by Action Aid Nepal and the Social Science Baha, 26-27 September. 9841419943

MUSIC

- ❖ **Fusion** with Kutumba and Stupa at Moksh Live, 15 September, 8.30 PM. 5526212
- ❖ **Drop Everything** start your weekend with live music night at Lajimpat Gallery Cafe, 15 September, 7.30 PM
- ❖ **Winter Concert Rehearsals** by The Kathmandu Chorale, till 15 September, 7PM at the British School. 5534737
- ❖ **Mexican Night** with DJ Sishir at Liquid Lounge, 15 September, 7.30 PM, Rs 500
- ❖ **Software Freedom Day** free software, tutorials and technical help, 16 September, 10AM-5PM at Yala Maya Kendra
- ❖ **Take 5 Jazz Night** with Cadenza, Dwarika's Hotel, 7PM on 16 September, Rs 1200, 7PM
- ❖ **Nanglo Volkswagon Beetle Rally** for cleft palate surgery, 16 September, 9.30 at Nanglo Darbar Marg
- ❖ **Yala Maya Classics** with live performances by Jeeven Ale on flute, Manoj Gautam on tabla and Mandira Ale on Tanpura, 18 September, 6PM at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka. 5553767
- ❖ **Women in Concert Part IV** at Hotel Deli Annapurna, 24 September, Rs 999, 7PM
- ❖ **Ramailo Saanjh** with Anil Shahi's Maya Mantra at Dwarika's, 26 September, Rs 1000
- ❖ **Oktober Fest** a fusion of food and music at Dwarika's, 29 September, Rs 850
- ❖ **Surya Classic Jazzmandu 2006** 12-20 October
- ❖ **Open Mic Night** at ViaVia Café, Thamel every Friday, 8PM

DINING

- ❖ **Mezza and Margaritas** at Dwarika's Fusion, every Wednesday at 5.30 PM, Rs 555. 4479448
- ❖ **Saffron** new Indian restaurant at Hotel Shangri-la. 4412999
- ❖ **Seven Sensations** at Hotel Yak & Yeti, cocktails and snacks. 4248999
- ❖ **Thakali Lunch** special price, everyday at Moksh. 5526212
- ❖ **Sizzler Promotion** at Hotel Himalaya. 5523900
- ❖ **Authentic Thai Food** at Krua Thai, Thamel. 4701291
- ❖ **Monsoon Madness Wine Festival** enjoy wines from four continents at Kilroy's of Kathmandu. 4250440
- ❖ **Wet & Wild Summer Splash** swimming and lunch, or overnight stay with breakfast and swimming, Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Weekend Brunch** at Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. 4491234

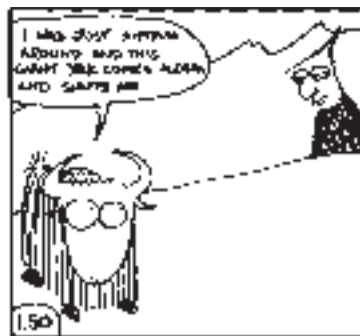
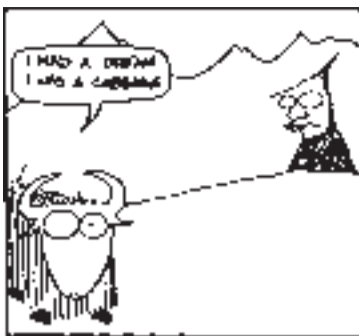
GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** open for new season from 1 September. 4361500
- ❖ **Nature Retreat** at Park Village Resorts & Spa. 4375280
- ❖ **Escape Kathmandu** at Shivapuri Heights Cottage. 9841371927
- ❖ **Escape to Godavari Village Resort**, an overnight stay package with breakfast & swimming. 5560675

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YAK YETI YAK

by MIKU



Quest Entertainment

During a night of partying, Anamika (Urmila Matondkar) meets Nikhil (Sanjay Suri) at a pub. The chemistry between them is instant but she disappears into the night without even telling him her name. Nikhil starts to visit the pub regularly hoping to meet her again. One such night at the pub with friends a confrontation leads to a shot being fired. Time stands still as Nikhil realizes that he is holding the gun from which the shot was fired. This moment would change all their lives forever.

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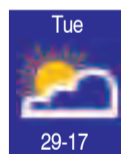
NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



This week's three-day run of stormy rain is like the Nepali proverb, 'ea lamp shines brightest before it dies'. Chitwan valley was hit hardest by this front, that brought it over 400mm of rain in three days, 250mm from a single storm. This was the last of its kind this monsoon, though the satellite picture from Thursday afternoon shows more rain in store for the coming week. Breakaway clouds will bring light showers towards evening, and the sunny days will be punctuated by gentle autumn breezes. Valley residents can plan activities this weekend to match the fair weather.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



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SAGAR SHRESTHA

ARMS AND THE MESS: These Armoured Personnel Carriers and the trucks in the background sparked off rumours of arms imports, which led to riots. The APCs are part of the supplies accompanying the 850 Nepal Army troops soon to be deployed on peacekeeping duty in Lebanon. They are now in Sangram Shardul Battalion in Gajuri.



SAGAR SHRESTHA

SHAKE-UP: Nepal's newly appointed Chief of Army Staff Rukmangat Katuwal shakes hands with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala after receiving the official insignia on Sunday.



RAM HUMAGAIN/NEPALNEWS.COM

WELCOME TO TOWN: Regional Resident Representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for South Asia, Shahidul Haque, UN Resident Representative to Nepal, Matthew Kahane and Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madhuban Paudel (left to right) at the opening ceremony of the IOM office in Nepal, Tuesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

SNEAK PREVIEW: Kunda Dixit unveils the cover of *A People War - Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996-2000*, during the soft launch of the new book of photos on Tuesday at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

REMEMBERING BP: Acting General Secretary of the Nepali Congress Ram Baran Yadab speaks on the 93rd anniversary of BP Koirala's birth during a function at Ratna Park on Saturday.

Fair trade designer

For four years, Poonam Rai produced and designed clothing lines for major French high street chains like La Redoute, Quelle, and Blanc Port. The clothes were manufactured in Nepal and then shipped off to France under Rai's supervision.

But the conflict and an uncertain political situation caused delays in shipments, and that hit orders. After four years in the export business, Poonam suddenly lost all her clients, and worse, her workers found themselves without a job.

Poonam acted swiftly. She took in 24 workers, mostly Dalits, and with them opened SemReMe, a small boutique in Maharajganj. Today, her clients range from locals who want custom-made jeans to expats and tourists who want wedding gowns shipped to America.

Poonam is doing well for herself, but she's concerned about the Nepali handloom industry. Many of our hemp and organic cotton, natural fibre, and woven textiles are not part of fair trade and because of this, the people who work the hardest get the least share of the profits. It's just not right.

She is also disturbed by Nepali designers not being all that bothered. Sadly, I've only met foreigners who think it's important, she says Poonam. While lobbying for fair trade, she makes sure her clients pay 5 to 10 percent of their sales back to the people who have manufactured the product. She hopes this amount will be used to strengthen workers' skills, and production infrastructure.

Back in her workshop, her staff—tailors, weavers and dyers—listen intently as Poonam points out a missing button on a white organic cotton shirt. They know they cannot afford to mess up this order. The client, Leila Hafzi, is a well-known Scandinavian designer. A good word from her in the international scene would mean more business for the company and more money for them.

Poonam and her staff are looking ahead to better times. Two years ago, we lost a bid to supply cushion covers to Harrods. But with our increasing professionalism, that's unlikely to happen again, Poonam says with a confident smile. ●



KIRAN PANDAY

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Tempus omnia curat

We have been at battle stations keeping a watch on the tournament for **vacant ambassadorships**. There is nothing new to report since our last update on the issue three weeks ago, other than to say that the candidates have now entered the **semi-final** round. Competition is fierce, hand-to-hand combat has been reported.

Parliament for its part has decided that it will henceforth demand three nominations for each ambassadorial position, and then will take an exam with objective and subjective questions essay questions and also oral exams before deciding which lucky chaps get to be Nepal's emissaries and plenipotentiaries. This has meant all prospective dips are cramming geography, history and arithmetic so they can pass the **Iron Gates**.



The UML, NC(D) and NC all had rival ambassadorial candidates for the **juiciest spots**, viz: Tokyo, London, Washington and New Delhi. This deadlocked the nominations for three months. The disagreement was one of the reasons the NC and NC(D) have a hard time agreeing on unification because some NC(D) hopefuls would probably lose their chance of ambassadorial nominations if the party united.

Nevertheless, at least the NC and the UML have called a **truce** and decided to divide up the world much in the same way that the Spanish and Portuguese demarcated their spheres of influence in the 17th century. The NC wants New Delhi and Washington, arguing that sending a commie to Washington may not be a brilliant idea and that it can handle Big Brother better than the UML's resident India-bashers. By which token it would mean that the UML could easily get a communist country like China, but don't bet on it. Beijing doesn't want commies either. So Balkhu now wants Tokyo, Berlin, Brussels and (surprise!) Rangoon. UML frontrunners appear to be mostly **human rights wallahs**.



The town is abuzz with speculation about what transpired at the Girija-Gyanendra **summit** the other week. We happened to have a fly on the wall during the hour-long meeting and can report that King G sought Premier G's advice on matters of state. "What should I do?" the king asked. According to the fly, who requested anonymity, the prime minister replied: "Sit tight, Your Majesty, don't do a thing," adding, "**tempus omnia curat**". Or words to that effect. Time heals everything, and no one should know that better than our prime minister.



There are several options being considered to untie the **current political deadlock**. And at risk of sounding like our predecessor, Under My Hat, they are (in no particular order):

1. Make King G president
2. Make Prachanda president
3. Make PM president
4. Make Chandi Dhakal president
5. Make Prachanda king
6. Make Baburam Minister of Urban Planning and Tyre Supplies
7. Make Paras ambassador to North Korea

We also hear Prachanda wants to change his name. It's difficult living up to one's **awesome** reputation and several suggestions come to mind. In the national interest, here are some suggestions: Comrade Awful, Comrade Grey Shirt, Comrade-in-Chief, The Dear One, the Great Leader, Mr Bad Hair Day, Chairman Meet-Me-At-The-Gym. Please tick only one.



It's obvious that the prolonged ceasefire means the underground Maoist comrades have nothing to do, and the leadership needs to keep the elite commando units occupied with organising **tyre fires**. Their special taskforce is busy patrolling New Road selling 'tickets' for Maoist cultural events at Rs 100,000. Wonder if we get a free Coke with that. Others are hitting shops along Lajimpat for up to Rs 1 million. In Jomsom, tourists have to pay Rs 1,500 as soon as they land to the commissar, and hotel owners there are thinking of closing shop because of extortion. So what is the Federation of Nepali Chamber of Commerce and Industry doing about all this? The President was sitting on the podium with Maoist leaders at a revolutionary trade union convention at Khula Manch. A day previously, the FNCCI **head honcho** also used the 10-minute time allotted to him during the Indo-Nepal Hydropower Summit to deliver a 20-minute tirade against the media suggesting, among other things, that just as China **muzzled** the media Nepal should do the same. With businessmen like these, who needs willful defaulters?



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