



Times

Weekly Internet Poll # 316

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

Total votes: 1,885

Good 8.1%

Could be better 11

Poor 66.8%

Don't know 13.7%

Weekly Internet Poll # 317. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Does US Ambassador Moriarty's tough stand against the Maoists help or hurt the SPA's efforts?

Dia Safe

HOME FURNISHERS

223, Tripathi, 334 Tripathi (near to Thapathali), Nepal
Ph: 4264621, 426246, Fax: 973-14261918

Let's run for Spirit

An Exclusive Fitness System

Available in 100s of locations

Warranty and after sales service available

Spectrum Merchandise Pvt. Ltd.

Tripathi, Radha Bazaar, Cosmos Building, Kathmandu
Tel: 21-420000, Cell: 9801000000 www.spectrummerchandise.com.np

absolute

Enjoy the real lounge environment with 100s of Cocktails & Mocktails

Absolute | Pulchowk | Ph: 5521408

LaCie silverscreen

MultiMedia Hard Drive

USB 2.0 - 4000 (500MB) - 12000
Play back movies, music and photos on TV
Direct connect to PC, Mac, and more

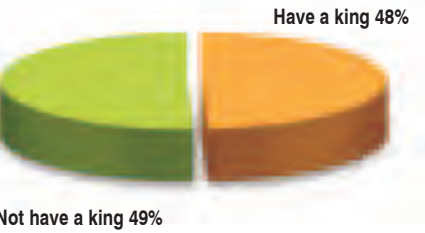
CAN-222 Systems, Inc. Pvt. Ltd.

P.O. Box 2032, Computer and Building
New Plaza, Pulchowk, Kathmandu
Phone: 577-1, 4440271, 4440002, 4440003
E-mail: can222@can222.com
Web: www.can222.com

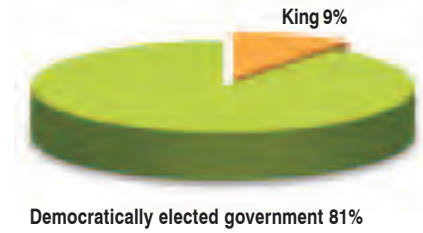
What we think

Nepalis are carefully upbeat about the future: poll

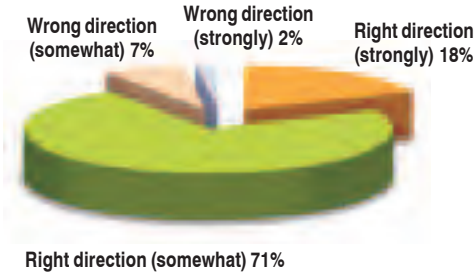
Regardless of how much power the king has, do you think Nepal should or should not have a king?



Who should ultimately control the army: the king or a democratically elected government?



Generally speaking, do you think things in Nepal are going in the right or the wrong direction?



A nationwide public opinion poll has shown that Nepalis are cautiously optimistic about the way things are going, but are divided on whether to keep the monarchy or not.

It was an almost 50-50 tie between those who wanted the monarchy abolished and those who wanted it to stay, but the trend shows clear divides based on gender, location, and education. Younger people and men tend to be republicans, and there are fewer supporters of the monarchy in western Nepal and among the educated.

The poll was conducted between 6 August-6 September among 3,000 respondents above age 18 all over the country by the Kathmandu offices of the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the market research company ACNielsen.

The poll shows Nepalis are very sure about some things. For instance, more than 80 percent think the army should be under the command of a democratic, elected government. There is also overwhelming support for the job the seven-party alliance has done so far (91 percent said they approved) and for UN involvement in monitoring the ceasefire. An overwhelming 97 percent of those who'd heard of

constituent assembly elections wanted them, perhaps because they think this is the only way to restore peace in the country.

The popularity of various political entities in 'thermometer ratings' showed the seven-party alliance scoring highest with +45, followed by the UML with +13, and the NC with +10 respectively. The Maoists scored -2 and the NC-D -39. This was corroborated with popularity ratings for personalities in which Sher Bahadur Deuba scored -39 with only King Gyanendra more unpopular than him at -59. Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhab Nepal tied at -1 and Girija Koirala came out with +4.

More than one-third of those polled hadn't heard of a constituent assembly or knew little about it, and slightly more than half thought the Maoists will not fully disarm. Even so, 56 percent said they would trust the Maoists to allow a multiparty system if they came to power. However, the formulation of the question leaves room to doubt whether this is what the people actually believe or what they hope will happen.

Whereas 89 percent of the people felt the country was going in the wrong direction in June 2004, only 7 percent think so now. And while in October 2004 74 percent thought elections

couldn't happen in the next year, only 18 percent think so today.

A striking revelation from the poll is that when asked to name two of their main concerns most

Editorial p2 Cantonment commitment

respondents said lack of jobs, followed by education and cost of living. Maoist violence came seventh, after health care and above corruption.

(The pie charts do not include 'Don't know/Can't say' responses. For details of the poll, please see 'Optimism, certainty, and ambivalence', p11.)

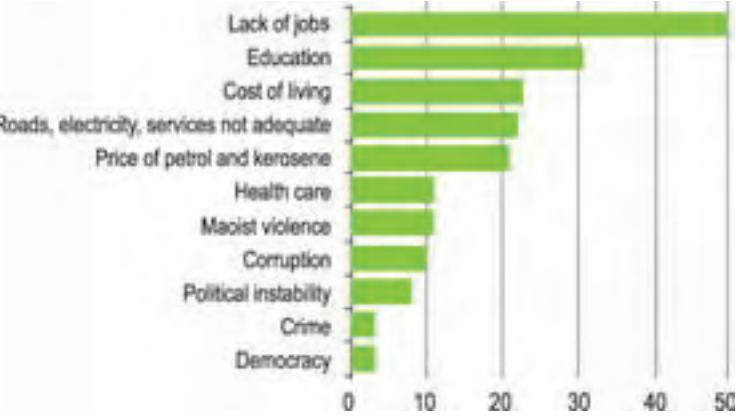
Do you approve or disapprove of the constituent assembly elections?



Do you think the Maoists will fully disarm?



Which two of the following are you most concerned about in your everyday life?



Land Rover

All Terrain 4WD
Luxurious Interior
Matches for all lifestyles

Discovery III

Freelander

LAND-ROVER

THE LAND ROVER EXPERIENCE

AUTHORIZED AGENT:
Euro Gears Pvt. Ltd.
Kat-75-2 Teku Road P.O.Box 4790 Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 4261235, 4371104
Fax: 4420877, 4262069,
E-mail: eurogears@mos.com.np

SERVICE CENTER:
Delta Motor Works Pvt. Ltd.
Dhumbahani, Kathmandu Tel: 4371104

NEPALI
Times

editors@nepalitimes.com,
www.nepalitimes.com

Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit
Editor: Sophia Tamot Executive Editor: Anagha Neelakantan
Design: Kiran Maharjan Web: Rupendra Kayastha Desk: Jemima Sherpa
Vicepresident Corporate Affairs: Sneh Sayami
Director, Sales and Marketing: Sunaina Shah marketing@himalmedia.com
Subscription: subscription@himalmedia.com
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu 5543333-6, Fax: 5521013
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hatiban: 5547018



No whipping boy

Reputational risk and the UN's role

Pivate sector management consulting thrives on three demand attributes: the need for specialised skills, credible facilitation, and a 'whipping boy'.

From an economic perspective, consulting business models work well because consultants and their employers are guided by similar incentive



GUEST COLUMN
Dipta Shah

structures: consultants by lucrative fees and the prospect of add-on business, and executives by perceived success and associated increases in compensation.

Each undertaken task involves a careful analysis that weighs the potential costs of failure against the benefits of success. In conducting such pre-contractual due diligence, consultants perform internal analyses that weigh the probability of success against the consulting firm's exposure to failure, often referred to as reputational risk.

The long-term cost of failure to the service provider's brand name (and associated losses in future fees) often outweighs the benefits of accruing non-contingent, short-term revenues.

What does all this have to do with Nepal's peace process? A lot. The functions

performed by the United Nations in conflict situations are very similar to services provided by private sector management consultants. The only significant difference is that the cost of employing the UN in Nepal will not be borne by the Nepal government, but by the international community.

With recent statements made by Maoist leaders, the very rationale for UN involvement in 'arms management' has been thrown into doubt. Even before the Maoists reversed their commitment to having their arms managed, the absence of a high-level roadmap to constituent assembly elections already presented a significant risk to UN operations.

The UN system needs a success in Nepal just as much as Nepalis need to succeed in their struggle for peace. Unfortunately, there is less of an incentive structure for internal parties in Nepal's conflict to allow effective UN involvement.

Although publicly every group claims that it wants to see peace in Nepal, the Maoists in particular demonstrate a documented pattern of behaviour that implies they want peace under one condition: Maoist victory. Naturally, such a condition is unacceptable to the Maoists' partners in the April Movement.

So far, the UN has carefully managed perceptions by assuring the government and the rebels of its willingness to help solve Nepal's conflict. Official (and unofficial) UN emissaries have also repeatedly highlighted that the UN's involvement in Nepal will be a "process". This means UN involvement will

first have to overcome its own red tape and only be initiated once the government and rebels have acceded to peace on mutually acceptable terms. Similar to a strategic roadmap that management consultants are empowered to work toward, the UN needs a clearly outlined set of rules, regulations, standard operating procedures and metrics for success before it can do anything meaningful in Nepal. The UN needs a detailed mandate, and not just a 12-point or 8-point agreement.

The UN may recommend different models of peace making to the concerned parties in Nepal, but it will never advocate a single model. Doing so would be a cardinal violation of the UN's own operating procedure. Plus, this is a decision to be made by the seven parties and the Maoists, not any external third party. The UN will be happy to provide organisational expertise backed by its unique charter. But for obvious reasons, the UN will not want to position itself as a whipping boy for a peace process that by any meaningful account, is yet to kick off.

The pre-Dasain 'summit' needs to focus on producing a detailed roadmap that convinces the UN that its role is desired and a necessary complement to peace in Nepal. Anything less will almost certainly result in the resumption of violence, either as 'peaceful' street protests or all-out urban warfare.

Which way the situation steers is completely up to the seven parties and the Maoists. This time, there are no whipping boys. ●

CANTONMENT COMMITMENT

The Nepali polity treats the international community with ambivalence. On one hand we ask that ambassadors keep off the national political turf, but at the same time hope for a rescue from that quarter if and when the Nepali players create a mess.

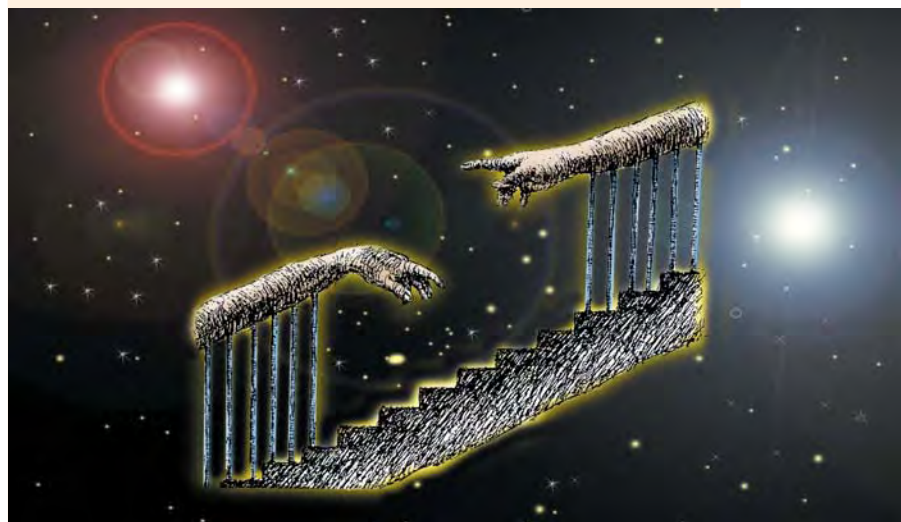
It now looks as if the transitional process to bring the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) into open politics and move towards constituent assembly elections will be long and drawn-out. The confusion during this interregnum must not deprive the Nepali people of international support for recovery and development. The memory of the peace and progress sought by the April movement must not be forgotten.

The international community at large needs to weigh in and not be accused of interfering if they do on the importance of making a space for the Maoists on the open platform. Together with Nepali opinion-makers, they must ensure that the people's desire for peace and their commitment to pluralism, and democracy are not undermined during this transition period.

Arms management is total civilian control of the Nepal Army and activating the process of separating Maoist combatants and militia from their arms is essential. We believe the most feasible option for now is included in the five-point formula: cantonment of armed rebels as proof of their commitment to resolution, which can pave the way for the CPN (Maoist) to join the interim government. The issue of constituent assembly elections in the context of full separation of Maoists from their guns (we think not) can be dealt with later.

It seems incongruous that among the plenipotentiaries only the United States ambassador has been talking. His alarming prognosis vis-a-vis Maoist intentions is the kind to spark immediate rejection due to his earlier pronouncements during the royal takeover, and more generally, because of the Bush administration's image.

The Nepali intelligentsia and the international community must now hold the Maoists to their cantonment commitment while providing them a safe landing with dignity. Why should only Mr Moriarty hold court?



Getting this thing unstuck

It's now up to Dahal and Koirala to make sure we untie the knot

Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal met Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala at Baluwatar early this week. The two-hour-long tête-à-tête helped to some extent to clear doubts about the future of the peace process, but fear-mongering by foreigners is still rife in the Valley.

Outsiders don't have a very good record of reading Nepali realities, but their power to influence government decisions can't be underestimated. These insidious de-motivators could derail peace talks again.



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

Unfortunately, much anti-Maoist propaganda goes unchallenged. While it's true that Maoist cadres are engaged in extortion, it's equally true that most of their targets lack the moral authority to challenge extortionists because of their own misdemeanors. Morally-upright entrepreneurs have successfully defied ruffians by informing the Maoist leadership

about their cadres' excesses. DDCs without legitimacy and authority weren't collecting taxes until about a year ago, so they may as well wait for a political settlement at the centre.

The Maoists' arms are another diversion. The job of state security forces is to win armed confrontations, and the aim of armed insurgents is not to lose. But Chairman Gyanendra's Unified Command failed to bring the Maoists forcibly to the negotiating table. The Maoists are the strategic victors of 'propaganda by war'.

By virtue of being a partner, though a junior one, in the April Uprising, they are inalienable actors in the ongoing political process. Of course, no country has two armies, two judiciaries, or dual centres of state power, but those issues need to be dealt with in a political package. Making the surrender of arms a precondition of a political settlement is a bit presumptuous coming from the seven parties, most of whom earlier collaborated with Chairman Gyanendra.

Alliance leaders, including Koirala and Madhab Kumar Nepal, are aware of their

limitations. They sound defiant because right now they have the full support of the international community, often the decisive factor in Nepal's domestic politics. The Maoists are no longer useful for India. Beijing never liked them, calling them anti-government guerrillas rather than self-avowed adherents of the Great Helmsman. For Americans, all communists and socialists are anathema: in early sixties, it actively opposed Nepal Congress, thinking that the party under BP Koirala wasn't sufficiently anti-communist. Europeans were giving the Maoists a patient hearing, but now even they seem to have lost interest in a lost cause.

Prachanda's concerted propaganda campaign in print, radio, and television has failed. No one buys his apology for the abduction of school children, extortion in the countryside, and brutal executions of innocents. It's difficult to take a leader's words of repentance at face value when his followers' deeds contradict them.

That leaves Prachanda and his cohorts at the government's mercy. The beleaguered supremo can still ignite the

urban uprising he is threatening to, but that will be an open invitation for meddlers to enter a confused Kathmandu. The Maoists leadership knows the consequences of proxy wars too well to walk into that kind of trap. That could happen if they lose control over their cadres, which is possible, but unlikely at the moment. Public posturing notwithstanding, Koirala and Prachanda know that unless they accommodate each other, they will be pushed aside by nihilist hotheads from both sides.

But what they also need to realise is that the country can't wait forever for rapprochement between two bahuns so alike and yet so different. Moriarty's utterances, Maoist meetings, the citizens' movement, the UML's mass mobilisation, and unification uproar in the NC camps are all sideshows. Like the 12-point understanding, 8-point accord, 25-point code of conduct, and 5-point settlement for arms management, the next agreement too has to come from these two gentlemen making their considered moves on the national chessboard. ●

LETTERS

MAINA

Two weeks ago you bravely published a translation of the *Kantipur* article 'How Maina was killed' (From the *Nepali Press*, #313). Shocking though the detail was, I write to say that it did not prepare me for reading the horrendous full account in the army Court Of Inquiry report. One sentence in it makes all clear: 'in the process of questioning by torture, in not being able to withstand the torture, her death occurred.' In other words, the torture and the torturers killed Maina. It is surely a matter of extreme shame that the three officers who personally ordered and directed this killing were not appropriately charged, and continue to serve on in the army today, even in the same ranks.

All armies worthy of the name prize honour above all else, and I know the Nepal Army well enough to say that no one in its ranks would dispute that assertion. The reason is both simple and profound. It is what makes soldiering, the profession of arms, an honourable one, to be followed with pride, and which separates it from barbarism. But, sadly, that is the only appropriate word I can find for the behaviour that led directly to the death of Maina.

As Nepal moves into a new era, the new Chief of Army Staff, General Katuwal, has rightly and publicly declared his commitment to ensuring that the army operates within the law of the land. That law requires that the killing of civilians by soldiers to be dealt with by the civil courts. There could be no better signal that Nepal is indeed changing for the better in regard to the observance of human rights than for the COAS to call in the civil police for a full, open investigation into the killing of Maina with a view to having the alleged perpetrators appropriately charged under criminal law, and tried before the civilian courts. I appeal to him to do so.

In the same spirit, I appeal to the new government, without further delay, to honour its international obligations and declare torture to be a criminal offence under the law of Nepal.

There can be no bringing back Maina, but surely your readers would agree that the actions proposed above would be a worthy memorial to her young life, so tragically and brutally ended while she was still at school.

Sam Cowan, via email

CK LAL

CK Lal ('Big gamble,' #315) seems to have no knowledge of how the Nepal Army functions. His gibberish that the choice of Katuwal was controversial makes no sense. According to Lal's logic, nobody should have been promoted, since the entire army was following somebody's orders. Mr Lal, please keep in mind that the main criterion for promotion in the army is seniority. May I ask who else he had in mind?

Amrit KC, Bishalnagar

● The article 'DDR, SSR, RRR and the SPA' (State of the State, #313) by CK Lal provides strong, well-researched, and valid ideas, that should educate

our politicians about US diplomacy around the world. While appreciating that the US did in a way help cancel the military threat from the Maoists, we shouldn't forget that the US has long used other nations to serve its corporate-led priorities. Just consider the financial assistance provided to the corrupt Marcos family in return for a US military base in the Philippines, and the export of Stinger missiles to the Afghan Mujahideen to expel the Soviets. Other nations too will use Nepal, if unfavourable economic and social polarities develop between our two neighbours. As CK says, civil society should understand such dynamics and take action if required.

Amir Poudel, via email

IMAGE PROBLEMS

The article 'KU's quality education' (#315), appears to glorify Kathmandu University management without proper background research. The author didn't consult the academic faculty at KU about the reasons for the current unrest. The academic faculty has been dominated over for the last 15-odd years and has now found voice through the formation of KUPA (Kathmandu University Professors' Association). The author talks about the current VC of KU, Professor Sharma and his contributions to education in Nepal, but blocks out the issues of nepotism and administrative and financial irregularities hounding KU and preventing it from going even further.

The golden rule of journalism is unbiased reporting. What we read in this article is biased and inaccurate interpretation of facts, which could have been avoided by consulting the academic staff of KU.

The article quotes Sharma on how hurt he is to see 'people' trying to 'destroy' what he has built so carefully. But the article does not summarise what our

demands are, or which of them are being implemented as it inaccurately says. What the audience reads in this article is exactly what the KU administration wants them to.

We sincerely hope that in future *Nepali Times* sticks to what it does best: reporting facts that reflect both sides of the coin.

Kathmandu University Professors' Association, via email

KAMLARI

Your report on 'Kamlaris in Dangi' (#315) tells the true story of Tharu girl-children being used as housemaids. Kamlaris are even considered a mark of family status here. Even high-rung professionals have no hesitation in having them, though they don't concede in public that they have underage kamlaris at home.

The NGOs working for Kamlaris have done good work and are providing the girls with alternative sources of income. But I suggest they find an amicable solution to the problem, instead of filing cases against hoteliers.

Bhaskar Aryal, Dang

POWER PLIGHT

Your article 'Electric switch' (#313) was a grand promotion of electric cars backed by statistics, cost analysis, and presentation of future cars that can be manufactured in Nepal. Sounds very impressive, but I see two main problems. First, is it possible to have a smart government in Nepal? Our past experience has been quite disappointing.

The biggest inevitable hurdle is electricity.†The NOC is broke and the NEA is sliding towards bankruptcy. There is daily load shedding, even in the monsoon. It will take at least ten years if all goes well with all proposed projects, and with a smart government to be self-sufficient in electricity and meet industrial and domestic demand. And that

electricity will be expensive. Where will we get affordable electricity when we fail to exploit our rich hydropower potential?

I think, Kunda Dixit, the only way to realise your suggestion is to first get a government that will effectively deal with corruption. Nepal is the only country in the world where state-owned corporations like the NOC and the NEA are in financial trouble despite being monopolies.

S Tuladhar, Geneva, Switzerland

SALT FIGURES

The salt prices in 'Salt of the earth' (#314) are incorrect. Free-flow 30 ppm iodised salt ex-factory, Gandhidham in Gujarat, India, is Rs 1.80/kg. Packing charges are Rs 0.70/kg, and rail freight Raxaul is Rs 1.40/kg. The total price ex-Raxaul is therefore IRs 3.90 to 4.00. STC charges more.

DS, email

BACKSIDE

Considering that two paragraphs of the first 'buzz' ('What's the buzz, what's happening', Backside, #312) were about me, I thought that it is wise to clarify the story. If it referred to me, the incident did not take place in Ghattekulo. I was suddenly attacked by outsiders near Chhetrapati on my daily walk heading to the outskirts, in a small hotel, but not by the mother as reported. As far as the story is concerned, even the parents have gone on record to say it is untrue.

The point of economic diplomacy was also raised. True, I could not do much in seven months except start projects like the Sindhuli Road, Kali Gandaki-A, Kulekhani Phase-II,



Radar Installation in TIA, Bagmati Bridge, perhaps the biggest projects post-1990. Really, I would have loved to bring in more than these projects!

Dr Bishnu Hari Nepal
Former Ambassador to Japan

NEPALI HERO

For once I wholeheartedly agree with your editorial, on Dr Ruit ('The vision thing', #313). Ten years ago Dr Ruit cured a chronic eye problem our baby daughter had in a week without medication or surgery (he taught us a massage technique instead), and for a one-time fee of Rs 5.

I am pleased he is finally receiving much-deserved international attention for his wonderful work. The fact that his outreach eye camps went into the remotest regions of Nepal even during the deadliest times of the conflict is awe-inspiring. He is a man of the people who insists that even ministers and other self-appointed VIPs get in line to see him, just like the rest of us. Dr Ruit and his dedicated team of 'protégés', such as Dr Suman Thapa, are nothing short of miracle workers and Dr Ruit should be declared a national treasure.

Any prospective international donors searching for a worthy cause in Nepal need look no further than Dr Ruit. Nobody will put your money to better use. And if any domestic 'fat cats' want to rejuvenate their souls a tad, I cannot suggest a more result-oriented man of vision than Dr Ruit. Heck, buy the good doctor a heli-ambulance and see how many more thousands he reaches and gives back the gift of sight.

God bless Dr Sanduk Ruit and all those like him. †Nepal cannot do without you.

Sanjeeb B Shrestha,
Kopundole

TIC
TOC
TIC
OFFER



Buy Peter England garments
this festive season and get a trendy watch
absolutely free*

OFFER VALID AT:

Kathmandu: Exclusive Showroom, Putalisadak. Ph: 4225646, Dot Fashion Wear Pvt. Ltd., Khichapokhari, Ph: 4227545, Dot Fashion Wear Pvt. Ltd., Kathmandu Mall, Ph:4150056, Skopes, Kathmandu Plaza Ph: 4269677, Shrestha Tailoring, Bagbazar, Ph: 4225421, Shrestha Tailoring, Chuchepati, Ph: 4486893, Blubird Departmental Store, Tripureshwor, Ph: 4228833, **Birgunj:** Nilambari Fashion Store, Ph: 525667, Also available without above offer at : **Kathmandu:** Gemini Grocer Supermarket, Boudha, Ph: 4492450, Srinath Collection, Chabahil, Ph:4470696, The Splash Fashion, Manbawan, Ph: 5526715, Bhatbhateni Supermarket, Bhatbhateni, Ph: 4413825, **Biratnagar:** Bansal Varities, Ph: 524971



MORE IS LESS

*Terms & conditions apply. Offer valid till stocks last. For trade enquiries contact: Bipin Agarwal at ptrade@wlink.com.np

High-wire

Prachanda has a tough act going

As the peace process stalls, the conflicting demands on the Maoist leadership are becoming increasingly evident. Most realise the need to end the violent conflict, but many Maoist cadres, driven by years of hard-left indoctrination, are holding out for ultimate victory. Balancing these goals can be frighteningly difficult. How is Prachanda handling this job?

This week provided a rare opportunity to watch the awesome one in action. As the local representative of an international tv news channel, I had requested an interview with Prachanda. We were to meet at a location on the outskirts of Kathmandu for an on-camera interview.

When we arrived, Prachanda and other senior Maoist leaders were already there, attending the internal meeting of a Maoist-affiliated organisation which was holding its convention. Between the



MEANWHILE
Suman Pradhan

meeting and our interview, Prachanda addressed his cadres in a large hall.

This was no ordinary speech. It was aimed at his own cadres during a time of great uncertainties in the peace process.

Comrades, Prachanda began. The large hall went silent. Dozens of digital cameras flashed in unison. We are at a crucial moment in the peace process, he said. We are here for peace, but the SPA does not seem serious. They have used us to regain power and are now sitting comfortably on their chairs.

For 20 minutes Prachanda spoke to a rapt audience. His tone was authoritative and final, and the words relatively measured until the last five minutes. The party has placed great faith in you, his voice began to rise. His portly Mao suit-clad body began to sway. His arms flailing, his bulbous face brimming with emotion, Prachanda began to rally his troops.

You have arrived in Kathmandu to attend your conventions. In one or two months, you will be going among the people whipping up a hurricane. There is no turning back. You will bring a hurricane. We will soon shatter the illusions of those sitting

inside Baluwatar and Singha Darbar.

The mass of cadres, silent for much of the speech, began to respond. Thunderous applause erupted and fists raised in the Maoist salute.

Twenty minutes later, Prachanda sat in a private room facing a tv camera. Wiping his sweaty forehead, he looked eager to begin the interview.

It was quite a transformation. From a fiery revolutionary

rallying his troops just 20 minutes before, Prachanda was now coming across as a statesman. He knew he was addressing a global-and American- audience.

He spoke in measured tones, smiled often at the camera, and cracked a few jokes. He talked about his family, what he eats and drinks, what his life was like in the jungle. He even spoke of the Hollywood movie he enjoys watching (Spartacus). But time and again, he returned to one message: Don't be afraid of us. We are not classical dogmatic communists. We are willing to adapt.

We are communists, so of course we believe in socialism and communism. That is our ultimate goal, but due to regional and international situation, we are willing to discuss all issues, he said. We are not dogmatic communists. We are not mechanical. In fact, we are fighting for capitalistic mode of production. We are fighting against feudalism.

Prachanda made his pitch clearly understanding that the interview will play to an American audience: The chances of a peaceful transition are greatest at this time but the US government and ambassador are making false accusations against us, trying to paint us as terrorists. Why they want to sabotage the peace process, I cannot understand.

Cut to remote Kanpur village in Kabhre district, where I met a few PLA fighters the day after this interview. Asked if a political compromise would be acceptable, one young soldier said, pointing towards his gun, Our party has taught us that this gun can be used against the enemy as well as to cleanse the party. We are a party of the people. We don't believe our leadership will go against the people's wishes. The people want total victory.

The awesome one has an awesome job on his hands. ●



KIRAN PANDAY

Child abuse

The war has not stopped for children

NARESH NEWAR
in NEPALGANJ

Over 400 children killed. More than 8,000 orphaned. Around 40,000 displaced. Close to 29,000 abducted.

A generation of Nepali children has been crippled physically and psychologically by the decade-long conflict, as these figures from Child Workers in Nepal suggest. Yet, children have failed to figure anywhere in the peace process and so far, none of the series of talks between the Maoists and seven-party alliance have managed to include children in their agenda.

On Monday, the Maoists 'asked' schools around the Valley to send their students in school uniforms to attend their ANNFSU(R)'s national assembly convention in Tundikhel. There was a huge outburst from child rights and human rights groups and the event made the headlines of newspapers, radio, and television.

But this is virtually an everyday occurrence out in the districts, especially in west Nepal, where children are abducted and forced into 'voluntary' participation in Maoist activities.

"They intimidate us and make threats if we refuse to join," says 16-year-old Shrenika Shaha from Bardiya, who is a member of Bal Adhikar Chetna Samuha, a children's group formed by Insec to help raise awareness about child rights in remote villages. Shaha explains that the rebels start out convincing children to join their political activities and become 'important' in society.

"They try to tell us that they'll turn Bardiya into Switzerland if we all work as Maoists," says 16-year-old Bardiya's Deb Bahadur Buda.

This constant intimidation has frightened some school children into submission, left others mentally disturbed, and seduced some with visions of power.

Local Maoist leaders in Bardiya and Banke say they never force their politics on children. "We are very sensitive about protecting rights of

the children but how can we stop them if they are so interested in our student activities?" argues Purna Subedi, chief of the Banke's Jana Sarkar. She says accusations of child abduction and the like are merely political propaganda against the Maoists.

But talk to any of the children and parents who are willing to risk their lives to speak out against the rebels, and such claims appear as hollow as promises of a Swiss-style life.

"Every day, parents fear their children will be abducted or lured away by the Maoists," says a depairing Purna Bahadur Pokhrel, whose 15-year-old son Sushant disappeared last month after attending a Maoist student program in Nepalganj.

Pohrel received a phone call from his son who said that he would return home only as a Maoist commander.

"I want my son back. I want the Maoists to show good faith by returning him home," pleads Pokhrel. ●



KIRAN PANDAY

Violations

A UNHCR report released on Thursday detailing rights violations and what was done right by the security forces during the April Jana Andolan, and says that as more groups exercise their right to peaceful protest and gathering, the police need to learn from past mistakes and be prepared to handle demos to come.

Children who had participated in the protest demonstrations were not spared. Nearly 224 children were severely injured, about a fifth suffering head injuries from batons or rubber bullet injuries.

David Johnson, officer-in-charge of OHCHR Nepal, appealed to the political parties to stop using children in their demonstrations, and avoid a repeat of April. Political parties should draw up a code of conduct for demonstrations which reflects the duty to respect others, and prohibits the use of children in demonstrations, said Johnson, adding that the security forces need to be trained in child protection issues, including the rights of children not to be beaten or



MIN BAJRACHARYA

arbitrarily detained.

Among the other recommendations made by the rights body are strengthening the chain of command in the police, holding security men accountable, providing adequate training, and amending laws and ordinances to allow lawful gathering. In addition, those found to have violated human rights in April should be charged, says the organisation.

There are renewed fears about rights, as the new army bill is ready to be approved by parliament. Activists such as lawyer Mandira Sharma worry that the proposed law allows for impunity and immunity from prosecution for security forces.

NEW PRODUCTS

ACCOUNT SCHEME: Lumbini Bank has launched the US Dollar Premium Deposit Account, giving depositors 4 percent interest on a daily balance. The account holders will be allowed unlimited withdrawals, free SMS banking, a waiver on good for payment charges and a 50 percent waiver on traveller's cheques, amongst other services.

CHEVY: With Chevrolet's new SRV and Tavera both hitting the Kathmandu streets, there's plenty to choose from. The stylishly sporty SRV is a sport-back vehicle boasting a 1.6 litre petrol engine, handy storage and passenger comfort features, wrap-around lights and an MP3 player. The multi-utility Tavera (pictured) offers a third row for several seating options, along with stylish interiors and the assurance of low maintenance and running costs.



CALCIUM CHOW CHOW: Wai Wai noodles will now come packaged with extra calcium, with its manufacturers claiming it will offer four times more calcium than other Nepali noodles. With the additional calcium, each 75gm of Wai Wai meets 20 percent of children's recommended dietary allowances.

LIQUID GOLD: Marico Industries has launched Saffola Gold oil, made of a mixture of ricebran and kardi oils. It's high in vitamin E, lowers cholesterol and doesn't saturate foods cooked in it.

CASH MACHINE: Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) has opened a new ATM at Mangal Bajar. The bank already has machines in Pulchowk, Darbarmarg, Thamel, Putalisadak and Bhatbhateni supermarket in Kathmandu and one in Pokhara. These 24 hours banking facility accepts all kinds of VISA cards.

FRIENDLY: World Bank brings out indicators every year in a report called Doing Business, which determines how business friendly a country is. In 2006, Singapore came first, followed by New Zealand and USA. Nepal ranks 100th out of 175, whereas India's position is 134 and China's 93. In South Asia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives rank at 88, 74, 138, 89 and 53 respectively. Last year, Nepal ranked 90th.



NEW CHOCOFUN: Sujal Foods' flagship brand ChocoFun, a chocolate covered wafer,

priced at Rs 5, has been launched in a new pack through their 'New Pinch, New Pinchi' campaign.

TIC TOC TIC: Peter England has introduced an exciting Dasain offer. A chic wristwatch is offered absolutely free, on purchase of Peter England garments. This offer is valid from 15 September and will continue till the stocks last.

FUCCHE FOR KIDS: Makers of 2PM Noodles, Asian Thai Foods, have launched their Fucche Instant Noodles, available at Rs 5 in a new pack designed to keep the noodles fresh while preserving their vitamin and mineral content.

DOMESTIC DVD, TV: CG Impex, a sister concern of the Chaudhary Group, has launched CG DVD's, a series of branded DVD players. Available all over Nepal, the player comes in two different models with a 12-month warranty. The player is compatible with DVD, DVCD, VCD, CD, CD-R, CD-RW, MP3, and Kodak photo discs. Another Chaudhary Group company, Goldstar Nepal, makers of LG television sets in Nepal, recently launched CG TV, a premium colour television, in three models with a 48-month warranty. The company has also started the 'CG Utsav Upahar' for the festival season.



JOLLY GET LUCKY: Jolly Shandy and Lemonade are now offering 'Jolly Get Lucky' festive scratch cards. Prizes include Philips 32" LCD TVs, ipods, mobile phones, gold coins, Jai Nepal movie tickets, key rings, Jolly Lemonade six-packs and thousands of Jolly Lemonade bottles. Five 'Happy Dasahin Tihari' coupons win a bottle of Jolly Lemonade. Jolly is a Carlsberg product manufactured and marketed by Gorkha Brewery.

FITNESS GEAR: Spectrum Merchandise, which began importing physical fitness machines from Korea and Taiwan ten years ago, has opened a new showroom in Tripureswor displaying the latest in fitness machines. The company has also launched its website, www.healthtracknepal.com.np, for health enthusiasts.



ARTIST BIO: RN Joshi, *Widening the Horizon of Nepalese Art*, by Professor Banshi Shrestha, is now available on the market. Published by Park Gallery, the book is written in English and includes 40 of the late Joshi's paintings. It is priced at Rs 950. † †

Branding business

Business needs to market itself better

Defending private sector business is getting difficult in Nepal. Civil society leaders talk about rights, liberties, and political issues. But they never engage a vital subset of



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

the civil society—the Nepali business community. Thus, we get abstract lectures, but no effort to start a national conversation about how our hard-won rights can be effectively practiced within a framework that adds to employment, income, and

workforce empowerment levels, while reducing job-related vulnerabilities. Yes, a gold-plated constitution is a good start. But as we saw through the 1990s, without continuous collaborative work to translate people's dreams of a better future into reality, a well-crafted legal document alone offers no certainty that Nepalis' lives will significantly improve. One reason the business community is shunned is that it is perceived to be 'damaged goods'. During the palace's direct rule, influential business leaders became ministers and advisors. That made them notorious for 15 minutes, but publicly untrustworthy for life. The issue of what to do with loan defaulters has also dragged on for far too long. Business leaders have

no workable solutions, they dither or offer lame defensive explanations. In the public mind, businessmen are crooks—in bed with other crooks, aka politicians.

The cost of the failure to deal with those few bad apples is mounting. The integrity of Nepal's financial system is open to question, and the risks associated with doing business in Nepal make the capital requirement for it high. Given this, how can Nepal attract even small-scale investments and nurture entrepreneurs?

The recent actions of and against the business community don't help either. Contractors

shutting down production and service lines.

Meanwhile, despite an admirable start two years ago, Business Initiative for Peace has fallen by the wayside. The business community has lost an opportunity to exercise leadership and use the interim times to explain how better business policies and practices give more Nepalis jobs and pay.

The Maoists are riding the wave of anti-business mood, which they helped create and sustain. They've escalated acts of extortion and intimidation. They harass bankers and financiers, force firms to hire

and train their unskilled cadres, and get away scot-free after beating up businessmen.

In such an environment, how is anyone to do business in Nepal? How is anyone to get into business when there is little sympathy for those who run for-profit private sector businesses? And can anyone articulate the role businesses play, when firms are portrayed as tools that do nothing but exploit people?

It's time our business leaders rose above their petty concerns and started articulating answers. When the notion of private sector business is continuously under attack, it must be a priority to marshal credible arguments in its defense to create a better business-enabling environment in Nepal. ●



Main Show room : Soalteemode (on the way of hotel Soaltee) Phone No. 01-4273292 / 4283644 / 4277023 Fax No. 4270092
Thamel Show room: Opposite to Sanchyakosh Building, Ph. No. 01-4264775 / 4410947
Web: www.npi-nepal.com, Email: npi@mos.com.np

Undiplomatic

Editorial in *Rajdhani*, 18 September
राजधानी

In the name of supporting the peace process, US ambassador James F Moriarty recently took a ride in a Nepal Army helicopter and visited the midwest and far west regions. Following his visits to the army barracks, he criticised the Maoists heavily in front of the media. Now both the Maoists and the seven parties have countered by attacking him for acting against diplomatic norms. His face-saving defensive stance is that he has not done so. No matter how powerful one's country is, undermining one's own diplomatic decorum looks like an attempt to intimidate another country. Moriarty's remarks will not go un-criticised, especially when the political powers are working hard to resolve the country's internal problems. This is not the first time that Nepal has experienced active foreign interest in domestic issues. Besides the USA, other countries have also interfered actively, especially against parties that were very popular among the Nepali people.

The US has generally maintained its position against communist parties. Former ambassador Julia Chang acted exactly like Moriarty. The UML protested heavily against Chang

following her anti-UML stance after the 1990 People's Movement.

Friendly nations need to support a sovereign country to be free and resolve its own problems. Trying to make decisions for another country is interfering in its internal affairs. Moriarty is trying to present himself as a member of a political party. Yes, Nepal's problem can be solved by national consensus through elections, and not Maoist bullets. But this is for Nepal to resolve themselves, with the UN as witness, not for Moriarty to address in a speech. He can discuss issues diplomatically to related authorities, but not publicly through a press conference. It's possible that the Nepali people will hand over responsibility for the country to the Maoists. So, before attacking the Maoists unnecessarily, Moriarty has to be discreet and adhere to the diplomatic code.

Saboteur

Sudhir Sharma in *Kantipur*,
15 September

कान्तिपुर

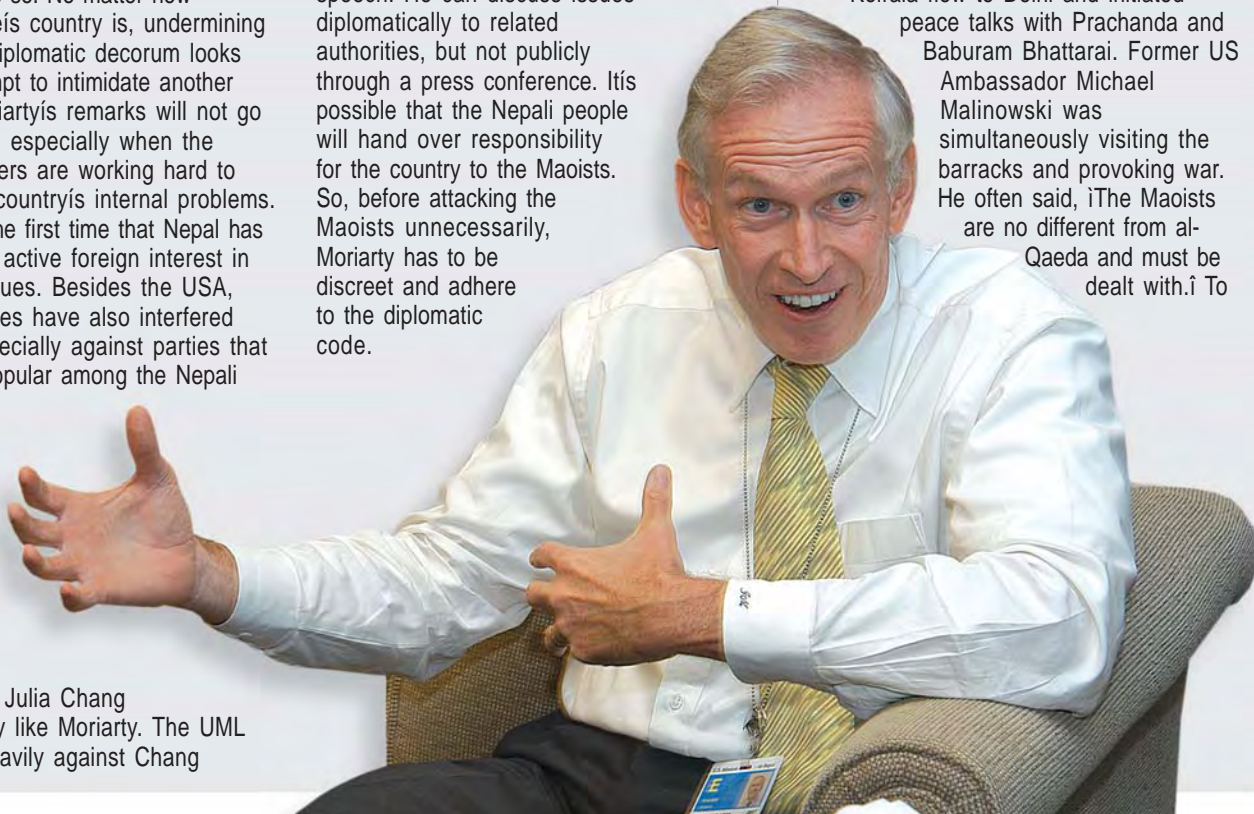
As with top Nepali and Indian politicians, there are cordial relations between Nepali generals and their American counterparts. The Nepal Army is going through a historic transition. Though the king's chain of command has been disrupted, the government still doesn't fully control the army. Foreign powers understand the significance of this.

Around April 2002, Girija Prasad Koirala flew to Delhi and initiated peace talks with Prachanda and Baburam Bhattarai. Former US Ambassador Michael Malinowski was simultaneously visiting the barracks and provoking war. He often said, 'The Maoists are no different from al-Qaeda and must be dealt with.' To

do so, the US provided the Nepal Army with unprecedented military aid, sabotaging Koirala's peace efforts. Pro-American Sher Bahadur Deuba dissolved the House of Representatives, giving the king the opportunity to stage his 1 February coup.

America's extreme policy has not changed, and Moriarty was Malinowski's new avatar. Despite idealistic talk, his every move seemed anti-democratic and against the peace process. He caused political chaos by saying the king should be given 100 days following his coup. He then ran to Delhi to prevent the 12-point understanding, just as Girija and the Maoists were trying to launch a decisive anti-monarchy movement. During the April Uprising, Moriarty kept trying to split the Maoists and the parties. Following the restoration of parliament he continued his campaign, saying the Maoists could not join the government until they disarm.

During the people's movement, Koirala repeated a key issue: 'I have told the Americans not to make Nepal part of their global strategy. Let Nepal be open, independent, and flourish on its own.' Then, the US was warning that Nepal's state mechanism could be destroyed. Now Moriarty is warning of the danger of the end of democracy in Nepal. Is the US global strategy, which Girija Babu clearly understood, resurfacing? In our region, the US is focused on China. 'Dirty games' in international politics are easier and more successful in failed states than in peaceful ones. Is Nepal's peace process becoming an obstacle in the American game?



MIN BAJRACHARYA

स्तरीय पत्रिकाले दिन्छ गुणस्तरीय उत्पादनहरू

हिमालमिडियाको कुनै एउटा प्रकाशनको ग्राहक बन्नुहोस्, तत्काल, हरेक महिना र ६-६ महिनामा उपहार प्राप्त गर्नुहोस् । यो योजना* १ भाद्र २०६३ देखि नेपाल अधिराज्यभर लागू हुनेछ ।

हिमाल संग सितैमा

तीन वर्ष
(नाडी घडी वा
होटल प्याकेज)**

दुई वर्ष
(भित्ते घडी)

एक वर्ष
(नेपाली म्युजिक
दुईवटा सिडी)

	Actual Rate	Discount Rate
3 Years	2520	2100
2 Years	1680	1450
1 Year	840	750

Times संग सितैमा

तीन वर्ष
(होटल प्याकेज)**

दुई वर्ष
(नाडी घडी वा
होटल प्याकेज)**

एक वर्ष
(भित्ते घडी)

	Actual Rate	Discount Rate
3 Years	4590	3500
2 Years	3060	2500
1 Years	1530	1350

WAVE संग सितैमा

तीन वर्ष
(भित्ते घडी)

दुई वर्ष
(नेपाली म्युजिक
दुईवटा सिडी)

एक वर्ष
(नेपाली म्युजिक
एउटा सिडी)

	Actual Rate	Discount rate
3 Years	1260	1100
2 Years	840	750
1 Years	420	380

Hatiban, Lalitpur, Nepal
Ph: 5543333 / 5523845
subscription@himalmedia.com

BRANCH OFFICE:
Kathmandu: Santosh Aryal 5011628/9851054729 | Banepa: Bharat Adhikari 9841248894 | Biratnagar: Khagendra Kattel 021-532387/9852022533
Narayanghat: Buddhi Kattel 056-530668/9845026710 | Nepalgunj: Ganesh Chettri 081-523848 | Pokhara: Durga Humagain 061-538913/9856026572

Kids in crisis
.....
Editorial in *Annappurna Post*, 20 September

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

The CPN-Maoist ignore the global consensus that using children for politics and war is a crime against society. After claiming their child recruits have played a special role in the people’s movement, last week’s 17th national convention of their sister organisation, the All Nepal National Free Students Union (Revolutionary) , in the heart of Kathmandu, had large numbers of children under 16. Those children were wearing red headbands and wandering around without food or water in the midday heat. They were transported dangerously on the roofs of buses, shouting political slogans completely unsuitable for their age.

Perhaps the Maoists felt proud at the sight of the large crowd of underage children, but there is no excuse for such an act. If they reach power and form a government, won’t they adhere to and respect international norms and agreements regarding children’s rights?

Organisations working for children’s rights have criticised the Maoist students’ actions. The National Human Rights Commission expressed concern, and a NHRC survey conducted the day of the rally found that classes had been cancelled in most schools in Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur. It is sad that a

political group aiming to bring about change displays such irresponsible behaviour.

President GP
.....
Budhabar, 20 September

सुधवार

Maoist leader Deb Gurung has proposed Girija Parasad Koirala for president. Inaugurating the 17th convention of the ANNFSU(R), Gurung made the proposal public for the first time. It is not known if Gurung’s statement was a personal or party decision, but it did bring to light confusion within the party.

Even during the heat of the Jana Andolan, or when he was made prime minister through its force, Koirala has always sided with the monarchy. No matter what kind of monarchy is being considered—constitutional, ceremonial, or titular—Koirala has always been one of the palace’s most loyal guards.

Gurung’s statement makes it clear that the Maoists naively believe it might be possible to step into a republic with the help of Girija’s weak crutches. Gurung has put his political stand in question by seeming to support Koirala more than even Ram Sharan Mahat and Krishna Prasad Situala do. The proposal to declare someone cleaved to constitutional monarchy president causes serious concern about the intent of the proposed republic. This Girija-love will cost the Maoists in the long run.

Congratulations to all the winners of the 1st month's lucky draw

2nd Prize
Birendra Kumar Rauniyar
Shankhamul, Kathmandu
Max DJ 500 Samsung Audio

3rd Prize
Prakash Kumar Rai
Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu
18 EVMS Samsung Refrigerator

4th Prize
Nepal Water Conservation Foundation
Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur
7300 EG Samsung Washing Machine

1st prize
Bhaktapur Nagar Bikash Samitee
Durbar Square, Bhaktapur
21" Samsung CTV

5th Prize
Sunny Shrestha
Tahachal, Kathmandu
GE82W Samsung Microwave Oven

6th Prize
Sailung Kitchen
Putaliline, Dharan, Sunsari
P-365H Samsung DVD Player

7th Prize
Pashu Swastha Nirdeshalaya
Tripureshwor, Kathmandu
VC 4620 Samsung Vacuum Cleaner

For subscription: Santosh Aryal 9851054729

Planning a career in media?

Himalmedia has ten years of experience in publishing. Its products have set new standards of journalism and production quality in Nepal, and the group is poised for further expansion.

Himalmedia’s three core publications *Himal Khabarpatrika*, *Nepali Times*, and *WAVE* are trendsetters in their segments. Himalmedia employees provide their brands with the creativity, innovation, talent and commitment that make them top publications.

The company believes in transparency and fairness, reflecting Nepal’s diversity in its staff profile. Himalmedia generates an abundance of career opportunities within its 100-strong team. In keeping with growth plans, Himalmedia now seeks to recruit a competent, self-motivated candidate for the following position:

- MANAGER, CIRCULATION**
- You will manage three popular magazine titles, and use reader demographics to formulate strategies to meet targets. Responsibilities include managing operations, database, and logistics. You will analyze market performance, develop and implement retail circulation strategies and align, motivate and develop team members.
- Professional experience:**
- Graduate with at least three years experience in the media environment, including campaign planning
 - Strong communication skills and a thorough working knowledge of Microsoft Office programs
 - Exposure to sales modeling software and database structures will be an advantage
 - Fluent in English and Nepali



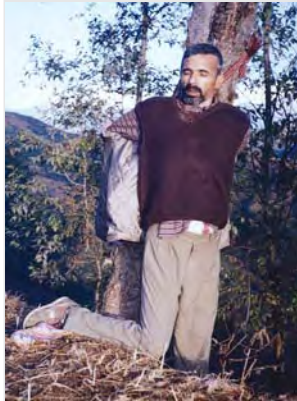
Apply in writing with CV and cover letter to
advertising@himalmedia.com
or
Director, Sales & Marketing
Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal

Closing date for all applications: October 15, 2006

Justice

Suman Adhikari in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 17 September-1 October. The authoris father, teacher Muktinath Adhikary, was tied to a tree and killed in cold blood by Maoists in early 2002.

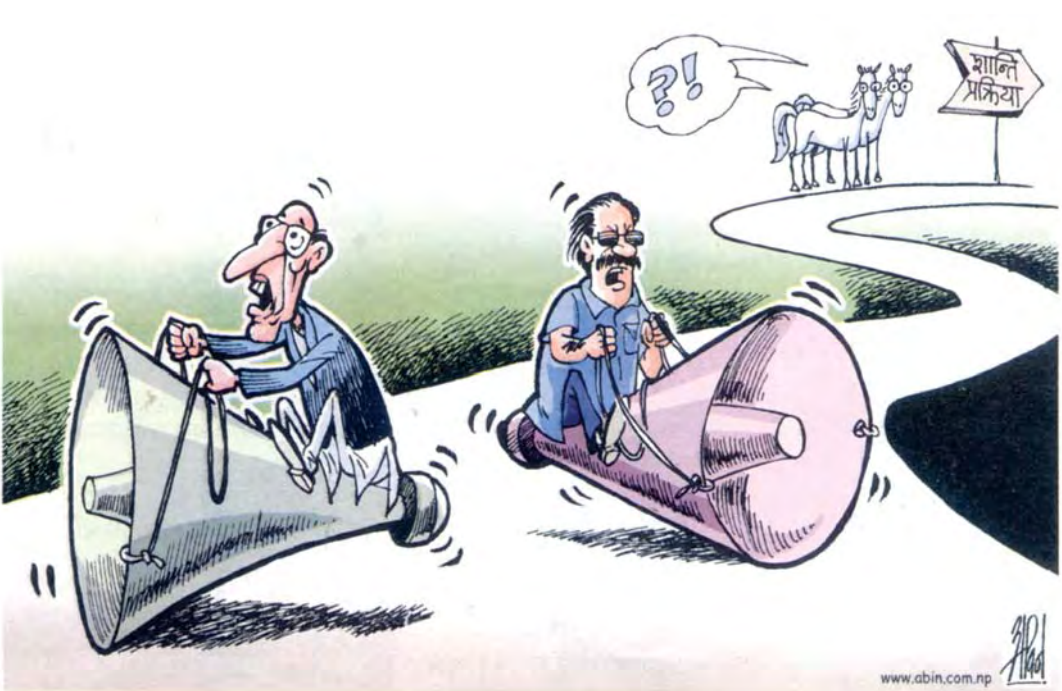
Over 12,000 people have died in the name of the Maoist conflict. Nepalis have been killed because they have refused to pay, feed, or house Maoists, or the rebels have taken innocent lives for personal vendettas. The state also killed many innocents because they were ërebel spiesí, or just unlucky enough to be caught in the crossfire. Poor, hardworking Nepalís just trying to get by have been systematically and brutally killed.



The ceasefire is our chance to make something positive. Now is not the time to be bitter, but to join hands and to work together. But sadly, even in such a positive environment the Maoists are determined to hide their excesses and blame the last ten years on the government. Their victims are suffering from psychological, financial and social problems, yet no one on the talks team is discussing how to deal with the psychological trauma of the war. We canít get out of this war if we donít address humanitarian issues.

Only the victims have the right to forgive those who committed those atrocities. A political solution is not the only way out of this conflict. Justice is the only hope victims of the conflict have in the face of their psychological and financial wounds. Reconstruction and reconciliation require finances and physical structure, but the families of the victims of the conflict first and foremost need their integrity protected. Physical and financial compensation mean little without justice.

If we want our society to change, we need to start talking about healing and reconciliation. After all, those who committed the atrocities and those who suffered from them lived as brothers in the past. When I think about how my father Muktinath Adhikari (*pictured*) was murdered, I want to get back at those Maoists who killed him. It is not abnormal to hate those who harmed your family. But who will listen to us? A voice on tv tells us, ¡violence and sacrifice is normal during the time of conflict, forget what happened in the past.î It is inhumane to broadcast such messages because everyone is blatantly ignoring the fact that for our societyís reunification those who committed these heinous crimes need to realise their mistakes.



Sign: Peace process

समया Abin Shrestha in *Samaya*, 14 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ There is no situation in which the king can be put out of the palace on his ear. That is why I proposed that he should be made the last king, and the first president. Please highlight this as the ëGopalman doctrineí. ”

Minister for Physical Planning Gopalman Shrestha in an interview with *Jana Aastha*, 20 September

Great escapes

A Dasain getaway planner for those who can't leave fast enough



Where: **Tiger Mountain destinations** are in Chitwan, Bardiya national parks and Pokhara, and have special offers for expats this season.
When: Until 28 October.
Package: Choose between a three-day-two-night package or four-day-three-night deal, at either Tiger Mountain Tharu Lodge or Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge or a combination of the two.
Cost: Prices range from Rs 10,000-25,000 per person including meals, activities such as elephant safaris, boat rides, jungle drives, bird watching, jungle walks, plus the services of experienced naturalists and jungle guides, taxes, and national park fees.
Special offer: Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge offers a per night rate of Rs 6,000 per head, inclusive of accommodation, meals, and in-house activities such as jungle walks, bird watching and village tours.
Contact: Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, 4361500, reservations@tigermountain.com

Where: **Rhino Resort** in Chitwan is reached by road, a flight into Bharatpur, or by a combination of a raft and wheels from Mugling.
When: Dasain
Package: Three day-two night package
Cost: Rs 3,000 on twin sharing basis
Contact: Rhino Resort, 4265454



Where: **Gaida Wildlife Camp** borders the rhino zone in the central area of Chitwan National Park. Drive to Sauraha, and the Camp folks will take care of you from there.
When: Dasain
Package: Three day-two night package
Cost: Couples pay Rs 5,999, and single Rs 2,999, inclusive of jungle activities
Contact: Gaida Wildlife Camp, 4215431, 4215407

Where: **Temple Tiger Jungle Lodge** in Chitwan offers discounted rates this season, as well as picnic lunches, barbecue dinners, and jungle activities.
When: Until 31 October
Package: Flexible Dasain and Tihar offers
Cost: Rs 5,400 per person per night
Contact: Temple Tiger Jungle Lodge, 4244651

Where: **Le Meridian, Gokarna** is a lush getaway in the heart of the forest, surrounded by green hills and a panoramic view of the mountains.
Package: Four-day-three night Dasain offer, two-night Golf Getaway, two-night weekend package, two-night Romantic Gokarna.
Cost: Offers range from Rs 10-15,000 for singles and Rs 12,000-18,000 for couples, and Rs 17,000 for the romantic getaway.
Contact: Le Meridien Kathmandu Gokarna†Forest Golf Resort Spa, 4451212

Dasain is upon us already, earlier this year. Dasain bonuses are splurged on shopping, eating, and partying. The streets of Kathmandu are already packed with shoppers, students in a premature holiday mood, office workers winding down early, and others making preparations for the festive return of family far away. The autumn breeze wafts up kites and what smells suspiciously like khasi ko masu. But this is also the only time of year busy Kathmanduites can really get away from it all. Planning becomes easier with our quick *Nepali Times* Escape Guide. Destinations inside and outside Nepal are offering special rates and packages. You could take a break at resorts and hotels outside the city, go on an adventure or wildlife holiday, or, if your time, inclination, and budget suit, fly to a nearby destination overseas.



Where: **Park Village, Budhanilkantha**, in the foothills of Shivapuri is spread over six acres of dense woodland, and is excellent for kite-flying.
When: Dasain
Package: Two day-one night package with full American breakfast and dinner, elaborate Dasain lunch, free use of pool, gym,†and snooker, and 25 percent off steam, sauna, massage, and beverages.
Cost: Rs 2,100 per person on twin sharing basis, children under five free, children over 10 pay Rs 1,100
Contact: Park Village, 4375280

Where: **Club Himalaya, Nagarkot** is making up for the cancellation of Changa Chait by organising a pre-Dasain party, where kites can be flown.
Package: Chiso Chiso Hawama for Nepalis and expatriates offers one night, dinner, breakfast, and shuttle service.
When: Year-round
Cost: Single Rs 2,800, double Rs 3,400, not including taxes
Contact: Club Himalaya, 6680080/ 83

Where: Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu
When: Dasain
Package: Dasain Bonanza for Nepalis and residents, including massage, gym, pool, spa, buffet dinner and breakfast.
Cost: Rs 4,500 per person per night on twin sharing basis with two children
Contact: Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4491234, reservation.kathmanduhr@hyattintl.com



Where: **Godavari Village Resort** is spread over 14 lush green acres and offers mountain views and traditionally-styled cottages and buildings overlooking rice fields.
When: Dasain
Package: Dasain overnight stay package
Cost: Rs 1,800 for one and Rs 2,500 for two
Contact: Godavari Village Resort, 5560675

There are literally scores of companies that organise treks to the popular Everest and Annapurna regions. Or, you could get a map and make your own way, stopping at teahouses and mingling with locals and other tourists.



International

In the decade since Kathmandu travel agents started offering international tours, they've specialised in leisure, pilgrimage, adventure, and honeymoon tour packages. You can go anywhere, from Asian destinations like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, China, and Dubai. Farther afield are Australia, New Zealand, France, Switzerland, the US, Egypt, and Kenya. Special Dasain packages are selling out, and all depart in a few weeks.

Lalit Mandap specialises in East Asia and offers four packages this season:
Where: Thailand
Package: Eight days-seven nights in Bangkok and Pattaya featuring Coral Island, Nong Nooch Gardens, Tiger Zoo, Safari World, and Dream World
When: Tours depart on 29 September and 4 October
Cost: Rs 47,000 per person on twin sharing basis

Where: China
Package: Twelve days in Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Wuxi, Suzhou, Hangzhou
When: Tour departs 7 October
Cost: Rs 68,000 per person



Where: China
Package: Best of China, nine days in Shanghai, Beijing, Wuxi
When: Tour departs 30 September
Cost: Rs 60,000

Where: East Asia
Package: Oriental bonanza, nine days to Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand
When: Tour departs 29 September
Cost: Rs 92,000 per person on a twin/ triple basis

Lalit Mandap also offers domestic tour packages, priced according to the number of people. Packages include two days-one night to Nagarkot and Dhulikhel, day-long rafting on the Trisuli, one-day-one night camping, and rafting trips to Charaudi, Kurintar, Manakamana, available year-round.
Contact: Lalit Mandap Travel and Tours, 5546526

President Travels and Tours says its more popular trips include those to Macau, Mauritius, Turkey, Korea, and Cyprus. This holiday season, President Travels offers promotional packages.

Where: Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur
When: Dasain
Package: Seven days-six nights Dasain dhamaka
Cost: Rs 55,000



Where: Egypt
Package: Eight days-seven nights in Cairo, Luxor, the West Bank, and Aswan including the pyramids, museums, a Nile cruise among other activities.
Cost: Rs 41,000 (not including airfare)

For both contact: President Travels and Tours, 4220245

Malaysia Dream Holidays offer numerous packages through Zenith Experiences Travel Services (4444076) and Marco Polo Travels (4247215).

Where: Kuala Lumpur, Genting and Penang
Package: Three nights in Kuala Lumpur, one in Genting, two in Penang
When: Year-round
Cost: \$325 per person on twin sharing basis, \$200 per person and child with bed, \$162 per person and a child with no bed, \$113 for single supplement

Where: Kuala Lumpur and Genting
Package: Three nights in Kuala Lumpur, two in Genting
When: Year-round
Cost: \$250 per person on twin sharing basis, \$170 per person and child with bed, \$125 per person and a child with no bed, \$94 for single supplement

Where: Famosa
Package: Two nights in Famosa
When: Year-round
Cost: \$125 per person base on twin sharing basis, \$113 per person and a child with bed, \$100 per person and a child with no bed, \$188 for singles

Where: Famosa
Package: One night in Famosa
When: Year-round
Cost: \$93 per person base on twin sharing basis, \$84 per person base and a child with bed, \$64 per person and a child with no bed, \$150 for singles

Where: Kuala Lumpur and Melaka
Package: Dasain special
When: Until end-November
Cost: Rs 13,999 per person on twin/ double/ triple sharing basis

Many fly-by-night firms offer trips to **Tibet** or just **Lhasa**. It's important you choose a reliable operator, and there are many choices to suit your budget. Among the choices are:

Where:†Three days sightseeing and overland return to Kathmandu via Gyantse, Xigatse, Tingri, Nyalam, and Zhangmu.
When: September and October
Package: The Lhasa Express, eight days
Cost: \$855 per person for group of four, airfare not included.
Contact: Shangri La Tours / Himalayan Journeys, 4226138



If none of these floats your boat, **Star Cruises** might. Cruise packages are ex-Singapore and include accommodation on twin sharing basis, meals, and entertainment on board.

Where: Two nights Melacca/ Kuala Lumpur cruise
Cost: \$340 per person on twin sharing basis, 50 percent discount available for second passenger.
Where: Three nights Penang/ Phuket cruise
Cost: \$535 per person on twin sharing basis, 50 percent off for a second passenger.
Where: Five nights, straits of Melacca
Cost: \$830 per person on twin sharing basis, 50 percent off for a second passenger.
When: Cruises sail 1 September-15 November.

WWW.SOALTEE.CROWNEPLAZA.COM

Last Summer !

This Autumn!

They didn't let us stay at home.

We just can't stay at home.

It's OKTOBERFEST in the air.

Soaltee Crowne Plaza brings you the hefty celebration season of – OKTOBERFEST. Unlimited beer, food, music, games, fun... 22nd to 24th September 2006. Open for Lunch and Dinner (Friday dinner only).

Lunch : 12:00 noon to 2:45 pm
Dinner : 6:30 pm to 10:45 pm
Priority Privilege discounts apply.

San Miguel BEER

Garden Terrace
The Happening Cafe

SOALTEE
CROWNE PLAZA
HOTELS • RESORTS
KATHMANDU
THE PLACE TO MEET.

Tahachal, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel.: 977-1-4273999, Ext. 6152

Featuring: Abhaya, Arpana, Ciney, Jessy, Preeti, Rachana, Rashmi, Sapna, Sheri, Subu, Yankee & The Cloud Walkers

Women in concert

Part IV

Ticket Rs. 999 INCLUDES BUFFET DINNER

24 Sept. 2006 | 1900 hours
Hotel de l' Annapurna

Come not only for the Music, but also for the cause
IN SUPPORT OF SEWA KENDRA LEPROSY RELIEF

Optimists, pessimists

The future looks increasingly uncertain

Most Nepalis will welcome plans for new peace talks before Dasain, announced after the prime minister met the top two Maoists on Sunday.

That is because Nepal still hovers between war and peace. Large-scale violence has ended, but local outrages continue, mainly perpetrated by the Maoists. And despite the claims that suspicions have been lifted, mistrust between the Maoists and the government has been rising.

This enables the Maoists to disrupt life on relatively small pretexts, as illustrated by last week's incident surrounding the armoured vehicles at Gajuri military camp. After the ceasefire monitoring committee found the trucks empty, the strike was called off, but Prachanda still said there was a conspiracy.

Given this recent pattern, how will things play out in the weeks to

come? Let's focus on the intentions of the Maoists and the government.

The Maoists, sporting their new grey uniform, have come largely overground, and are

running a slick Kathmandu office. But as for what they'll do next, predictions are divided between the pessimists and the optimists.

Some of Prachanda's recent remarks have been hardline. For instance, his assertion that the people are asking the Maoists to keep their weapons, that the camps the Maoists are building can be seen either as a contribution to peace or as a preparation to meet any eventuality, and that when multi-party democracy comes back to Nepal, it will only be a transitional phase.

Baburam Bhattarai reportedly says constituent assembly elections will not be possible without restructuring the Nepal Army whatever that means.

Some pessimists see the Maoists moving by stealth into a position of power, eulogised by most of the civil society lobby. A contributor to www.blog.com.np says Maoists have been entering FM stations and threatening violence unless they air the news they demand. I can only hope that isn't true.



SAGAR SHRESTHA

Pessimists also point to the fact that Maoist extortion, abductions and even killings continue around the country the most recent victims, two dalits in Lamjung, tortured to death.

The optimists counter that the Maoists' tough remarks are a way to pressurise the government to move faster and ensure that lower-level Maoist cadres are not alienated. The Maoists insist that their demands for money are a matter of feeding their army and militia. There are tens of thousands of these, some of whom have been living underground for years. What will they do next?

Optimists note that senior Maoists still say there's no going back to war. In his recent BBC phone-in, Prachanda said his repeated use of the term 'October Revolution' was symbolic and might refer to the future establishment of a republic through the elected assembly.

The prime minister and some of his cabinet have also been talking tough, saying, for instance, that until the Maoists disarm, they can't become a normal political party. Many people are appalled by the idea of an armed party entering elections. But there is another uncomfortable fact the June eight-point agreement mentions rapid movement towards interim arrangements, including the dissolution of parliament. It does not speak of any conditions for this to happen.

The Maoists have a point when they accuse the government of reneging on agreements, and they themselves have started backtracking on last month's letter to the UN, which requested help to monitor their own army's confinement in camps.

The government did, after signing the June agreement, admit that they'd not done enough 'homework' earlier. On the other hand there is evidence that the rebels virtually blackmailed them into signing by threatening a return to war unless big concessions were made.

So political squabbling continues, party politicians jostle for influence, and the Maoists behave as if they own the country just because they have weapons. Into the vacuum of democratic behaviour comes uncontrolled street politics.

Pushing aside autocratic royal rule in a largely peaceful manner was an achievement, and inspiration to people around the world. But Nepal still has a long and uncertain route to travel. ●

Charles Haviland is a journalist for BBC television and radio for South Asia.

Conflict vs conservation

Post-conflict, conservation must remain with communities



WWF NEPAL

SOPHIA TAMOT

Until 2000, Nepal's conservation efforts looked promising. Despite the conflict, the number of Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros had risen to 612 from less than a hundred in the 1960s, just one indicator of success.

But Nepal today has just 409 rhinos. "From the rhino data alone, we can say conservation work has stepped back nearly two decades," says Chandra Gurung, WWF Nepal's country representative.

Chitwan National Park alone had 544 rhinos in 2000. However, as the Maoists stepped up their activities, guard posts were abandoned, giving poachers and smugglers the freedom to move around national parks, encroach on protected areas, and illegally fell timber.

"Damage is most where security posts have been set up. The army was deputed in protected areas and they have been the main targets of rebels," says ecologist Dinesh Bhujju.

In Chitwan, there were 44 armed posts of which 17 were evacuated during the insurgency. "There is aggravated rhino poaching in the area, especially after 1997," says Bhujju. Since 2000, the rhino count in Chitwan National Park has gone down to

372 from 544—a 31 percent decline in five years.

In July, park officials found a carcass of a pregnant female rhino along with its fifteen-month-old foetus in Chitwan. Its horn was missing and the rhino was covered in gunshot wounds. Altogether, six rhinos have been found dead since July end.

Despite anti-poaching campaigns and efforts by conservationists, huge profits from the sale of rhino horns and tiger bones mean local smugglers will not be deterred. A rhino horn can fetch as much as Rs 800,000/kg in Nepal, while tiger bones cost up to Rs 5,400/kg. International prices are three to four times higher.

Conservationists have no idea about the state of other species, as the conflict has made it impossible for them to go into specific areas and monitor animal activity. "The south of Annapurna has become a no-go zone for park staff," says Gurung.

The conflict has also set back the implementation of programs planned to keep conservation efforts on track. In Chitwan's Madi valley, 60,000 residents live without electricity due to the conflict, and over 15 game scouts have been killed by Maoist landmines in Parsa and Suklaphanta. "Ten of our staff were injured and abducted. The

Maoists have also banned social mobilisation, which makes it very difficult for us to work," says Jhamak Karki, assistant ecologist at the Department of National Parks and Forests.

Wildlife monitoring has also suffered a setback, which is why poaching in all areas, not just the remote inaccessible ones has intensified. But poaching for food was curbed to an extent because Karki says, "the Maoists confiscated all weapons from the villagers."

Revenue generated from the exploitation of natural resources normally goes to the government and is in part put into local community development projects. That has in recent years been channelled into Maoist activities. "Even Maoists from Dhading go up to Dolpo to collect taxes on Yarchagumba. The Rs 10,000/kg royalty that should be going to the government was going to the Maoists," says Yeshe Lama, senior program officer of WWF Nepal.

But it's not all bad news. "Despite the conflict, landscape conservation has materialised, a third breeding rhino population has been established, and the concept of community owned and managed conservation areas was successfully pioneered in the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area," says Lama. The conservation project will be handed over to the local council this Friday.

This is the only way to go, say experts, because true ownership of wildlife and the forests lies with the community, and it is difficult to run successful programs without their participation. "Ten years from now, we want to see the indigenous communities as owners of wildlife and living in peace with nature," says Mangal Man Shakya of the Wildlife Watch Group.

The group has just launched two publications to show the impact of the conflict on conservation in Nepal. (See box). ●

Not all bad news

Two reports *Conflict & Conservation: Himalayan Biodiversity on the Brink*, and *Cost of Conflict: On Nepal's conservation efforts* have been published by Wildlife Watch Group, which has been lobbying for wildlife issues since 1993.

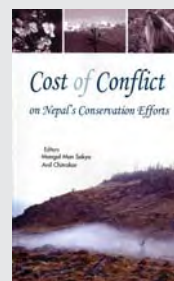
Based on field reports collected by over 20 journalists who visited different national parks and protected areas, the books offer a chronology of the conflict's direct impact on wildlife.

What the books highlight does not really come as news. Maoist activities like taxation, extortion, threats to life and property, abduction, and ambushes have greatly affected conservation efforts in most national parks and protected areas.

But there are also progressive stories of community groups, remigration of birds and

empowerment of women despite the conflict. The reports also find that the losses suffered by the forests are not as severe as initially predicted. All this has been possible mainly because of the communities' commitment towards conservation.

While the editors admit that the journalists who carried out the studies are not environmental experts, but political journalists with good contacts in the Nepal Army and the Maoists, the books are a solid source of information about the current situation in the national parks and protected areas.



Optimism, certainty, and ambivalence

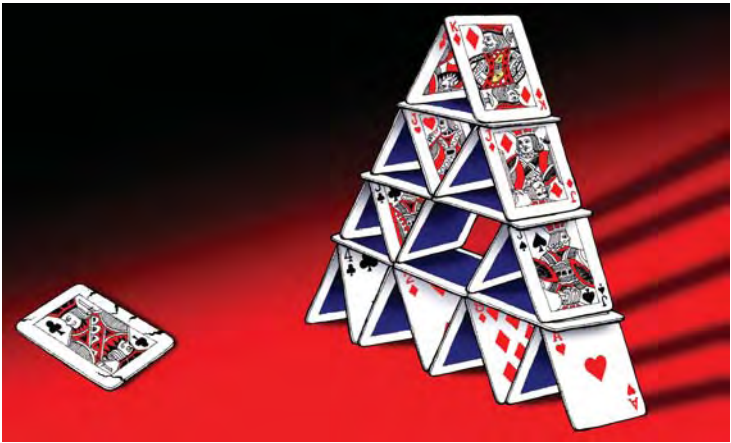
It may be a bit premature to discuss an election to a constituent assembly when 35 percent of the electorate either hasn't heard about it or knows very little about it. Even so, there are telling political and psephological patterns suggested by the NDI-AC Nielsen poll results released this week. There is cautious optimism about some things, dead certainty about others and ambivalence on the remaining. But that just reflects the contradictions already present among the parties, the Maoists, and the royalists. The seven-party alliance may have a 91 percent approval rating, but that puts more pressure on them to perform. In the 2004 NDI survey, that figure was just 34 percent, which suggests that if the alliance doesn't manage the expectations of the people well,

institution of the monarchy remains an issue, though republicans and royalists are split virtually down the middle, and by age, gender, education, and region. Though the king's personal rating might have fallen considerably since 2004, nine percent still think he should have control of the army. John Moreira, head of the team that designed the questionnaire, suggests that support for the institution of monarchy will increase or decrease according to the personal role of the king in the coming days. This, he says, is because only 2 percent of the respondents back absolute monarchy as against the bulk who wish strictly ceremonial role for the king. The Maoists for their part are faced with ambivalence. Their

a precursor to it. This is possibly why even today 76 percent of respondents favour integrating Maoist troops into the Nepal Army. To conduct this survey, NDI commissioned polling research firm AC Nielsen and polling consultant US-based Greenberg

Quinlan Rosner Research Inc, Washington DC, which predicts election results in countries like the US and the UK. Greenberg designed the polling survey, including the questionnaire, and analysed the data gathered. The Greenberg operation was directed by John

Moreira, and AC Nielsen conducted the fieldwork. This entailed 10 focus group discussions, followed by random sampling based on the population break-up of 66 districts of Nepal. The survey's margin of error is 1.6 percent. ●



SUBHAS RAI

they could lose a lot of ground gained through the April Uprising. Nepalis may be optimistic about the parties, but they aren't unrealistic. They see disunity (58 percent) and self-interest (33 percent) as the biggest stumbling blocks to the parties. Social inequity will play a role in how parties are judged, as 28 percent rated not doing enough for women and lower castes as one of their two top concerns about the government. The king has an abysmally low rating (-59 on a thermometer scale), which measures the spread between approval points going up to 100 and disapproval going down to -100. But the

thermometer rating is -2, after positive ratings for the seven-party alliance, the UML, and the NC. The Maoists have got better ratings in helping the poor, fighting corruption, and stopping caste discrimination, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal's personal rating has gone to 35 percent. This support has the potential to grow during an election. † Thus, the undecided wait-and-watch respondents (18%), all potential voters in the constituent assembly election, could play a decisive role in shaping the post-election scenario. Earlier polls by NDI and Himalmedia have shown that the Nepali people believe an election is a product of peace, not

Special Bundle Price !
Rs. 64,990
Inclusive of VAT

Offer valid till stocks last

acer TravelMate Notebook
Latest Intel Celeron Processor, 533MHz FSB

EPSON Stylus C67 Colour Printer
INKdividual DURABrite™ Ultra Ink Cartridge

MERCANTILE
OFFICE SYSTEMS

Available at:
Mercantile Office Systems, Durbar Marg, 4243566, 4220773
Star Office Automation, Putali Sadak, 4266820, 4244827

GM

CHEVROLET

AVEO
now, that's performance
2yrs / 40,000kms warranty

TAVERA NEO
2yrs / 40,000kms warranty

SRV
2yrs / 40,000kms warranty

OPTRA
2yrs / 40,000kms warranty

Vijaya Motors Pvt. Ltd.
E-mail: marketing@vmpl.com.np
Ph: 4433205, 4414625 (Lazimpat) 2022022, 016206621 (Kantipath)

Now available, a wider choice from Chevrolet

Thailand after Thaksin

Mismanaged, even a well-intentioned, 'bloodless' coup could turn ugly



JOHANNA SON

Many Thais are heaving a sigh of relief that Tuesday's military coup has been non-violent, and at the prospect of an end to months of political tension around ousted Prime Minister Thaksin, but not far behind is the nagging question: now what? Many are asking if this is a return to the past, in a country that has seen 17 coups and 46 years of military rule in the last 74 years.

Many Thais spent Wednesday surfing the internet or glued to the army channel. Public pronouncements of the coup leaders, led by army chief General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, said an interim prime minister and cabinet would be named in two weeks and that elections are expected by October 2007.

"The military only took power for a short while. They will return power to the

people," remarked 60-year-old Chao, a worker at a small Bangkok hotel.

But Noi, an accountant, added: "I don't feel happy or sad for Thaksin. But I feel the way the military carried out the coup while Thaksin was not in the country, that's not democracy. Right now, Thailand is no different from Myanmar."

So far, the ruling Administrative Reform Council issued pronouncements including the suspension of parliament, the abrogation of the constitution and plans to draft a new one before polls can be held, control over media and a ban on gatherings of more than five people. Between 1932 and 1997, Thailand has had 15 constitutions.

Jon Ungphakorn, an activist and until the coup, a caretaker senator, is disappointed by some of these initial signals. "If we have a civilian interim prime minister who is a champion of democracy, if they restore freedom of speech and the

press, if elections are promised within six months, if an interim constitution is brought in immediately, then we might be moving forward. But if the present military (rulers) say that in order to eradicate the Thaksin system, they need to have power for many more months, or ban Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party from standing in a future election," he explained; that is a different matter.

As Wednesday's online editorial of the English daily *The Nation* said, "The world is watching and scrutinising. To many democracy lovers, Thaksin's downfall... turned back the clock on Thailand's political development... The coupmakers are lucky in that much of society now believes they have done the wrong thing for the right reason. But the perception that this is something done in good faith will be extremely fragile." "The slower the coupmakers are in the pledged transfer of power back to the people, the more Thaksin will look like a 'pretext' and not the 'reason' for the power seizure," it added.

Ungphakorn says that the ouster of Thaksin—who preparing to address the United Nations General Assembly in New York when the coup went underway—was inevitable given recent pressures. Although he believes it would have been better if peaceful mass meetings and civil disobedience had been used, he says, "in a sense Thaksin himself had forged his own coup" when in the years after winning a landslide victory in 2001, he "destroyed all the checks and balances within the system", as the Thak Rai Thai party dominated the government, and clamped down on media freedom.

Wednesday morning, the senior most military and police officials appeared on state television as the country's rulers. They said the Thaksin government had caused "conflicts and undermined the harmony of the people as never before in history" and had been "corrupt" to the point where there was a danger of "violations against his majesty the king (Bhumibol Adulyadej)". Troops are wearing yellow bands to show loyalty to the king.

A statement on state-run television said the king had endorsed Sonthi as head of the Administrative Reform Council, but there has been no statement from the palace. ● (IPS)

Meteoric rise

Though the leader of the Thai military coup, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, is known to be soft spoken and is respected for his professionalism, he was never one of then-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's favourites.

The general's appointment as commander-in-chief of the army last October as the first Muslim to take the post came as a surprise to many. However, he was heavily backed by retired armed forces Supreme Commander General Surayud Chulanont and Privy Council President General Prem Tinsulanonda, both advisers to Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

As a result of frequent differences with Thaksin, including over the handling of the insurgency in the Muslim majority in the south, Sonthi was reportedly on his way out and on to an inactive post.

Sonthi, 59, graduated from Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy in 1969 and was commissioned into the Royal Army Infantry Corps. He went on to lead several top units, including the elite Special Warfare Command.

Earlier this year, Sonthi said, "As a soldier of His Majesty, I would like to help him relieve his worries and the army will adhere strictly to whatever advice he gives us." As the political situation worsened, Sonthi repeatedly denied coup rumours that were stealing headlines and fuelling concerns of civil unrest. (The Nation)



Booking Open

This festive season

**Zoom out with
the best deal.**

- 90% financing
- Finance upto 8 years
- Interest rate 6.5%
- Low EMI
- Free insurance for 1 year



**Newly arrived. New improved features and looks.
Booking open now!**

HYUNDAI

www.hyundai-motor.com

FOR A TEST DRIVE VISIT:

AVCO INTERNATIONAL (P) Ltd.
Sole distributor of Hyundai vehicles for Nepal

AUTHORIZED SERVICE CENTRE: AVCO SERVICE CENTRE PVT. LTD.
PH: 4413086/4438741 FAX: 4421353

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK.

3-YEAR WARRANTY • 3 YEARS FREE SERVICING • WARRANTY ON GENUINE HYUNDAI SPARE PARTS 3 MONTHS OR 5000 KMS • EXCHANGE FACILITIES

4425538 (DIR.), 4414281 (DIR.) 2004070, 98510 47600 (SUNIL), NAGPOKHARI, NAXAL, KATHMANDU.

www.avco.com.np

DEALERS: KATHMANDU: AM INTERNATIONAL PVT. LTD. (AUTO MART) 4233331, 98030 37567 (SUSHILA). POKHARA: JONCHHEN TRADERS: 061-528589/539173, 98560 26840 (DIPENDRA). BUTWAL: HIMALAYAN AUTO TRADING PVT. LTD.: 071-540648, 550500, 98570 26346 (THANESHWOR). NARAYANGHAT: UNITED MOTORS: 056-526562, 528433, 98550 55449 (RAJAN). BIRATNAGAR: AUTO CENTRE: 021-530301. FAX: 021-535501, 98520 20481 (BIJAY). BIRGUNJ: REENA TRADE: 051-528872, 528876, 98550 20090 (SURENDRA). JANAKPUR: PARAS TRADERS: 041-525962.

CONTACT YOUR NEAREST DEALER FOR MORE INFORMATION. *CONDITIONS APPLY

Hyundai Mobile Service: 9851047500

Drive your way



BOAT BROTHERS: Curious locals watch the two kayaks somewhere along the Ganga

RAM SILWAL

Source to sea

Two Nepalis kayak from the Himalaya to the Bay of Bengal

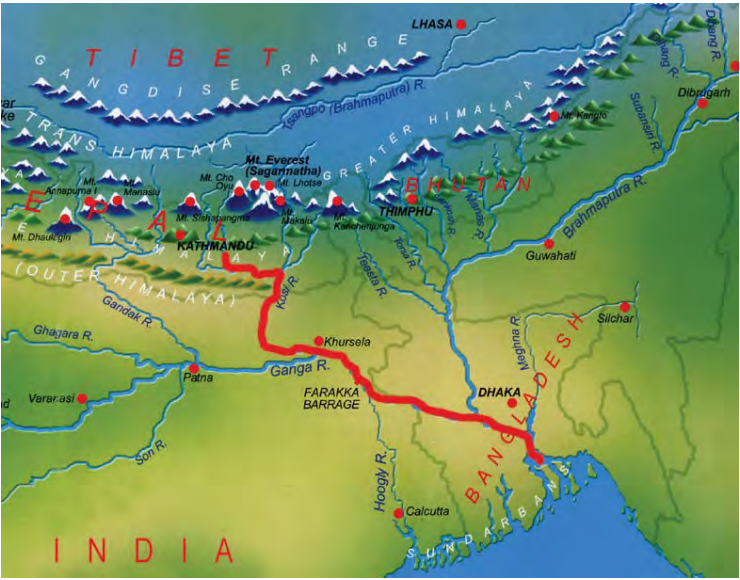
ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

Ram Silwal and Endra Rai’s journey might have taken less than three weeks, but it was the essence of classic, epic adventure travel. The two professional river guides kayaked 1,300km from the foothills of the Nepal Himalaya down to the Bay of Bengal. Along the way, they say they experienced the best and worst of unconventional travel in South Asia, from kayaking on the Ganga with fresh water dolphins for company, to spending 36 hours in Indian police custody. Silwal and Rai made the trip to encourage Nepali youth to take up adventure sports, create awareness about Nepal in neighbouring countries, and encourage environmental and river protection.

On 22 August, the duo mountain biked for two days from Pashupati to the Tala Marang creek in Helambu. There, they got in their kayaks and floated down to the Melamchi, which later joins the Indrawati. This was the first kayak descent ever made on the stretch. They continued through challenging white waters of the Sun Koshi and Sapta Koshi, reaching the Indian border five days later where they walked across the Kosi barrage into India. “We were expecting big whirlpools where the Kosi meets the Ganga, but conditions were surprisingly different,” says

Silwal. It took a while for Rai and Silwal, more familiar with rapid white waters, to get used to the massive stretch of rivers in the flatlands. “Fortunately, we didn’t have to confront any crocodiles but did see over 50 freshwater dolphins,” adds Silwal. The duo settled into a routine that seemed natural after just a couple of days. Setting out early each morning, they would paddle hard until noon. By late afternoon, the search for the night’s campsite would begin. Sometimes they’d camp too close to villages and be surrounded by crowds of over-friendly villagers, while at others they moved after locals warned them of dacoits and wild animals. They even passed an occasional night in their kayaks when the banks of the flooded Ganges were too marshy to set camp. However, as they neared the sensitive India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal’s Lalgola area, neither expected the welcome they got. “At first it seemed like people were cheering us on as we paddled down the middle of the river. We didn’t realise we were in trouble until a motorboat carrying Indian Border Security Force (BSF) soldiers in plain clothes came right up to us,” they recall. Although they had a legal visa for Bangladesh and didn’t need one for India, they were handcuffed and locked up for almost 36 hours until the BSF finally decided the two were

harmless and let them go. However, a portion of the film they had shot on the Indian leg of the journey was erased by the security forces. There was nothing they could do but make up for the lost time and so they did. On 5 September they crossed into Bangladesh where the Ganga changed to the Paddha. On the morning of 11 September they sensed the sea air. Paddling hard for almost 12 hours, they reached the Bay of Bengal by evening. From the moment they got into the water in Tala Marang, they had paddled a total of 153 hours, 29 minutes, and 35 seconds, and were the first ever to make the epic journey. Along the way there were plenty of lessons. “The single most important thing we learnt was that if there is anything dangerous to man, it is perhaps man himself. In India and Bangladesh people depend on the river for their livelihood and if we here at the source do not keep the rivers clean, people there will suffer,” says Rai, who is also the goodwill ambassador of the Nepal River Conservation Trust. The trip was a dream come true for the duo. Silwal had been planning the expedition from the ‘source to the sea’ for two years and realised Rai was the perfect partner when they met six months ago. “We were inspired by Edmund Hillary. Even after being the first to summit Mt Everest, he didn’t rest and went on other equally exciting and adventurous journeys,” says Rai, who is also the first from the Rai community to summit Everest. The two spent almost \$1,500 of their own money on the trip. Logistical support came from Nepal Mountain Bikes, camping and kitchen equipment from Himalayan Ecstasy, kayaks from The Royal Beach, and clothing from Kavu. Silwal and Rai now plan awareness campaigns to educate and inspire the younger generation to take more interest in adventure sports. “There is so much potential for adventure sports that young people need not go abroad for jobs,” says Silwal. ●



Dashain & Tihar Offer

50% Bonus & 20% Discount

on all dial-up schemes

Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel : +977 1 5546410
sales@vianet.com.np www.vianet.com.np

• This Scheme is only valid from 25 Bhadra 2063 to end of Kartik 2063.
• Vianet reserves all the right to accept or decline any offer without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Ramailo Saanjh

by the poolside

in association with San Miguel

Anil Shahi

and his popular group “Maya Mantra” will entertain you with a fusion of traditional & modern nepali melodies

26th September ‘06
10th October ‘06

Interesting mouthwatering dishes prepared at live cooking stations. Come n enjoy varieties of Nepali delicacies like Samaya Bajee, Gelroti, Bara, Sakuwa, Khaki ko kabab, Maas ko masu and many more.....

Tickets available @ Dwarika's Hotel
Rs.1000/- nett per person (Includes Snacks & Dinner)
10% discount for Heritage plus members.
Special discounted cash bar.
Time: 7pm - 10pm

Valet parking Available

Dwarika's Hotel
Bartolopatti, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4479488
Email: info@dwarika.com
Website: www.dwarika.com

San Miguel BEER

THE BRITISH EMBASSY, KATHMANDU

NOTICE FROM BRITISH EMBASSY CHANGE IN VISA APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT PROCEDURES

As of Monday 2nd October 2006, (Monday 16th Ashwin 2063) the British Embassy will no longer be accepting cash payments for visa services. All visa applicants will need to pay their visa application fees to the Standard Chartered Bank at the Lazimpat branch. Fees will not be accepted at any other Standard Chartered branch or at the British Embassy in Kathmandu after the aforementioned dates.

Applicants will need to inform the bank as to which visa they are applying for and the appropriate fee will be charged accordingly. The bank will charge a nominal fee for producing a deposit voucher. The deposit voucher will need to be presented to the British Embassy alongside a visa application form and the necessary supporting documents.

A special counter at the Standard Chartered Bank in Lazimpat for payment of visa fees will be open between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday. On Fridays the counter will be open between 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

The British Embassy visa section is open to receive applications between 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Monday - Thursday and on Fridays between 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Information is available on the British Embassy Website by logging on to: www.britishembassy.gov.uk/nepal. Any additional queries in relation to visa applications for the United Kingdom can be directed to the British Embassy in Kathmandu on Tel: 01441 0583.

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **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

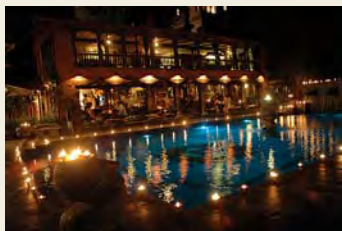
EVENTS

- ❖ **Lux Supermodel Hunt** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 22 September
- ❖ **Jack Daniels Quench** organised by Party Nepal with DJ D'Jit from New Delhi at Liquid Lounge, 22 September, Rs 599
- ❖ **Baba Bowling Jamboree** at Bowling Boulevard, Kantipath, 22-24 September, for school and college students only. 9841498251
- ❖ **Poolside Dance Party** a fundraising event at the International Club, Sanepa, 22 September, Rs 650. 5550861
- ❖ **Answers to the Nation's Woes** with Maitalal Gurung, People's Freedom Party (Progressive Green), 24 September, 3PM at Martin Chautari. 4-238050
- ❖ **One Giant Leap** a film brought to you by Kathmandu Film Society, 24 September, 5.30 PM at Brikuti Mandap.
- ❖ **Films Out of Mind** at Lazimpat Gallery Café, Harvey 26 September, *Psycho* 28 September, 7PM
- ❖ **Book Launch** of *Badlindo Khadya Shrimkhala*, with commentator Bishnu Raj Upreti, 26 September, 4PM Martin Chautari
- ❖ **Naya Nepal Conference** organised by Action Aid Nepal and the Social Science Baha, 26-27 September. 9841419943
- ❖ **Premier Show** of *The Greater Nepal- in Quest of Boundary*, directed by Manoj Pandit, 27 September, 3PM at Martin Chautari
- ❖ **Fulpati** 29 September
- ❖ **Tika** 2 October
- ❖ **Salsa Classes** at the Radisson Hotel, 6PM, pre-register at the hotel reception. 4411818
- ❖ **Tai-Chi, Qi-Qong and Hatha Yoga** at the Self Awakening Centre, Baber Mahal Revisited, call to sign up. 4256618



MUSIC

- ❖ **Devil's Night** featuring DJs Shrawan, Samba, Axe and Ray with reggae band Jerry and Friends, jam sessions, 22 September at Maroon Lounge, 7PM. 9803219021
- ❖ **Gazal Night** at Jatra Café, 23 September, 7PM. 4256622
- ❖ **Dolma Café's Ramailo Saanjh** with Anil Shahis Maya Mantra, 23 September. 4215069
- ❖ **Women in Concert Part IV** at Hotel Del Annapurna, 24 September, Rs 999, 7PM
- ❖ **Ramailo Saanjh** with Anil Shahis Maya Mantra at Dwarika's, 26 September, Rs 1000
- ❖ **Dwarika's Oktoberfest** a fusion of food and music at Dwarika's, 29 September, Rs 850
- ❖ **Jazz Affair** at the opening of the Garden of Dreams, Saskia Laroo to perform, 11 October, Rs 2,000. 4495000
- ❖ **Surya Classic Jazzmandu 2006** 12-20 October
- ❖ **Open Mic Night** at ViaVia Café, Thamel every Friday, 8PM



DINING

- ❖ **Oktoberfest** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza, food, music, games and fun, 22-24 September. 4273999
- ❖ **Mezza and Margaritas** at Dwarika's Fusion, every Wednesday at 5.30 PM, Rs 555. 4479448
- ❖ **Seven Sensations** at Hotel Yak & Yeti, cocktails and snacks. 4248999
- ❖ **Thakali Lunch** special price, everyday at Moksh. 5526212
- ❖ **Scrumptious** wood fired pizzas at Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel 4262768 and Pulchok 5521755
- ❖ **A Sweet Taste of Life** at La Dolce Vita, authentic Italian cuisine. 4700612
- ❖ **Season of Freshness** at Shambala Garden Cafe, Shangri-La Hotel, happy hours 12-7 PM. 4412999
- ❖ **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

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com

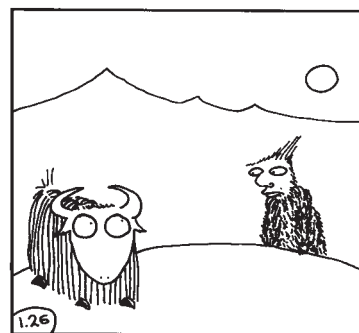
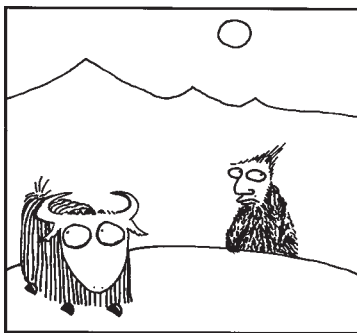
AKA Pizza @ Moksh

Coffee by Himalayan Java
(Behind the Egyptian Embassy), Pulchowk, Tel: 5526212

Moksh AKA PIZZA

YAK YETI YAK

by MIKU



Quest Entertainment

Lage Raho Munnabhai is the sequel to 2003's hit comedy *Munnabhai M.B.B.S.* Once again good-hearted local thug Munnabhai (Sanjay Dutt) and his loyal sidekick Circuit (Arshad Warsi) find themselves in a host of unlikely situations when Munnabhai masquerades as a history professor to impress radio jockey Jhanvi (Vidya Balan). As usual, there's more than a few unexpected surprises, and hilarity ensues.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal
www.jainepal.com



FARNIS Collaborated with Italy & all products are designed by professional designers of the world.

B & B TRADING HOUSE Bajra & Bajracharya Enterprises Bijulbazar 4780687, 4781105 | Balaju: 4365510 | Lagankhel: 5523278

VARIOUS LAPTOPS ... at single showroom

Why buy in cybernetics
- Authorised HP reseller for Nepal
- 7 years of experience in Customer Service
- Genuine Service Centre
- Easy warranty claim



Cybernetics Pvt. Ltd. (showroom)
4a-1, Computer Bazar, Putlisadak
Tel: 4420432, 2322007

Cybernetics Pvt. Ltd.
Kathmandu, Near by Ganesh Mandir
Tel: 4224137, 4250577

NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



Talk about a late resurgence. Don't let the bright weather earlier this week fool you. Thursday morning's satellite picture shows another cycle of monsoon front-emerging from the Bay of Bengal, bearing moisture-rich clouds. The low pressure trough is persistent along the foothills, which means that this weekend will be more or less rained out. Looks like the monsoon will be here to stay for a week past its 23 September departure date. As we move into the festive season next week, we'll likely have sunny skies and dry weather again.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



Jeans Masala
Indian Restaurant

Jeans Café Basantapur, New Road, #4221324 (Next to Fire Brigade)

SALE upto **50%** off

Summer & Winter Collection 10% off on new arrival

Exclusive **NIKE** Showroom at DurbarMarg, Kathmandu.
AVENUE MARKETING PVT. LTD. Tel: 4229835



BBC

नेपाली

Daily

20.45-21.15 on 102.4



Radio Sagarmatha

P.O. Box 6958,
Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: ++977-1-545680, 545681,
Fax: ++ 977-1- 530227
radio@radiosagarmatha.org,
www.radiosagarmatha.org

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

नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग



SAGAR SHRESTHA

THIS LAND IS MY LAND: Demonstrators from women's, Tharu, and other janajati groups staged a one-hour protest outside Singha Darbar on Wednesday to say Nepal is theirs, and not Ambassador Moriarty's.



CHARLES HAVILAND

BEETLEMANIA: Close to 50 bugs from the Association of Nepal Beetle Users Group chugged up to Kakani to raise money for cleft palate surgeries. They also cruised through Patan Darbar Square, New Road, and dropped in at the Wheels auto show at Birendra International Convention Centre.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

CLASS ACT: Cadenza gets into the groove at a Surya Classic Encounters event at Dwarika's Hotel on Saturday.



MERO FIRST BIRTHDAY: Dmitry Zaika, CEO of Spice Nepal, speaks at the first anniversary of Mero Mobile at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Sunday.

Exotic Jewellery & Accessories

WHOLESALE & RETAIL

Koupondol, Lalitpur (Opp. Hotel Himalayan) Tel : 5528444

Bamboo master

For a 63-year-old on dialysis, Punya Poudyal is bursting with energy. Both his kidneys have failed him, but he continues to work on his lifelong passion, bamboo, and share his knowledge with the world.

Poudyal, who has spent almost 40 years researching bamboo and rattan, is now working with a few other enthusiasts to establish a world-class Bamboo Botanical Garden on a sprawling four-hectare plot in Budanilkantha. The unique garden will also provide some much-needed green public space.

Poudyal has travelled the world presenting papers on the subject, and has come a long way from his small village in Tehrathum. After topping his batch of teacher trainees in the Sano Thimi National Vocational Training Centre in 1967, Poudyal won a government scholarship to study bamboo and rattan in the Philippines. He has over fifty professional journal publications, and established projects as far afield as Samoa and Papua New Guinea that are still active and profitable after two decades. His latest book, *Bamboos of Sikkim (India), Bhutan and Nepal*, is a comprehensive guide on the plant in the region and will be published next week. Next in line are books on bamboos of the world and even one on global bamboo experts.



ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

Visiting Poudyal at his home is like an adventure into an exotic tropical land. He has a vast collection bamboo and rattan products, and a garden filled with 30 different species, each of which he can lovingly identify and

praise. Here's hoping Poudyal's master's, as his former students in Bhadrapur Secondary School in Jhapa nicknamed him, proves as resilient as the plant that he loves. ●

Alok Tumbahangphey

Machhapuchchhre Bank Limited

at Your Service

With Full Range of Banking Services

MBL Presents **ON-LINE** Mobile Bill Payment Service.

NAE/MBL/02/06

You can now pay your mobile bill at our counters, which will be immediately accounted to NTC.

We Value Your Time

Happy Vijaya Dashami 2063

Paying mobile bill with MBL is just like paying bill at NTC Counter, as it is directly linked with NTC Server...

Service with a personal touch...

MACHHAPUCHCHHRE BANK LIMITED
Ramshah Path, Putali Sadak.
Tel: 4443681

URL: www.machbank.com
SWIFT Code: MBLNPKA

Branch Offices: Nayabazar, Mahendrapul, Rambazar, Bagar(Pokhara), Damauli, Bhairahawa, Birgunj, Jomsom, Banepa, Putalisadak, New Road (Kathmandu Mall)

The UN is going places

Whoever in the United Nations decided to paint the organisation's mammoth SUVs with large blue 'UN' signs must have graduated from the same corporate branding course as the yellow-and-red guys at DHL.

But on Kathmandu's narrow streets the logo has turned into a metaphor for profligacy and waste. When is the UN going to free up hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for health care and education by switching to smaller, more fuel-efficient or battery-operated cars for city travel? It is also a timely reminder to many of us who look to the UN as a saviour in the current peace process to examine its record in other world hotspots. Sure, there is little sense in blaming the UN because it is just the lowest-common-denominator of our own Third World bureaucracies. But, hey, that's our excuse!



It used to be that the UN's lords of poverty zoomed around the world at velocities approaching the speed of sound. These days they are moving their offices around instead.

At one point during the post-democracy period of the 1990s, Kathmandu had become the place where most regional organisations were based because this was where SAARC, in its infinite wisdom, decided to locate its secretariat. So, Unicef's Regional Office for South Asia came here, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) set up its regional base in Kathmandu, and several international NGOs headquartered themselves here looking after not just South Asia but also their Central Asian operations. †

Now, whimsical UN bosses in New York seem to be afflicted with Acute Relocation Syndrome (ARS). They plunked the UN's regional poverty initiative, called SURF, in Kathmandu and two years later moved all human and non-human assets to Sri Lanka at enormous expense saying that the security situation in Nepal had become untenable. True, at that time Sri Lanka had a ceasefire and we were in the middle of conflict. But today, it's the other way around. And even at the height of Nepal's conflict we never had car bombs going off in the centre of the business district killing hundreds at a time. (The closest we've come to a terrorist threat was a hoax fax at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare last week, purportedly from Al-Qaeda!) †And now that Sri Lanka is on the brink of war again, are they going to move back?

UNAIDS set up its regional AIDS office in New Delhi five years ago recognising the threat of the disease in South Asia, and particularly India. Two years ago, it decided to move its entire office lock stock and barrel to Bangkok for no particularly intelligent reason other than that Big Boss liked the sights and sounds of Thailand.

There's no word yet on reactions to the rearrangements in Thailand's scenery. Perhaps the tanks complement Bangkok's balmy breezes quite nicely.



Now comes word that a recent executive board meeting of UNFPA in New York decided to move the UNFPA's South Asia office from Kathmandu to Bangkok, too. Another regional boss who'd rather be in Phuket, not Surkhet. As part of its \$30 million regionalisation process UNFPA has decided to keep its Pacific Regional Office in Fiji (another salubrious tropical isle) but close down its South Asia Regional Office in the world's most populous region. What kind of message is the UNFPA sending to South Asia's 1.5 billion people and SAARC?

Even more worrying than these ad hoc decisions is the vast silence from South Asia's otherwise voluble dips at the UN. Our delegates attended the UNFPA executive board meeting in New York this month and didn't raise a squeak. Nepal's rep wasn't the least bit bothered. With this kind of attitude it wouldn't surprise this Ass one bit if SAARC itself decided to relocate its secretariat from Kathmandu to Bangkok. After all, despite two decades of talk-talk-talk about regional cooperation in air links the easiest way to fly to the Maldives from Nepal is still via Singapore.



ass@nepalitimes.com



नमस्ते सुपरमार्केट
absolute
NAMASTE SUPERMARKET
PULCHOWK, LALITPUR
PHONE: 5525017, 5525018

Festival Discount!!
सुपथ मूल्य तथा विशेष छुट



NAMASTE SUPERMARKET
A Single Store • A Complete Store

Hotel Narayani Complex
Pulchowk, Lalitpur
Tel: 5525017, 5525018
E-mail: namsup@wlink.com.np
Branch: Maharajgunj
Tel: 4721712, 4720389



Festival OFFER!!

Japanese SUV
AT Rs. 29.40 LAKHS



New TERIOS 1.5

Finance upto 8 years at 6.5% interest rate
Offer valid for limited period only
Specifications given differ from model to model. Accessories shown may not be part of standard equipment.


Hansraj Hulaschand & Co. (P) Ltd.

SHOWROOMS
KATHMANDU: Thapathali, Tel: 4244254, M: 98510 86670 (Birat)
BIRATNAGAR: Munal Path, Dharan Road, Tel: 021-532253
POKHARA: Gandaki Trade House, Naya Bazar, Tel: 061-521206, 524848
Service Station: Swayambhu, Tel: 4287140, 2002448

Refreshingly yours...




With a varied choice from Icy-cool mint to Orange splash and Lemon, stay fresh all day long.