

Shikhar Vehicle Insurance

Your Friend.  
Your Pride.

Shikhar Insurance

Invest in your security,  
Cherish and nurture this relationship  
with Shikhar Vehicle Insurance Policy.

Shikhar Insurance

Trust us, we will deliver

P.O. Box : 11133, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal Phone: 4784514, 4784515, Fax: 4784513

# Burning bridges



**LEFT HANGING:** This bridge across the Bheri in Surkhet was destroyed by Maoists three years ago. Across the river is Dasratpur, the Maoists' 6<sup>th</sup> Division is in cantonment. Villagers crossing in the dugout ferry this week know only too well the absence of war is not peace.

SAGAR SHRESTHA

<b>Editorial</b> Long and bumpy road	p2
<b>State of the state</b> From the inside looking out	p2
<b>Nation</b> Janajatis on the warpath	p4
<b>From the Nepali press</b> Dilip SJB Rana	p6-7

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 336

Q. Do you agree that the price of fuel needs to be raised?

Total votes: 4,720

Yes 33.3%

No 65%

Don't know/ can't say 1.8%

Weekly Internet Poll # 337. To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

Q. How much do you know about the federalism debate?

BOXLIGHT®

Presenting a Better Way

RavenXB

BRIGHTNESS

2000 ANSI lumens

CONTRAST RATIO

2000:1

WEIGHT

4.5lbs / 2.04kg

CAS

CAS Trading House Pvt. Ltd.

P.O. Box: 2932, ComputerLand Building,  
New Plaza, Putalisadak, Kathmandu  
Phone: 977-1- 4440271, 4430858, 4430859  
E-mail: [sales@cth.ccsnp.com](mailto:sales@cth.ccsnp.com),  
Web: [www.castradinghouse.com](http://www.castradinghouse.com)

HEALTH TRACK

Taiwan

Let's run for  
your Spirit

Available

Treadmills  
& All Exercise  
Equipments

Warranty & after sales service available

Spectrum Merchandise Pvt. Ltd.

Tripureswor, Radha Bhawan, Cosmos Bulding, Kathmandu.  
Tel: 01-4252025, Cell: 9851070121 [www.healthtracknepal.com.np](http://www.healthtracknepal.com.np)

LENO

Glass Sanitaryware

Unique  
humanity  
space

BAJRA GROUP

Bajra & Bajracharya Enterprises  
Bijulibazar 4780687, 4781105  
Balaju: 4365510 |Lagankhel: 5524851

Land Rover  
Discovery 3

All Terrain 4WD  
Luxurious Interior  
Matches for all lifestyles

LAND-ROVER

GO BEYOND

AUTHORIZED AGENT:  
Euro Gears Pvt. Ltd.  
Ka1-75-2 Teku Road P.O.Box 4790 Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 4261235, 4371104  
Fax: 4420877, 4262069,  
E-mail: [eurogears@mos.com.np](mailto:eurogears@mos.com.np)

SERVICE CENTER :

Delta Motor Works Pvt. Ltd.  
Dhumbarahi, Kathmandu Tel: 4371104



**NEPALI**  
**Times**

editors@nepalitimes.com  
www.nepalitimes.com

Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Editor: Kunda Dixit  
Executive Editor: Anagha Neelakantan Desk Editor: Jemima Sherpa  
Design: Kiran Maharjan Web: Rupendra Kayastha  
Director Sales and Marketing: Sunaina Shah marketing@himalmedia.com  
Circulation Manager: Samir Maharjan sales@himalmedia.com  
Subscription: subscription@himalmedia.com, 5011628/29  
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur  
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu 5543333-6, Fax: 5521013  
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hatiban: 5547018



## LONG AND BUMPY ROAD

Reading between the lines of Pushpa Kamal Dahal's first open public address in Kathmandu on Tuesday, it becomes clear that the chairman was in damage control mode.

As they prepare to be part of the interim government, the Maoists are also dealing with the fallout of the identity politics they themselves unleashed. At Tundikhel, Dahal was trying hard to change the subject and conceal the blunders that fanned the tarai flames last month.

It wasn't a convincing performance. He didn't express any regret (although there was a belated apology for the Madi bus bomb), and he accused madhesi groups of "stealing our slogans". The realisation seems to be dawning on the other parties—albeit reluctantly and slowly—that the tarai issue, and others like it, need a political solution. Yet the Maoist leadership still sees the tarai as an internal squabble that can be treated as a law and order matter and crushed by force. This attitude and the continuing party-sanctioned extortion and threats make it difficult for us to see how the Maoists can be accommodated in the interim government.

The transitional administration needs to be much more streamlined, responsible, and responsive to deal with not only elections, but also the eruption of identity politics. Time has run out on the government's ten-day deadline to address madhesi demands, and now janajati groups are on warpath. Anyone with a grievance is taking advantage of a state weakened by disunity and jaundice.

It's not all bad news, though. Take a step back, and discernible beyond the strikes and blockades is a basic transformation in the way Nepal will be governed. There is consensus on fundamental matters: that political representation should be based on ratio of population, and that power must be devolved to federal units of governance.

What is making it difficult for these principles to gain the traction they need is the reluctance of those who have traditionally held sway—and this includes the power brokers within political parties—to let go gracefully. We sidelined the monarchy and delinked it from the military. Now we want a parliament to be more representative and for political parties to practice internally what they preach externally.

The road ahead is long and bumpy. Sometimes we careen dangerously close to the edge, but at least we are moving in the right direction.



KIRAN PANDAY

# UN-amused

## Why can't development agencies get rid of their SUVs

Like many readers, I was one of the unlucky masses who had to wait for hours at the petrol pump recently for meagre two litres of gas. I am not amused. I'm not angry because the madhesis blockaded the tarai



**EYES WIDE SHUT**  
Sheetal Kumar

for three weeks (and the Nepal Oil Corporation has continued it for another two). My frustration is directed more at the massive four-wheel drives—much in vogue with the UN and diplomatic circles—whizzing through Kathmandu's narrow streets when everybody else is stuck at the petrol pump.

Give the diplomats a pass because while they may ride SUVs, they may not own more than five per embassy. But the UN, that high-minded centre of development and humanitarian

values, has hundreds of clunky mini-trucks carrying exactly one person to a meeting somewhere in town. What a waste.

You'd think an organisation which promotes concern for the environment, sustainable development, anti-poverty schemes, and human rights could see that Kathmandu's roads just can't take any more of their massive four-wheel driven egos. But no. Day in and day out, the UN's white elephants wriggle through town.

Perhaps this didn't matter in the old days when cars were few and fuel plenty and cheap. But today it does. We pay our petrol import bills in hard currency. You can make a plausible argument that the congestion on Kathmandu's streets can be reduced by half if all these UN SUVs were sent out of the Valley, where they belong.

To set a good example, why not have the Resident

Coordinator and his staff ride around in Marutis? Mr Kahane does own a nifty thrifty Wagon R and indulges in the pleasure of driving it around on weekends. But is he brave enough to go to official appointments in one?

There are literally hundreds of gas guzzlers in the UN parking lot in Kathmandu. All of them contribute to air pollution, heavy petrol import bills, and road congestion. And there are many more of these behemoths in private or business hands, not to mention those used by government ministers, lawmakers, bureaucrats, and the comrades.

We can't control what private individuals choose to ride, but we can hope that the publicly owned ones are banished from Kathmandu streets. Most of the real work is done outside the Valley by OHCHR human rights officers, UNDP development workers, and the arms monitors. They can make far better use of these sturdy Prados, Patrols, and Landcruisers in the field. These cars were designed precisely for such terrain, not for ferrying be-suited officials to meetings in capital cities. The bosses in Kathmandu can drive around in smaller, more economical models. Better still, they can set an example by driving only electric vehicles.

Unfortunately, though, UN postings are as much about massaging egos as about helping poor countries 'develop' themselves. And in Kathmandu at least, the ego has won. Just ask any of those poor souls waiting for their two litres of petrol at the pump. ●

# From the inside looking out

## If it had snowed on the Maoist party on Tundikhel it would be a sign

The Maoists had been preparing for the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of their 'People's War' for months. For young cadre from the grassroots, this was the first chance to see their Comrade Chairman in the flesh. They filled the Khula Manch grounds and spilled over into then overflowed into adjoining thoroughfares to hear their leader speak. If it had snowed on Tuesday afternoon, they would have seen it as a sign.



**STATE OF THE STATE**  
C K Lal

Pushpa Kamal Dahal had taken some care to create a good first impression. Nattily dressed in his signature grey jacket, he looked well-groomed with his Stalinesque moustache, glowing skin, expensive-looking accessories, and gelled hair.

But looks can do only so much to hide inner insecurities. Dahal spoke for over

two hours to say two things. He assured loyalists that the party still stood for the dictatorship of the proletariat. To the critics of armed insurgency, he said he was all set to enter electoral politics in a peaceful manner. How he reconciles the contradiction between these conflicting positions will be a test of his leadership in the coming days. Thus, perhaps, the verbiage.

The road ahead for the peace process is bumpy. The armed insurgency ended in a stalemate. While it may be easy for leaders to accept a political settlement, it will be a difficult sell to cadres indoctrinated with victory-or-death.

The peace deal has weakened the position of the seven-party alliance too. Other than a shared commitment to elections to the constituent assembly, they have nothing in common on the face of it. But the parties—or 'regressive forces'—have appropriated the Maoists' radical slogans, as Dahal lamented. With almost every political player ready to

accept republicanism, federalism, and inclusion, no single party will stand out while campaigning for the elections.

Every speaker at Tuesday's rally was taking the lowest common denominator position: support us, or else. This stand has also taken over by most other groups: the Maoists, monarchists, Hindutva forces, military, or anyone else.

Not even Dahal's confessions, regrets, apologies, and commitments sounded solid, interspersed as they were with the empty slogans of a misguided adventure that cost more than 14,000 Nepali lives. The chairman needs to reinvent himself to begin to make amends for his guilt, just as the party needs to reinvent itself to both stand out and hold on to its supporters.

The Maoists' network of informers, which supposedly reaches the highest echelons of the security forces, needs to be activated so we know what happened

to the over 800 people reported disappeared during the decade of armed conflict. The Maoists owe it to all these families to explain the circumstances of the disappearances and establish their whereabouts—dead or alive.

The second correction the Maoists must make to transform themselves into a proper political party is to take care of their child soldiers. It can't give them back their childhood, but it can offer intensive basic education and skills training. The combatants in the cantonments will probably be demobilised and rehabilitated in due course. But the needs of the militia to be addressed now, when they are facing the vacuum left by their lost cause.

The third challenge is also the most obvious. The multitudes who have supported Prachandpath urgently need a sense of mission if the CPN-M is not to get lost in the alphabet soup of sundry socialists, fiery communists, and pseudo-leftist hangers-on. ●



## LETTERS

## DIVIDED WE FALL

Re: 'Fuelling change' (#335). Federalism is a basic way to decentralise—if local and regional governments are elected locally and have the power to tax, spend, and enact laws accordingly, they will rely less on the central government. This is how you take control away from the upper caste dominated bureaucracy and government.

But federalism should be based on geography, not ethnic enclaves. Federalism based on ethnic identities will lead us back to the *bayese* and *chaubese rajyas*.

Think of all the questions: What if a particular ethnicity passes laws that discriminate against others in its state? Ask what if all ethnic-based federation have their own police and armed forces? These are easily manipulated into being rogue force and warlords—look at Somalia. How will commerce take place in an ethnic-based federation?

Federalism based upon emotional outbursts is no solution. We require proportional representation at all levels and affirmative action to empower ethnic groups. The House of Representatives should be elected on population basis, and the Upper House on equal geographic and ethnic representations. National laws should remain supreme in case of disputes.

We are all Nepalis, and united we stand. Just look at Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Kosovo, or Chechnya.

SN Singh, email

## COMING CONFLICT

For any madhesi who had doubts about having a separate madhes state, this movement has been an eye-opener. The brutal suppression by the state, comments and articles by some leading pahadi intellectuals and policymakers, and mainstream media reporting all have exposed the depth of the pahadi prejudice

against madhesis.

Had it not been for this sudden uprising in the tarai, the pahadi upper caste regime in Kathmandu would have got away with a rather spectacular rigging of the constituent assembly in their favour. How could our 'democratic' leaders not know that one-man-one-vote is a central tenet of democracy, and how could they justify suppression of a justified demand?

Madhesi need to stay united and realise that upper caste pahadis will again try to divide the country in a way that maintains their hegemony. The next battle is going to be between the 20 percent upper caste educated urban pahadis who want to maintain their control over Nepal and the rest, who want them to loosen their grip.

Anand Jha, email

● Sheetal Kumar makes valid points in 'Acute hearing' (Eyes Wide Shut, #335). The government should involve all sections of society through dialogue, interactions, and roundtable talks to decide what sort of federalism and proportional representation would be appropriate for Nepal.

Neglecting an agenda that was raised peacefully will only help extremists like the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, and Jwala Singh's group, whose only aim is to see their names in the headlines, and who will probably earn their living through maintaining terror and instability on both sides of the border.

The MJF's demand for the resignation of the home minister is understandable to some extent, but many madhesi and pahadis believe that Krishna Prasad Sitoula's resignation, instead of solving the problem, would jeopardise the peace process and upcoming CA polls.

Divas Sarma, email

## NO JUSTICE

The eight-party alliance government has handed the Rayamajhi political hot potato to the CIAA so it can give a slap on the wrist

to royal ministers for misuse of funds. But it says it has no legal authority to take action against them, the king, and the police for all the deaths and injuries. However, ordering the shooting of an unarmed person is premeditated murder, and beating defenceless, non-resisting persons with clubs is battery. Had the previous kangresi governments not refused to be accountable to the International Criminal Court, we'd have other options, but the lack of prosecution for the deaths and injuries represents a longstanding tradition of impunity and denial of the

has no other option than to trade with its neighbours. We can make lucrative hydropower deals, for example. The East-West Highway network should be expanded, by taking on international loans of necessary, to serve the needs of the giant economies of India and China. Private business houses should be encouraged to explore new tourist sites in the thousands of worthy places between the Mechi and the Mahakali. It's time the New Nepal government change itself to Nepal Inc.

P Saria, Ljubljana



value of human life. It is not law that is lacking, it is political will and moral decency, just as it was after Jana Andolan I. Perhaps this is to protect themselves from prosecution for their own violations.

Sanjay Jha, Biratnagar

## NEPAL, INC.

Artha Beed is correct to compare Nepal with its Asian neighbours ('The long view', Economic Sense, #335). Thanks to the Maoist conflict, Nepalis finally know the real meaning of democracy. But the new government hasn't yet addressed the demands on Nepal's economy by the 'revolutions'. Generating employment is a major task the country does not have to run on remittances. Nepal is landlocked and

## BALANCE

Kudos for publishing both David Miliband's article which fuels the media frenzy for developing countries to jump on the climate change bandwagon and Bjorn Lomborg's more balanced retort. In a country where people die every day from preventable and curable diseases, and where power outages, fuel shortages, and water rationing are a fact of daily life, it is difficult to muster enthusiasm for what is speculation on small long-term changes, especially since these are changes that we neither helped to create nor can do much to address. Let's keep things in perspective.

ISA, email

## ALMOST PERFECT

Backside is hardly that—I get to it before anything else. That said, the entire paper is indispensable. It's rare for media outlets in Nepal to maintain balance and courage. At the worst of times, *Nepali Times* was unafraid to stand up to despotism or inspire others to do so. That your readership extends to other continents is telling. There is something missing, though. Until a couple of years ago, you used to run creative pieces, such as those by Manjushree Thapa. Quality newspapers aren't comprehensive without artistic, literary or spiritual writing.

Haribol Acharya, email

## Fly with the new MAZDA 6:

## Your dream car!

The best car in its class

Cruise Control  
Fly by Wire  
Information (Digital) Display  
Advanced Engine  
Six Speed Transmission  
6 CD Changer  
Cock Pit Comfort



Just Arrived

PADMA SHREE  
PRIVATE LIMITED

PO Box: 5623, Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 44 11 900, 44 35 688  
Fax: 977 1 44 13 838 Email: padmasri@ccsl.com.np Showroom: Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 44 35 631



TfC  
THE FUN CAFE

STAY FULL

Big Brunch!  
small price!



Too late for breakfast? too early for lunch?? ...indulge yourself with the TFC Big Brunch!!!

enjoy the new highlights from our up-graded Saturday Brunch.

Satisfaction guaranteed. Exclusive lavish buffet brunch spread with a Free Flow of Beer\* @Rs. 799 plus taxes per person. Saturdays, 11:30am - 3:00pm. The Fun Café - Radisson Hotel Kathmandu.

\* Conditions apply



■ Family discounts: Group of three - Get one free. Group of five - 20% discount on total bill.  
■ Discounts for RadKat Members and Radisson Fitness Center Members.

Radisson

STAY SATISFIED

Radisson Hotel Kathmandu P.O. 2269, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 4411818, 4423888



# "Nepal is carrying the banner of hope"



KIRAN PANDAY

The European Commission's Asia Director, James Moran, who was in Kathmandu on a three-day visit this week, spoke to *Nepali Times* about a new European aid package, regional geopolitics, and the Bhutani refugees.

**Nepali Times:** How has the Commission looked at events in Nepal in the past year?  
**James Moran:** It's been an extraordinary year for Nepal and attention in Europe has certainly intensified. A year ago, there was the prospect of civil strife and Nepal was sort of put on the list of countries to be worried about. Things have of course moved on and you are now embarked on a process that is regarded in Europe as one of hope. This is important for Nepal, for the bilateral relations between the EU and Nepal, and I dare say, also for the region, where there are a lot of unresolved conflicts: Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Bangladesh's difficulties with its own elections. Seen from the South Asian perspective, Nepal is carrying the banner of hope for progress.

**What is your assessment of how things are moving?**  
 I was here with the EU Troika Mission in November just before the signing of the agreement with the parties and this time we are here to talk about our cooperation agreement. But as far as I can tell, you have enormous number of challenges still to face up to. But Nepal is on track, it's holding.

**On cooperation, are you going to wait for things to get totally normal?**  
 No we're not. The fact that we're here talking with our Joint Commission shows you that there has been a lot of progress in the last couple of months. We have been preparing our new strategy paper on Nepal for the next six years and this will be presented very soon in Brussels. It will focus on the social sectors, education, and consolidation of the peace process, where effort is needed. We have an exploratory mission on election observation that is finishing off its work now. So a number of actions are underway already.

**India and China are regarded as Europe's strategic partners, how has relations evolved with these two giants?**  
 It's certainly one of the great challenges we have in this century for Europe to get our relations right with both those countries. With China we've had a strategic partnership and we've had a honeymoon with China for the last five years economically and politically. China is now our second largest trading partner and with current trends it will be the largest in five years, overtaking the US. There are 20,000 European companies operating in China. And then of course there is a whole political agenda out there, especially on the multilateral front. I'd say relations with China have matured very rapidly in the last three or four years so it's completely unrecognisable. What we need to get with China is a more balanced relationship than we've had up to now.

With India, until relatively recently, it was a more classical development-driven relationship but again there things are changing, as India, which has traditionally not been a big player outside of its region, emerges on the world stage. India's role in the region is also interesting, in particular its very constructive role in Nepal. It's something that may not have been possible for them until recently, since they have generally not welcomed a multilateral role. But here in Nepal I get the impression they've been quietly supportive of the United Nations' role, which is central. These are good signs.

**What is the EU's view on third country repatriation proposal for Bhutani refugees?**  
 It's an issue which is causing us a bit of pain lately. We've been the main financiers of the refugee camps for many years and you know we do this because of the humanitarian imperative. But the question is raised why Nepal and Bhutan can't sort this out among themselves and find a political solution. We certainly see the American offer to settle 60,000 of the refugees as a positive development, but at the same time we understand that in Nepal this may be looked at sceptically because it may be taken as a signal that this is a way for further refugee arrivals to find a better life overseas. Meanwhile we are left to foot the bill, and politically it's getting a bit difficult because there is some fatigue.

# The janajatis are trying to replicate the tarai uprising, but can they?

J B PUN MAGAR

After the prime minister and the eight parties placated the restive plains, indigenous groups have now taken to the streets.

The government granted proportional representation based on population to the madhes, but the janajatis say this doesn't correctly represent their demographics. They also want ethnic-based federal units and a new national flag.

The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) held a fake-khukuri procession in Kathmandu this week, shut down the Valley on Thursday, and has announced a series of crippling shutdowns across the country in the coming month.

"We will have strikes and we will also talk," said Pasang Sherpa who wants proportional representation to also reflect ethnicity, language, and geography.

Activist S S Thapa says although the number of seats for the madhesi people has increased, the legislature will still be dominated by high castes.

The first seed of dissent was planted when there was obvious hesitation in appointing janajati



NEPALNEWS.COM

members to the interim constitution drafting committee. "Is the government waiting for us to take up arms to take us seriously?" asked rights activist Padma Ratna Tuladhar.

Just as a tarai faction of the Maoists broke away from the Maoists to undertake a militant movement, similar splits are already appearing among hill ethnic groups. "If these issues are not addressed, it is only a question of time before they go militant," says professor Krishna Khanal of Tribhuvan University.

But there are differences with the madhes uprising—hill ethnic groups are not ideologically united. Many of their traditional areas are now heterogenous with Magars living in Gurung regions and vice versa. Here is also a lack

of strong central leadership among various janajati groups even though there is an effort to unite 12 janajati organisations under a political party called the Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Manch.

The credibility of the Maoists has also been waning rapidly among the janajati groups. In fact the Maoists dissolved their ethnic autonomous regions, launched amidst great fanfare after entry into parliament and now stress "democratic centralism". Some Rai and Limbu groups have launched a splinter group in the name of Khambuwan. Pushpa Kamal Dahal has summoned Kirati leaders to convince them to stay on board, but dissent is growing at the grassroots. ●



## CAREER OPPORTUNITY WITH BRITISH COUNCIL NEPAL

British Council Nepal is looking for a self-motivated Nepali for the post of **PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS OFFICER**. The post holder will work a 5 day week from Monday to Friday. We operate an equal opportunities policy.

### SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE

#### ESSENTIAL

- Customer Service Skills/Experience
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Ability to build positive relationships with clients
- Experience of handling finances and maintaining financial records
- IT Skills
- Presentation Skills

#### DESIRABLE

- Ability to work strategically and focus on the longer term
- Ability to work to goals and manage obstacles

Only applications submitted on the standard application form will be considered. The application form and job description are available at British Council reception. Both documents are also available online at [www.britishcouncil.org/nepal](http://www.britishcouncil.org/nepal)

All applications must be sent by post, or handed in at British Council reception desk.

**Address applications to Education and Governance Manager**  
 British Council, PO Box 640, Lainchaur, Kathmandu, Nepal.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST ARRIVE BY 1700 HRS ON 26 FEBRUARY 2007.

CREATING OPPORTUNITY. BUILDING TRUST.

The United Kingdom's international organisation for educational and cultural relations. We are registered in England as charity.

[www.britishcouncil.org/nepal](http://www.britishcouncil.org/nepal)



# Guru of business

## Pushpa Kamal Dahal should go watch a film or two

Mixing masala plotlines with musicals for mass appeal, the Hindi cinema industry, Bollywood, serves up dreams of romance to millions around the world. But one overlooked aspect of Bollywood is how its movies capture the changing business zeitgeist in India.



STRICTLY BUSINESS  
Ashutosh Tiwari

During the ‘licence raj’ in the 70s and the 80s, while India was posting its so-called ‘Hindu rate of economic growth’ of around 3.5 percent a year, Bollywood portrayed industrialists as villains. These were rich men who lived in palatial buildings, befriended politicians for licenses and permits, smuggled goods, evaded taxes, and exploited labourers. Meanwhile, their pampered daughters supplied the song-and-dance melodrama by falling in love with the hero—invariably one of papa’s angry young opponents, who’d be a police officer or a factory worker from a slum nearby.

Since the mid-90s, however, with India’s annual economic growth averaging about seven percent, Bollywood has churned out decidedly pro-capitalist movies. The bad industrialists are gone. So too are the pitiable poor who tug at the heartstrings of socialists everywhere. It’s not labour and factories that make up

the plots of today’s movies. Instead, they are about the intra-family relationships of wealthy multi-generational clans with roots in India and branches elsewhere. The patriarchs are shown worrying about keeping ‘Indian family values’ stable, while their stunningly beautiful scions party hard in the discos of London and New York.

Tellingly, this celluloid applause of business families comes at a time when Indian businessmen—the Tatas, the Birlas, the Ambanis, and others—have become globally daring players. These entrepreneurs hire top-notch talents, spot global opportunities, structure complex deals, and are not afraid to elbow out foreign rivals to buy, sell and run companies anywhere. Their audacity, unthinkable only 15 years ago, makes even ordinary commerce graduates in small-town India aspire to such riches themselves.

Bollywood has picked up on that collective aspiration. It has started to celebrate the achievements of individual entrepreneurs who triumph against systems that shackle them. The protagonist of director Mani Ratnam’s latest movie *Guru* is Gurubhai, a Gujarati village-boy who wants to create his own destiny in business by never taking ‘no’ for an answer. Using both diplomacy and hardball tactics to cut through the red tape, he starts his own polyester company, and goes on to fling

open the gates of clubby Indian commerce. In doing so, he lets ordinary citizens in to reap benefits as shareholders.

The movie’s sympathetic portrayal of the power of an entrepreneur’s can-do attitude, persistence, and single-minded devotion to create a business is remarkable enough. What is even more interesting is its view that, far from being a tool of exploitation, a business with a large base of shareholders is a ladder that gets ordinary citizens to the ranks of the middle class.

Contrast that thought with the palaver one hears these days about New Nepal. Even with grinding poverty visible within any three-mile radius of Kathmandu, our political conversations continue to degenerate into games of blame distribution. There is hardly any thought being put into transforming Nepal into a stable country of the middle class.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s rhetoric against foreign banks last Tuesday confirmed that he doesn’t care how economic forces work. Despite his cloyingly self-serving self-criticism, Dahal stopped short of urging his comrades to refrain from helping themselves to the fruits of other Nepalis’ private earnings. Given Dahal’s admitted weakness for message-driven Hindi movies, it is time that, in the quiet of the cinema hall, he took a critical look at his Marxist gurus’ ideology and made up his mind to let thousands of Gurubhai-like characters flourish in Nepal.

### Fast money

Laxmi Bank recently launched an online remittance service, eXpress Money Transfer. Laxmi Bank is the first South Asian bank to join SWIFTNet, an international remittance program. The service caters in particular to people without bank accounts. Funds are collected and paid out by the 100-strong Laxmi Bank agent network.



### Real deal

A new firm, Best Deal Real Estate Agency says it brings together the largest network of property buyers, sellers, and contractors in the country. Best Deal will also offer financial assistance for buyers, legal services, and property assessment.



### Brand new colony

There is a new housing option in Bhaishepati, Lalitpur. The Reliable Colony, prompted by Guna Cooperatives, has already constructed 62 houses, and plans to reach its target of 110 units in under six months. The complex offers amenities such as a swimming pool, health club, mini-bank, and department store. The houses are priced at Rs 4-5.5 million, and mortgage plans offered by various banks run from seven to 11 percent.





**CDC**  
www.cdc.com.np

**COSMETIC DENTAL CLINIC**  
A Smile Care Centre  
Kupondole Height, DMC Building, 4th Floor  
Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel.: 5-554298  
E-mail: cosmeticcdc@yahoo.com

*Multispeciality Dental Clinic*

**Quality First**  
because your teeth is worth protecting...  
step in to believe it.



**Services Available:**

- Dentures, ceramic crowns / bridges
- Metal, ceramic, gold braces
- Tooth-coloured fillings / veneers
- Smile design & makeover
- Teeth whitening
- Oral jewelries
- Gum surgery / cosmetics
- Orofacial pain clinic
- And all other general dental services

Opening Hours: 9:00A.M. to 7:00 P.M.  
Saturday: 9:00A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

www.cdc.com.np



MIN BAJORACHARYA

The South Asian Institute of Management is currently admitting its first class of graduate students. Dean Bijay KC spoke to *Nepali Times* about the need for context-specific management training, and the challenges and possibilities in higher education in Nepal.

**Nepali Times:** What was the impetus behind starting a new management school?

**Bijay KC:** South Asian Institute of Management is a regional institute for management studies. For now we offer a Master’s in Management. I’ve worked at Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University, and felt there was a need for a institution specifically for management training,

# Managing South Asia

like the Indian Institute of Management, with more focussed areas of study.

Also, we believe in providing a culture-specific education. The concepts and theories in the curriculum have been modified to fit our culture, particularly where strategies, human resources, and behaviour are concerned. The instructors will offer South Asia-specific examples and the case studies students will examine will be regional.

**How is a Master’s in Management different from a regular MBA?**

MM courses focus on strategy and leadership skills development. Our emphasis is on practical education, so we offer special market-relevant packages, in line with students’ specific career goals. We’ve developed a career counselling and placement cell. Students will consult with this unit to determine their career goals by the end of their first year. That helps us clarify what kind of knowledge and skills are required, so we can provide them with suitable courses.

**How will your placement efforts work?**

We can’t guarantee placement, but we can facilitate the process. The institute’s promoters are bankers and industrialists who have their own networks. Our job is to help introduce students to these networks. We also have an international advisory board and our hope is they will help bring in their networks so our students can compete in the international job market as well.

**What challenges are you facing?**

We can’t deliver good education without a good faculty. It is especially hard to find experts in the field of management who are conceptually sound and also have practical experience. It becomes a challenge to balance cost and quality, because good teachers must be paid well, but there is only so much we can charge students.

For teachers it is extremely hard to develop local case materials. Particularly in Nepal, research is not given priority. It’s unfortunate, because management research is the foundation on which we must develop local teaching materials. Also, business houses are not very open and do not always want to share information with students.

**How do you plan to ‘balance cost and quality’?**

We aren’t looking to make a profit, a middle class student should be able to afford our courses. We have some scholarships and research assistance programs. We’re also working with banks on offering educational loans. We see our students working in banks, industries, corporate houses, and NGOs and we’re confident they’re a good investment.

Anyone from any discipline who has a bachelor’s degree is a candidate for SAIM. The most important requirement is motivation. They have to demonstrate in the entrance test and interview that they can handle two rigorous years, full of research, lots of reading, writing case studies and reports, and making presentations.

**What are your eventual goals?**

We’ll soon start offering short-term courses, and focus on research. In the next couple of years we will develop more focussed programs relating to finance, hospitality management, development management etc. We hope our students can create employment for others, and plan to start a program to help graduates set up their own businesses. Towards the end of their program, students will be asked to prepare business plans. We’ll pick the three best and work with the banks to create a fund for such businesses. In the future we will also have faculty from all over South Asia, and also a good number of the 25 students in each graduating class. Another major goal is to have good management scholars, those who can deliver and are interested in research and can be good teachers.





**KALINTA™** picture framing

Custom Framing  
Imported matting  
Italian posters  
Gift objects  
Mounting & lamination  
Italian style wood frames

Open  
9am-5pm  
Telephone  
4442437




Show Room: Nag Pokhari, East side of Royal Palace

www.subisu.net.np



**Is this how data is transferred in your office ?**



Adhering to the revolutionary thrust in Information Technology, organizations from all sectors has seized the value of a superior Internet Service catered by Subisu. From high speed access to remote access, Subisu offers a wide range of services that facilitate your business to gain more in lesser time.

any speed fully redundant optical fiber connectivity customized services

FIRST and TRUE Cable Internet provider in Nepal

An ISO 9001:2000 Certified Company

**SUBISU**  
CABLENET  
Business Solution Provider

... for those who hate to wait

for detail

4429616/617, 4424862 info@subisu.net.np

# "We'll go bankrupt"

Interview with Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 15 February

हिमाल

**What is the country's current financial situation?**

There has been progress since the return of democracy. We are looking at nearly 18 percent increase in revenue. The agricultural sector suffered because of bad weather, so GDP growth will not hit the expected five percent but remain at four. There isn't the hoped-for increase in investment, as there is still an environment of terror—the Maoists are still extorting, labour problems remain, and there are threats against industries.

**How come there is no improvement despite the political change?**

We are trying. We regularly monitor progress and expedite allocations. Work is progressing on roads, irrigation, electrification, and water supply. I am certain there will be much more progress this year than in previous ones. But you can't imagine the pressure we are under due to demands for current account expenses: from victims of the People's Movement, relief for families of martyrs, payment to the Maoists, elections, distribution of citizenship certificates.

**You seem dissatisfied with the lack of reforms in the civil service.**

There has been some change, but not the kind of transformation we'd expected. Fear and threats continue, and we have overshot the budget by up to Rs 12 billion, mostly due to the election and related security. There is no money in the treasury to meet that expense. Still, we expect progress in infrastructure, education, and health, and an increase in the GDP growth.



KIRAN PANDAY

**The Maoists's demands are also increasing.**

That's true, and the troubling thing is, there is no accounting. They've said they will present a statement of accounts in 35 days. That should be as per government rules. But given the rate at which it is growing, it will be difficult to meet the demands for expenses. If we doled out money to meet every demand, the country would be bankrupt.

**Can't we ask the donors to help?**

And tell them what? Yes, aid has increased a bit since the restoration of democracy, but it isn't that dramatic. The most positive aspect is that what used to come as loans from the World Bank and ADB has now been converted to grants.

# "No one says sorry"

Member of Interim Parliament, Parbati Dagaura Choudhary in *Tarun*, 12 February

तरुण

**Where and how was your husband, UML MP Chakra Dagaura Choudhary killed?**

The Maoists chased him out of the house in October 2002 and killed him. They still haven't said why they killed him. Two of them had once come to demand Rs 20,000 from us. He said he didn't believe they were Maoists because they were behaving rudely. They said they'd kill him if he didn't pay up. He said if he had to pay, he needed a few days to collect the money.

**What was Charkaji doing when they came?**

He was talking in the kitchen with some party cadre. They sent our daughter to call him, and then chased him out of the house and killed him about 200m away, near a neighbour's house.

**How did it feel to witness your husband's murder?**

I was sad. They were also communists, our beliefs

were supposed to be the same. My husband and I were not capitalists, he wasn't a thief or a dacoit, he was a politician. I told myself they must have killed him because they didn't agree with his politics. He had helped them in the past. He'd acted as a lawyer for Maoists in prison and secured their release. The army used to threaten him, calling him a sympathiser.

**Is that why you entered politics yourself?**

I was always inspired by his politics, and after his murder I became even more committed to the cause. Even if I weren't an MP now, I'd still be in politics. I would be trying to fulfil my husband's legacy.

**How do you feel when you meet the Maoists who killed your husband in the corridors of parliament?**

In my heart, I am very sad. I don't feel like talking to them. I wish I never had to see them. But it's inevitable that you meet them. No one has yet said sorry.

## Himal Southasian:

February 2007 issue is now on the stands!

**HIMAL**  
SOUTHASIAN  
www.himalmag.com



**Cover section: The general at the samadhi**

Four stories on Burma and the growing embrace between New Delhi and Rangoon

Also:

Nepal's perplexing moment of opportunity – *Prashant Jha*

Constitutional reform in Sri Lanka – *D B S Jeyaraj*

The promise of Bangladesh's interim – *Mahtab Haider*

The failure of Pakistani regulation – *Faisal Bari*

First photos from Burma's new capital – *Siddharth Varadarajan*

Assam's bloodbath – *Walter Fernandes, Wasbir Hussain*

The year of Kashmir – commentary



**Subscription rates for Nepal**

1 Year 2 Years  
NPR 540 NPR 1030

Tel: +977 1 5547279  
Fax: +977 1 5552141  
subscription@himalmag.com

Subscribe  
Now!





Political general

Experts from General Dilip SJB Rana’s 4 February speech at the Western Divisional Headquarters Conference in Pokhara, Kantipur, 5 February

काठमाडौं

The intention of this Conference is to help facilitate the process of making the army active against the dangers Nepalis may face in this changing political environment. Thirteen governments have come and gone since 1990 and Nepalis have suffered long and hard. As a result of this instability, we do not understand what good governance means. Instead of coming together for a better Nepal during a time of difficulty, the political parties fought each other. This chaos encouraged a section of society, already disenchanted with the state structure, to take up weapons. The government became weak and the country was pushed towards bankruptcy. In these difficult times, even the media was not sympathetic and published news that would only help the insurgent forces.

A careful examination of the violence in the tarai, led by the JTMM and the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum, and encouraged by the Maoists, makes it evident that the Maoists are not true to their statements that they have given up arms and come into mainstream politics. We are as close to violence as before. The Maoists will not break promises, take up arms, and go back to the jungle, but I do foresee violence in the near future. It is our responsibility to serve the Nepali people, which is why I direct the Nepal Army to stay prepared.

If the constituent assembly elections were to be postponed or delayed, or if the results are not what the Maoists expect, they will take up arms again. If the situation in the tarai does not become normal soon, or if the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force cannot

contain the situation, it is possible the Nepal Army will be deployed again before more damage is done. This divisional office, via the army headquarters, has already requested the government, the UN, and the Maoists for an interim agreement to allow the army to be deployed for a certain amount of time. I request officers of the 22 Brigade Office to be mentally and physically prepared to act under an ‘add to civil authority’ clause.

There are certain elements trying to cause rifts in the army between high and low ranking officers, because they know the Army is ready to sacrifice, is united, and sincere to the state. I request the Nepal Army to stay committed to providing security to the people and be aware that since the beginning of the ‘People’s War’ the Maoists have tried to create divisions inside the army and have often placed false news reports and claims.

Abuse of power within the army will dishonour our profession and hamper the peace process. I request all brigadiers not to tolerate any activity that will obstruct the peace process.

Camp chaos

Editorial in Rajdhani, 14 February

राजधानी

The Maoist fighters who have been confined to makeshift huts are slowly moving to nearby villages because they can no longer bear the harsh cold and

continuous rain. The cantonments lack medical and other essential services and supplies—the fighters have been denied their basic rights. The local Maoist leadership has directed those in the cantonments to move to neighbouring villages.

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat recently put out figures showing that the Maoists are demanding more money for their cantonments than the Nepal Army, and that it cannot afford to pay more. By comparing the organisation of the Nepal Army with the rush job of the ‘People’s Liberation Army’, the government has proved that it hasn’t a clue about what is going on with the cantonment process. Mahat’s statements suggest that the government still considers the PLA a threat.

After close inspection of the temporary camps, Ian Martin, the head of the UN team, recently said that he is not satisfied. According to the peace agreement, it is the responsibility of the government to organise and look after the PLA. Experts need to assess whether the Rs 350 million already given to the Maoists for the PLA is actually enough. Similarly, the Maoists should understand that the money they were given came from the national treasury and that their accounts need to be transparent and public. If neither side budges, and more fighters freezing in the camps come out, who will be responsible for the chaos that could result?



NARESH NEWAR



Tarai movement

हिमाल Robin Sayami in Himal Khabarpatrika, 13-27 February

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Not a word from Prime Minister Koirala’s speech last week addressed janajati demands and sentiments. Perhaps the government will only listen to us when we resort to violence?”

Pasang Sherpa, chairman of the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities in Himal Kabharpatrika, 15 February.

Big and Beautiful  
Sizes up to 40D

plum  
Fashion Lingerie

Bluebird Mall, Tripureshwor www.plum.com.np Narayani Complex, Pulchowk

Bella Italia!

Spring comes early at the Hotel Himalaya with the warmth of Italian Cooking...

Starting 16th February every Friday evening, 7 pm onwards

with a special  
A La Carte Menu,  
Buffet & Live Music  
Bellissimo!

Hotel Himalaya's New Italian Affair.

Buffet: NRs. 499/- per person (Applicable taxes extra)

For reservation, contact. Tel: 5523900 Extn. 1073

Lincoln SCHOOL

VACANCY  
2007 School Year

Elementary Teaching Assistant

Requirements:

- Teacher training in elementary education from a recognized institution
- Five years of elementary experience teaching 6 to 10 year-olds
- Experience working with expatriate children and parents
- Fluency in spoken and written English
- Excellent classroom management skills
- Ability to work as part of a team

Please forward a cover letter explaining interest in the position along with a resume and 2 references to:

Lincoln School  
Attn: Elem TA, Rabi Bhawan, P.O. Box 2673, Kathmandu, Nepal

Important: Application deadline February 26, 2007  
No telephone calls please. Please deliver at the gate, by mail only or email to lsnepal@yahoo.com

For further information: www.lsnepal.com  
Lincoln School is an Equal Opportunity Employer





BIKASH KARKI

MARK TURIN

International Mother Language Day on 21 February has particular resonance for South Asia. On that day in 1952, a number of Bangladeshi language activists were shot and killed by police as they demonstrated for Bengali language rights. Established at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference, and first celebrated in February 2000, International Mother

Language Day (IMLD for short) was established to promote linguistic diversity and multilingualism. In 2005, IMLD was devoted to Braille and sign languages, last year's topic was languages and cyberspace, and this year the theme is very pertinent to Nepal: the links between mother tongues and multilingualism. UNESCO states unequivocally on its website that "all moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic

diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance, and dialogue." While honourable and even noble, this suggestion remains contentious. In Nepal, language policy and linguistic rights are thorny political issues, and recent statements by language activists show a tendency towards isolationism,

# My t

## Language is content between national languages more so

exceptionalism, and division in the name of inclusion and participation. Even the United States and the United Kingdom, two nations held together by so much cultural background and shared history, are said to be divided by a common language. What about Nepal and its close to 100 languages? What implications does International Mother Language Day have for this nation in transition, and how should it be celebrated?

A helpful point of departure for understanding the emotional attachment to mother tongues in Nepal is the constitution, particularly because the ground has recently shifted. While Article 4 of Part 1 of the 1990 constitution declared Nepal to be multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, Article 6 stated that the Nepali language in the Devanagari script would be the official language of the nation. Almost as a concession, all the remaining languages spoken as mother tongues across the then kingdom were declared 'national languages of Nepal'.

The recently promulgated interim constitution makes a small but significant compromise on the issue of language: even though the Nepali language in the Devanagari script retains its place as the official language, all mother tongues spoken in Nepal are to be regarded as languages of the nation, and may be used in local administration and offices. The responsibility of translating from these indigenous mother tongues into Nepali for public records falls to the government.

The symbolic importance of these changes is considerable, as the topic is deeply emotive for many Nepalis whose mother tongue is not Nepali. But it is too early to say whether they will make any practical difference to the lives of non-Nepali speakers.

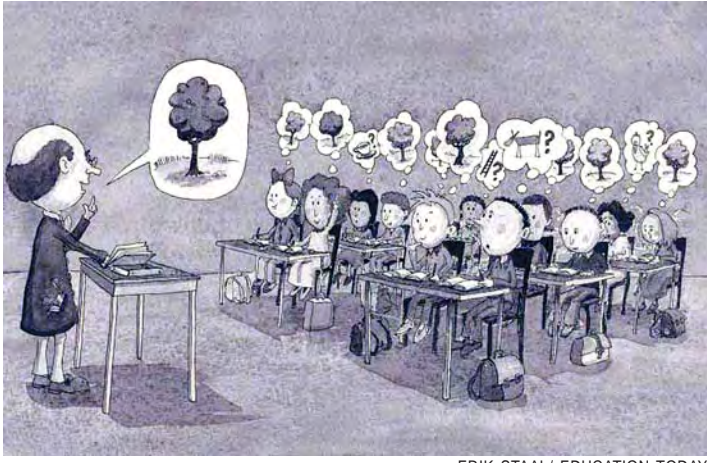
There are two clear sides to this debate. On the one hand, some argue that using Limbu in court or Maithili at school is a luxury affordable only when the fabric of the state is already providing security, peace, and basics such as water, electricity, and cooking gas. Moreover, by demoting Nepali from 'the' language to one of many, and making it an optional subject for janajati students in school, as some more strident activists advocate, the disadvantaged ethnic groups are buying into the very discourse of tribalism and non-participation that they accuse Nepal's ruling classes of having oppressed them with in the past.

On the other hand, speakers of minority languages have real

**EDUCATING BABEL:** While studies show that students learn better through their mother tongue, the language has to be taught in school for the benefits to be reaped, which is rarely the case with minority languages.



STEPHEN A EDWARDS

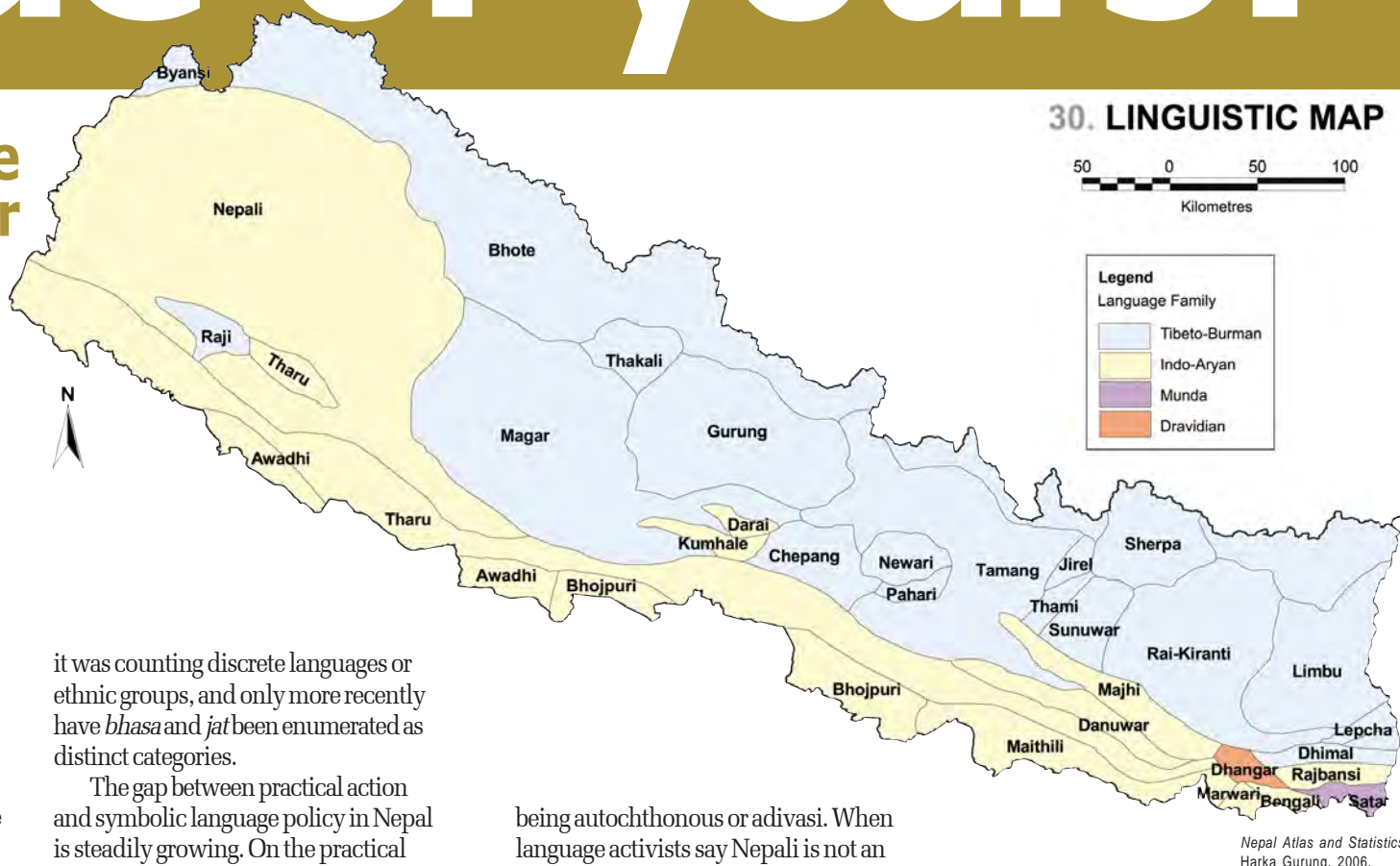


ERIK STAAL/ EDUCATION TODAY



# ious, and the debate anguages and mother

Part of the difficulty for Nepal is that much of the groundwork needed for formulating a robust, progressive language policy is lacking. Linguists still disagree about the number of languages spoken in the country, let alone dialects, and a comprehensive linguistic survey has yet to be conducted. Historically, the decadal census of Nepal has oscillated on whether



Amid all the posturing, there is little discussion of a more fundamental question: what makes a language indigenous to Nepal? In the Nepali context, the claim to indigenosity is more about disadvantage than about

Claims for ethno-linguistic autonomy need to be carefully balanced with an appreciation of the inherently heterogeneous and multilingual nature of modern Nepal. The map (*see above*) can easily be misinterpreted as suggesting that only Newa Bhae is spoken in Kathmandu, or that one unified language called Bhote is spoken across Nepal's northern border from the far-west to the central regions, when in fact no such language exists. The reality is much more complex, with layers of

Nepal is now at another crossroads in its turbulent history. Much is up for debate and negotiation, and members of communities who have been historically marginalised have legitimate aspirations and high hopes for a more 'inclusive' nation. Making flexible, lasting policies that genuinely support all of Nepal's languages will require foresight. Care should be taken to avoid replacing the divisive 'one nation, one culture, one language' rhetoric of the past with an equally divisive discourse of linguistic fragmentation. ●

*Mark Turin is a linguistic anthropologist and director of the Digital Himalaya Project. He is presently fieldwork coordinator for the Chintang and Puma Documentation Project at Tribhuvan University.*



**NO DRYNESS. NO DANDRUFF.**

## 10 X MOISTURISER<sup>\*</sup>

### FOR DANDRUFF-FREE HAIR<sup>\*</sup>

New generation Clinic All Clear removes the root cause of dandruff. It treats scalp dryness with ten times the moisturising properties of a non-conditioning shampoo. Giving you healthy, shiny and dandruff free hair.



The image shows three bottles of Clinic All Clear shampoo. From left to right: 'IceCool Anti-Dandruff' with a green and white design, 'ActiveCare Anti-Dandruff' with a blue and white design, and 'Hair Fall Defense' for dandruff-free healthy scalp with a yellow and black design. Each bottle features the 'VITA ACE' logo.

\*Visible flakes with regular use.





# Speak up

'All together now' is often a bad idea

There are many criticisms to be made of Washington's response to the heinous attacks of 11 September 2001. Much depends on the political and cultural proclivities of the critic, whether he or she is an Islamist or a neo-conservative, a leftist or a liberal.

But there's little disagreement with one point made by the high-level commission tasked with finding out why the attacks on America succeeded. In its report released in 2005, the 9/11 commission singles out "groupthink". This, in the words of commission co-chair Lee Hamilton, was to blame for intelligence agencies and policy makers failing to anticipate the plot to crash civilian airliners into high profile targets.

Similarly, a US Senate probe into why Weapons of Mass Destruction weren't found in Iraq after the invasion of 2003 blamed groupthink among those who were analyzing the intelligence data. So intent were the White House and its proxies on attacking Iraq, the report says, that even sober analysts



HERE AND THERE  
Daniel Lak

pushed the notion that Saddam Hussein was armed to the teeth with nukes, biological bombs, and nerve gas. That these were lies and fallacies we now know all too well.

The idea of groupthink isn't new. The term was coined by the American writer and individual thinker, William H Whyte, in 1952. His definition is still the best. Groupthink, he writes, is "a rationalised conformity—an open, articulate philosophy which holds that group values are not only expedient, but right and good as well." This, he concludes witheringly, is "a perennial failing of mankind."

In other words, we are part of a group that is working on a series of tasks or challenges and we already agree on many things. So that informs what we do, how we try to achieve our outcome, how we view the world. It matters more than the solution to the problem. Groupthink is in our nature as social beings who crave acceptance into something larger than just ourselves and our immediate family. It's part of being intellectually lazy, which many of us are. It's innate, part of us, hardwired into our flawed human brains.

So Osama Bin Laden won't attack America. Saddam is a threat and Afghanistan doesn't matter. There's no civil war in Iraq and the tarai and janajatis will just trust us. We'll be kind to the women and dalits too, just be patient.

It is—admittedly—grossly unfair to blame just the interim government of the moment for having the monopoly on groupthink in Nepal. There's plenty scattered over the detritus of recent history. King Gyanendra and his cohorts positively reeked of it. How else could ministers, military officer, and courtiers keep taking over a country that they already ran. Throughout the 1990s, freedom fighters turned democrats thought blithely and blindly that everything was wonderful while the Maoists raised the ire of the hills to revolutionary pitch. The entire Panchayat era was the most egregious example of Whyte's "perennial failing" that South Asia had to offer. The least said about Rana times the better.

These days, the bitter fruits of generations of groupthink are falling ever more rapidly from the tree and yet there are hopeful signs that Nepal is shaking off the demons of collective thought. The new voices in parliament, whether Maoist, civil society, madhesi, women, or excluded castes, will be immune in the short term to the urge to conform to discredited ideas. Democratic feudalism or high caste turf defending, neither will move these new groups to think as elites demand.

The key is to keep the group open and expanding. To resist the urge to slam shut the gates of inclusion once your group is inside. That's certainly tempting. Comfort rests in familiarity. But I'm confident that Nepal's new dynamic is unstoppable, however unpredictable and inconvenient

Someone call Washington. Here's a little something that they could learn from Kathmandu. ●

# "Communities manage

How did you get interested in mountain development?

J. Gabriel Campbell: I guess my mother got me started by giving birth to me in Mussoorie at 6,500 feet up in the Indian Himalaya. She was carried to the tiny community hospital by four porters in a sedan chair. Later, I became an anthropologist and lived for years with simple families in remote mountain villages. I wanted to understand these amazing people and how mountains shaped them, their cultures, and their economies, and how they shaped the mountains in return.

Your PhD thesis is on Jumla. Looking back, are you surprised that the Maoists were so active there?

Not at all. Then, Jumla was ten days walk from the nearest road. It is still over five days walk, and the poorest rural area I had ever seen in my life. The men went to work as coolies in India every winter. They were treated like dirt by most officials. Yet, they had dreams. They have the richest culture for love songs. Women who start in arranged marriages usually end up in marriages of love. They want better lives, and I guess it was not hard for them to follow people who promised that.

Having been associated with the Rapti project how do you read the current unrest in the tarai?

Whenever people feel that their own community is marginalised and does not have a voice, it is not surprising that they feel resentment and want to redress the imbalance. The rulers of Nepal have mostly come from the hills ever since the days of the Kasa Raja when Jumla ruled

Nepal for 400 years to Gorkha Raj, which we have been in for the last 250 years. Malaria used to keep the population of the tarai belt low and mostly consisted of indigenous groups such as the Tharu, Rajbhansi, Muslims, Dalits etc. who are themselves marginalised by other tarai groups. With the population balance having shifted over the last 40 years, there has not been a corresponding shift in political representation.

You were associated with the beginnings of community forestry in Nepal. What was it like then?

I remember my first exposure to community forestry. I travelled around Nepal and found out there were communities all over the country who were protecting and managing their forests even though it was against the law since they were technically the government's forests. Then there were forest officers who understood that local community management was more effective and more beneficial to the people, forests, and country than government management. Progressive forest officers and donors came together to support communities, change the laws, and start a whole new way of thinking even though most foresters and politicians predicted that it would only result in greater deforestation. This is an amazing success story that concretely shows that communities are in fact the best managers of their resources if they have a proper policy environment and support.

You were also involved with setting up the Makalu-Barun National Park.

All of us on The Mountain Institute's Asia team were dedicated to helping create new

**James Gabriel Campbell is the outgoing director general of the Kathmandu-based International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). He is also the current chair of the Mountain Forum. Campbell began working in Nepal in the 1970s with community forestry, the Rapti Project, USAID, and The Mountain Institute. He will soon retire from ICIMOD, after seven years there. A cultural anthropologist by training, Campbell was born and raised in India and speaks many regional languages. Excerpts of a recent interview with Ujol Sherchan of the Mountain Forum Secretariat.**

national parks on both sides of Chomolungma. Both of these protected areas are based on the recognition that local mountain peoples are the principal caretakers of the environment and must be its biggest beneficiaries if they are to maintain this critical role. Both have been successfully established, but face challenges to turn them into viable long term partnerships between local communities and local and state authorities. In Nepal, the Maoist insurgency basically eliminated the role of government, and in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, the area is so vast and spread out, with diverse sources of economic pressures, that it will take time to harmonise all the elements involved. As always, it will ultimately be up to the local people as to how effectively these parks evolve a sustainable mixture of conservation and livelihoods.

# The hole in the wall

Amrit Gurung goes back to the image that now symbolises the war



PICS: RAJESH KC

Three years ago, when the country was being torn apart by conflict Amrit Gurung and his band Nepathya were on a nationwide peace concert tour.

While passing through Motipur in the far-western district of Kailali he and journalist Rajesh KC visited a police post that had just been attacked and destroyed. Six policemen were killed.

Children from a nearby school believed the police station was haunted, but curiosity got the better of them and they followed the photographers into the station. An exploding mortar shell had made a large hole in one of the walls and the children were peering out of it. Both Amrit and Rajesh started taking pictures from the same angle, and both submitted them for a pictorial book that publishers nepa-laya were bringing out. Amrit's picture had two children and Rajesh's had



# mountains best”



ELIZABETH FOX

**From a regional perspective, what are some of the biggest constraints, geopolitical or otherwise, to forging regional cooperation for mountain development in the Himalayan region?**  
It is amazing for a region in which five of our eight member countries have fought wars over the last 40 years that it would be these same countries who came together and formed ICIMOD. This act of cooperative vision predated the signing of some of the Alpine Convention protocols, even though they worked almost 50 years to develop them. Naturally, there are still some geopolitical constraints left over from this history that inhibits the level of cooperation, which could be obtained and would be in everyone’s interests. These mostly relate to data sharing such as classifying hydrological information and geospatial data

(maps) as well as with habits of dealing with issues on bilateral terms rather than regional and global. However, I see a new openness to overcome these constraints, which along with technological breakthroughs such as Google Earth and radar remote sensing are starting to provide new platforms for technical cooperation. With some bold leadership, this could translate into a set of Himalayan or SAARC conventions.

**How committed did you find the governments of ICIMOD member countries towards addressing sustainable mountain development?**  
The current concern for climate change has focussed attention on the critical role of glaciers and snow in water storage and flash floods. The rising demand and cost of energy has renewed focus on the importance of Himalayan

rivers for hydro-electric generation. The galloping growth of our major regional economies, China, India, and Pakistan, and the increased trade that is starting to take off means that major road and rail arteries are no longer dreams, but are being turned into realities. South Asia is looking east and China is looking west in ways that are qualitatively different than ever before.

**How do you see the Mountain Forum evolving?**  
There are a number of ideas I think need to be vigorously explored. One is country chapters. Another is many more local language chapters: Chinese, Urdu, Russian, Thai, Indonesian, Serbian, etc. Others include tapping into the biggest mountain interest groups— mountaineers, hikers, and private sector tourism, and e-marketing of mountain products and services, employment opportunities, crafts etc.

Mountain Forum is a unique institution. It is open to anyone for free, and provides support for networking and information sharing over the internet across five continents. It has played a key role in helping shape the global mountain agenda. I was initially sceptical that something so ephemeral would last. I am extraordinarily pleased at how wrong I was. It has lasted and grown, and I think it potentially has a great future. I’d like to register, on behalf of all Mountain Forum members, how grateful we are to the Swiss government for providing essential support.

**So where do you see yourself after ICIMOD?**  
In the mountains. I started in the Himalaya and I can’t think of a better home than the beautiful and awe inspiring Himalaya.

five peering out of the same spot. An international selection panel chose Amrit’s for the cover of the book, *A People War*, which was launched in December and has become a collector’s item for book lovers in Nepal and abroad.  
Amrit returned to the remote police post at Motipur three years later during his recently-concluded concert tour. He learnt that one of the boys, Aman, was taken to India by his father when his mother died. But Hemanta was still there, wearing a Britney Spears T-shirt.

Hemanta posed once more for a picture, this time holding the book that has him on the cover. Times have changed, the situation is different, but the police station is the same. “This wall has now become a symbol of Nepal’s war,” says Amrit, “lots of people ask me where the cover picture was taken, it may be a good idea to build the police station somewhere else and leave this one as a war memorial.” Amrit is a professional singer and his hobby is photography.  
*A People War* is a collection



**A PEOPLE WAR: Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996-2006, Nepalaya Pvt Ltd, 2006 pp 215, Rs 2,500.**

of 178 pictures selected from over 2,650 submitted photographs. The book was envisioned by Kunda Dixit and designed by Navin Joshi.  
“To extend the reach of the book, we are working on a travelling exhibition in April of selected images from the book,” says Kiran Krishna Shrestha, team leader of the publishing house nepa~laya.  
“Every war has its iconic picture. Somewhere in this book is the photograph that will

symbolise conflict,” says Kunda Dixit, “and that image could very well be the cover picture of that bombed out wall.”  
While in Motipur, Amrit Gurung handed over a copy of the book to the library of the Rastriya Higher Secondary School where Hemanta studies. Says Amrit: “I wish we could present this book to every school in the country, it is a pictorial documentation of a conflict we all lived through, the horrors of which we should never forget.” ●

# Time warp gone wrong

Trust politics to ruin a good thing

**A**t the risk of exposing latent Orientalist tendencies, the Hand has always appreciated the pleasant sensation of being caught in a time warp here in Nepal. While the rest of the world forgets its past in blind materialist pursuits, Nepalis happily celebrate arcane festivals, ritually slaughter goats to appease terrifying deities, and honour every passing full moon. The unique calendar puts us sixty years ahead of everywhere else, despite indicators that we have some catching up to do, with auspicious days fixed by a cabal of astrologers. The month, date, and year never correspond with neighbouring countries, or anywhere else, reminding those of us from beyond the hills that

we live in a very curious place indeed. Who can gaze upon Macchendranath’s chariot, swaying improbably as it’s pulled through the narrow streets of Patan, and not be transported back in time?  
In the good old days, when humour still had a role to play, I used to think the tourist posters should read: Visit Nepal; A Country Hurtling into the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Alas, what was once charming inevitably grows tedious and stupid when politics gets involved.  
The 1990 People’s Movement saw an unprecedented convergence with world trends; as the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union freed millions from tyranny, Nepalis overthrew the corrupt Panchayat kleptocracy and achieved hard won democracy. It appeared the country was suddenly a full participant in the positive changes sweeping the globe.

चैत्र २०६३				MAR-APR 2007		
आइत	सोम	मङ्गल	बुध	बिही	शुक्र	शनि
				१ 15	२ 16	३ 17
४ 18	५ 19	६ 20	७ 21	८ 22	९ 23	१० 24
११ 25	१२ 26	१३ 27	१४ 28	१५ 29	१६ 30	१७ 31

This didn’t last long. As communism disintegrated worldwide it thrived here, demonstrating that old habits, like sidestepping the currents of history, die hard. Typically, our local Maoists declared their deluded People’s War in ’96, just as Maoism disappeared in the land of its birth, as China opened to the world and embraced free market economics with a vengeance.  
All this would be hilarious if the effects weren’t so devastating. The only laugh in town was that, bizarrely, no one seemed aware of these monumental changes. The profound ignorance of our political leaders is occasionally visible, like when Madhab Nepal returned from a free trip to Scandinavia a while ago. He had been invited to speak at a forum of old lefties, in his role as leader of the opposition and chief of the UML. In an unscripted moment, he told reporters how surprised he was when his Swedish hosts advised he shouldn’t tell anyone his party’s acronym meant ‘United Marxist-Leninist’; better say he was a ‘socialist’, to ensure the audience didn’t laugh him off the stage. Here was a man in charge of the country’s second biggest party and an aspirant to the office of prime minister who didn’t have a clue that the movement he represented was universally discredited. This would be astonishing anywhere but Nepal.  
Countless posters have recently appeared featuring the hammer and sickle. But the banner of the erstwhile USSR, which collapsed in chaos and ignominy, has been discarded as a symbol of oppression in Russia where it flew as the national flag for over 70 years. That it flies in Nepal indicates how wrong our once-cherished time warp has gone.

Readers who label the Hand an Orientalist-cum-Anti-Communist miss the point. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism has proven to be its own worst enemy, having failed miserably as a system of governance wherever attempted, and certainly doesn’t need a meddling Foreign Hand to bring it down. Being anti-communist nowadays is like being anti-Flat-Earth Society—why bother.  
The Hand isn’t anti-communist, simply anti-failure.  
World trends happen for good reasons, no matter the tired mantra our local ideologues repeat that communism failed elsewhere because it was never applied scientifically (or some such nonsense).  
Nepal’s distance from the rest of the world, once so appealing, has turned into the Maoists greatest ally. It serves their interest that the majority remain ignorant of such inconvenient historical facts, and somehow Nepal’s ‘other-worldliness’ allows them to get away with it.  
Betting the country’s future on a horse that has already lost the race is foolish. Nonetheless, being out of step with the rest of the world could still be used to our advantage, as it affords Nepal the unique opportunity of learning from the mistakes of others, instead of haplessly repeating them. ●



# Societies must make opportunity as equal as they say it is

## For the greater good

**H**ow much should we worry about inequality?

Answering that requires that we first answer another question: "Compared to what?" What is the alternative against which to judge the degree of inequality we see?

Florida is a much more materially unequal society than Cuba. But the right way to look at the situation is not to say that Florida has too much inequality, but that Cuba has much too much poverty.



### COMMENT

**J Bradford DeLong**

It is hard to envision alternative political arrangements or economic policies over the past 50 years that would have transferred any significant portion of the wealth of today's rich nations to today's poor nations. I can envision alternatives—Communist victories in post-World War II elections in Italy and France—that would have impoverished nations now in the rich North. I can envision those that would have enriched poor nations: Deng Xiaoping becoming China's leader in 1956 rather than 1976. But alternatives that would have made the South richer while reducing the wealth of the North



would require a wholesale revolution in human psychology.

Nor should we worry much that some people are richer than others. Some people work harder, apply their intelligence more skillfully, or have been lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. But I can't imagine what political-economic arrangements could make individuals' relative wealth closely correspond to their relative moral or other merit. What can be addressed are poverty and social insurance—providing a safety net—not inequality.

Inequality is a serious political-economic problem globally and for individual societies. In the United States, the average earnings premium received by those with four-year college degrees over those with no college has gone from 30 to 90 percent over the past three decades. As the economy's skill requirements have outstripped the ability of the educational system to meet them, the education premium has risen, underpinning a more uneven distribution of income and wealth.

Ceci Rouse and Orley

Ashenfelter of Princeton University find that the returns to an extra year of schooling are greater for those with little education than for those who get a lot. Raising the average level of education in America would have made the country richer and produced a more even distribution of income and wealth by making less-skilled workers harder to find, and thus worth more on the market.

America's corporate CEOs and their near-peers earn ten times more today than a generation ago. This is not because a CEO's work effort and negotiation and management skills are ten times

more valuable now, but because other corporate stakeholders have become less able to constrain top managers and financiers from capturing more of the value-added.

Within each country, the increase in inequality in the past generation is mainly a result of failures of social investment and changes in regulations and expectations, and has not been accompanied by any acceleration in the overall rate of economic growth. Changes in economy and society have resulted not in more wealth, but in an upward redistribution of wealth—a successful right-wing class war.

Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Steve Ballmer, and the other Microsoft millionaires and billionaires are brilliant, hardworking, and entrepreneurial. But only the first five percent of their wealth can be justified as an economic incentive to encourage entrepreneurship and enterprise. The next 95 percent would create much more happiness and opportunity if it were divided evenly among US citizens or others, than if they were to consume any portion of it.

An unequal society is an unjust society. The most important item parents anywhere try to buy is a head start for their children. The wealthier they are, the bigger the head start. Societies that promise equality of opportunity cannot afford to allow inequality of outcomes to become too great. ● (Project Syndicate)

*J Bradford DeLong, professor of economics at Berkeley, was Assistant US Treasury Secretary during the Clinton administration.*



**THT Live**

Up-to-the-minute news from around the country and the world, opinion polls, the heartiest laughs, horoscopes, localized weather updates, thoughts for the day and so..ooo much more!

It's happening round-the-clock on THT Live.

Accessible country-wide.  
Just thumb ta thumb thumb an SMS to 2722\* to get what you want, when you want it... on your Nepal Telecom cellphone as well!

### HOROSCOPES

Weekly Keyword	Result	Daily Keyword
WEEK ARI	ARIES	AST ARI
WEEK TAU	TAURUS	AST TAU
WEEK GEM	GEMINI	AST GEM
WEEK CAN	CANCER	AST CAN
WEEK LEO	LEO	AST LEO
WEEK VIR	VIRGO	AST VIR
WEEK LIB	LIBRA	AST LIB
WEEK SCO	SCORPIO	AST SCO
WEEK SAG	SAGITTARIUS	AST SAG
WEEK CAP	CAPRICORN	AST CAP
WEEK AQU	AQUARIUS	AST AQU
WEEK PIS	PISCES	AST PIS

For example, to get daily horoscope of Aries on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	ast ari	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type ast ari	Send

For example, to get weekly horoscope of Aries on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	week ari	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type week ari	Send

### NEWS

Keyword	Result
NEWS	LATEST NEWS
SPO	SPORTS NEWS
BIZ	BUSINESS NEWS
ENT	ENTERTAINMENT NEWS

For example, to get the latest news on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	news	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type news	Send

### STOCKS

Keyword	Result
NEPSE	INDEX
SHG	TOP 5 GAINERS
SHL	TOP 5 LOSERS
SHH	HELP

To get company codes visit [www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722)

For example, to get the top 5 gainers on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	shg	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type shg	Send

### WEATHER

Keyword	Result
CLI Jumla	Forecast for Jumla
CLI Butwal	Forecast for Butwal
CLI Dharan	Forecast for Dharan
CLI Hetauda	Forecast for Hetauda
CLI Janakpur	Forecast for Janakpur
CLI Lalitpur	Forecast for Lalitpur
CLI Pokhara	Forecast for Pokhara
CLI Bhairawa	Forecast for Bhairawa
CLI Surkhet	Forecast for Surkhet
CLI Dhangarhi	Forecast for Dhangarhi
CLI Bhaktapur	Forecast for Bhaktapur
CLI Bharatpur	Forecast for Bharatpur
CLI Biratnagar	Forecast for Biratnagar
CLI Kathmandu	Forecast for Kathmandu
CLI Mahendranagar	Forecast for Mahendranagar

For example, to get weather forecast for Kathmandu on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	cli kathmandu	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type cli kathmandu	Send

### JOKES

Keyword	Result
JOKE	JOKES
JOKE SANTA	JOKES ON SANTA
JOKE DOC	JOKES ON DOCTORS
JOKE SILLY	SILLY JOKES
JOKE ONE	ONE-LINER JOKES
JOKE LAWYER	JOKES ON LAWYERS
JOKE OFFICE	OFFICE JOKES
JOKE COMP	COMPUTER JOKES
JOKE BLONDE	JOKES ON BLONDES
JOKE AJIT	JOKES ON AJIT

For example, to get a joke on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	joke	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type joke	Send

### FOREX

Keyword	Result
FOREX SELL	SELLING RATES
FOREX BUY	BUYING RATES
FOREX currency code*	CURRENCY RATE

\*To get currency codes type FOREX HELP or visit [www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722)  
For example, to get the selling rate on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	forex sell	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type forex sell	Send

### THOUGHT

Keyword	Result
THOUGHT	Thought for the day

For example, to get thought for the day on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	thought	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type thought	Send

### DICTIONARY

Keyword	Result
DICT word	MEANING OF REQUESTED WORD

For example, to get the meaning of book on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	dict book	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type dict book	Send

### GAMES

Keyword	Result
GTTT	Tic Tac Toe
GHM	Hangman
GTTT HELP	TTT Manual
GHM HELP	GHM Manual

For example, to play HANGMAN on your cellphone:

Menu	Message	New Message	GHM	2722
Go to Menu	Select Message	Go to New Message	Type GHM	Send

Services available on:



Customer Care: 9805002722 (9am-6pm),  
Email: [thtlive@thehimalayantimes.com](mailto:thtlive@thehimalayantimes.com),  
[www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/2722). \*These are premium services and will attract Rs. 5/- plus all applicable Govt. taxes per SMS.  
Services available 24 hrs.



# It's expensive being poor in Nepal

A balanced diet is the only medicine most children in Nepal need

It is a cold January evening in Dadeldhura, almost as far from Kathmandu as you can go in Nepal. Villagers are thronging our health camp, and I am examining them and discussing their symptoms. In the queue, I see a child who is suffering from acute respiratory infection and looks emaciated. He is six years old, and is eating a packet of instant noodles.

"Your child seems very small for his age, what does he eat?" I ask the mother.

"Yes, he is small," the mother agrees, "we are too poor to give him food, there is nothing in the house."

I ask her if she has lentils in the house, or rice or flour. She says she does. Does she have cows and milk? Yes, she does. Does she grow vegetables? Yes.



NEPALI PAN  
Aruna Uprety

"So, what is the problem, why don't you give your child rice and dal, vegetables and milk?"

I ask, dreading the answer I know is coming.

"But that is not real food, I need to give my child chou-chou and vitamins so he will be healthy," she says.

What have we done to Nepali mothers and their traditional knowledge of good, nutritious food? This knowledge, passed down from generations, seems to have been erased in a few decades through relentless misinformation through advertising.

The idea that easily available home foods are not nutritious while expensive processed foods in colourful foil packs are healthy is now ingrained in mothers across Nepal. Parents also demand expensive bottled vitamins and tonics for their children from doctors.

"There is absolutely no evidence that supplemental vitamins are good for growing children," says Ramesh Kant Adhikari, dean of the Medical College in Maharajganj.

Doctors are also to blame because they prescribe some of these food supplements even when the child doesn't even need them. They find it tedious to explain to parents that all they need is enough carbohydrate, vitamins, and proteins—all available in the traditional Nepali diet.

Adds Adhikari: "It's expensive being poor in Nepal. The lure of advertising has brainwashed a whole generation of parents and their children."

Lack of some vitamins caused by an inadequate diet may lead to a specific deficiency syndrome, that can easily be corrected if parents know what type of homemade foods contain those micronutrients. The middle class is also following dubious advertising for appetite stimulants, which if not harmful, are certainly a waste of money.

Adhikari is the author of *Child Nutrition and Health* a book full of recipes made from local Nepali food items rich in vitamins, minerals and proteins like *surbottam pitho*, *jaulo*, millet porridges, roti, rice, and dal.

The practical aspects of these ideas are propagated by the Nepal Youth Opportunities Foundation which has been working in field offices for the last eight years, saving lives of children who are malnourished, not with expensive medicine but simple homemade food.

In Dadeldhura, it was heartening to see the boy in the queue come back looking like a normal, healthy child after just a week of being on a healthy diet. Children have this amazing capacity of regenerating, and it is miraculous to see it happen before our eyes.

Now what needs to be done is counter the negative message going out through tv commercials and ads that promote junk food, and make doctors and their patients aware that a balanced diet is about the only medicine most children need. ●

Aruna Uprety is a women's health and reproductive rights activist.



SUBHAS RAI

## The night of the babas

PRANAYA SJB RANA

Shivaratri is upon us, and so are hundreds of bearded, naked, marijuana-smoking incredible feat-performing ascetics. Shiva: creator, destroyer, Lord of all Lords, and patron saint of all stoners.

Every year, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the Krishna Paksha in the month of Falgun, thousands of devotees flock to Pashupatinath. Most go to pay their respects but there are those who are lured more by the offer of Shiva's Prasad, ganja and bhang, than by devotion.

No one is entirely sure why we celebrate Shivaratri: it is Shiva's honeymoon, the night he performed the tandava, or dance of destruction, or the day he drank the churned out poison from the ocean of the gods, thus gaining his distinctive blue throat, or *neela kantha*.

But a better—and less often heard—story is about how Shiva came to be the main man of the trinity. It all started when Shiva was asked to arbitrate a dispute between Brahma and Vishnu about who was stronger. Our hero transformed himself into a gigantic linga and posed the fighting parties a challenge: to find its beginning and his end. They didn't figure it out, of course, and in the end the massive column slit open, revealing Shiva reclining inside. A little strange and certainly anatomically impossible, but he did strike awe—and modesty—into the hearts of the other two and they gave up their little discussion. And this, readers, is why the various babas who congregate around Pashupati do the things they do. And why Shiva is regarded as the perfect husband.

This fiery-eyed destroyer of worlds stuff has made Shiva a bit of an international cult figure. Not only did Robert Oppenheimer quote Shiva at the first test of the atom bomb and say that he felt like 'Death' come to earth, he felt such a kinship with Shiva, that from that day on, took to winding a blue scarf around his neck.

There's plenty of weirdness closer home too. The sadhus with the huge tika, tridents, and orange-red robes are to scare the children with. The heavy duty ones are the ash-covered, bearded, dreadlocked, naked *nanga babas*. The chillum is a standard accompaniment, but the other odours and the greasy, sinister black tika on the forehead make them even more forbidding.

If you come across a group of naga babas chanting, getting high, or wielding their weapons, stand back. Unsuspecting and overly curious onlookers have been known to be cursed heartily. ●



BEFORE



AFTER

NEPALI YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FOUNDATION

Sukmaya Pariyar, five months  
Weight at admittance: 2.3kg

Sukmaya Pariyar, weight at discharge:  
4kg, a gain of 1.7kg in 27 days



Did your paper arrive on time this morning? If not, call our  
**Customer care @ 5547002**

**DIRECT LINE**

Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd. Hatiban Lalitpur





**Wood Craft**

Manufacture of  
Custom Designed Furniture

Kathmandu, Tel: Factory: 4271492  
Office: 5552200, 5554705, 2113264 | Fax: 977-1-5543410  
Butwal Tel: 071-540253 | Dhangadhi Tel: 091-521576 | Email: kabipdh@mail.com.np



## ABOUT TOWN

## EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Sound of Love** an exhibition of paintings by Ragini Upadhaya-Grela at The Art Shop, Durbar Marg, every weekend until 25 February at 11AM-6PM. 9841444848

## EVENTS

- ❖ **Non-violent communications training** by Katherine Singer at the Tewa Building, Dhapakhel, 17 February, 9.30 AM-4.30 PM, bus pick up 8.30 AM at Jawalakhel, Rs 150. 5536925
- ❖ **An interaction with Bali Rai** talk program with readings at the British Council, 5-6.30 PM on 19 February. 4410798
- ❖ **Mangalbare Discussion Series** on issues of the indigenous janajati community at Martin Chautari, 20 February at 5PM. 4240243
- ❖ **Media Discussion Series** on journalism during war, Martin Chautari, 22 February at 3PM. 4238050
- ❖ **First Annual Ladies Go-Kart Race** at the Elephant House, 24 February, Rs 3,000 for participation. 2191500
- ❖ **Salsa try-out classes** at the Salsa Dance Academy, Bhat Bhateni, on 24 February, beginner classes start on 25 February. 4422019
- ❖ **Learn German** by playing games with native speakers, every Wednesday, 3PM at the German Info and Culture Centre, Thamel. 9841241290

## MUSIC

- ❖ **Ozomatli** two-time Grammy award winning band live at Khula Manch, Ratna Park, on 17 February at 2PM, free entrance. 4445577
- ❖ **Fusion and classical Nepali music** by Rudra live at the Courtyard, Le Meridien, Gokarna every Friday, 7PM onwards, Rs 800. 4451212
- ❖ **Open Mic Night** at ViaVia Café, Thamel every Friday, 8PM
- ❖ **Gaine (Gandarbas)** perform at every lunch and dinner, Club Himalaya Nagarkot. 6680080

## DINING

- ❖ **Italian food promotion** at Al Fresco, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, from chef Alberto Bruni, 16-18 February, also the launch of a new menu 4273999.
- ❖ **Walk and lunch** every Saturday until 31 March at the Shivapuri Heights Cottage. 9841371927
- ❖ **Light nouvelle snacks** and elaborate cordon bleu meals at La'Soon, Pulchowk, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- ❖ **Continental cuisine** and wine by the fire place at Kilroy's, Thamel. 4250440.
- ❖ **Shop Talk** drink and dine at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Radisson Hotel.
- ❖ **Café Bahal** at Kathmandu Guest House. 4700632.
- ❖ **Smorgasbord** lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4375280
- ❖ **Gyakok** lunch and dinner at the Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, minimum of four guests at Rs 450 per person. 4412999
- ❖ **Retro brunch barbecue** with the Crossfire Band at The Poolside, Le Meridien, Gokarna from 12-4PM, Rs 1,000 inclusive of swimming and a complimentary drink. 4451212
- ❖ **International Brunch** weekends 11AM-3PM for Rs 499 per person (Rs 299 for children) at Hotel Himalaya. 5523900
- ❖ **Te** Tibetan delicacies at Nepal's first noodle bar, Bluebird Mall Food Court.
- ❖ **Calcutta's rolls, biryani, kebabs** Indian cuisine at Bawarchi, Bluebird Mall Food Court. 9741000735
- ❖ **Japanese Food** at the Coffee Shop at Hotel Shangri-La, 12 noon-3PM, Rs 499 per person. 4412999
- ❖ **Woodfired Pizzas** at Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel, 4262768, Bhatbhateni 4426587 and Pulchowk 5521755
- ❖ **Some Like It Hot** live music from Side B every Friday at Fusion—the bar at Dwarika's. Rs 799 includes BBQ dinner. 4479488
- ❖ **Soul Warmers** Inner Groove live at Fusion—the bar at Dwarika's, Rs 599 includes a Fusion platter and cocktail. 4479488
- ❖ **Pizza** from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- ❖ **AKA Pizza** at Moksh, delivery available. 5526212
- ❖ **Momo and Sekuwa Revolution** Saturdays at the Tea House Inn, Nagarkot. 6680048
- ❖ **Happy Hour** Lost Horizon Bar, Hotel Shangri-la, from 5-7PM. 4412999
- ❖ **Cocktails and Mocktails** Daily happy hour, 4-7PM at Kathmandu Revolving Restaurant, Ratna Plaza, New Road

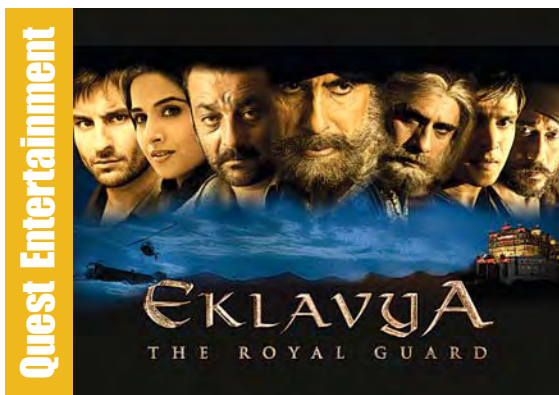
## GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Weekend package** at Le Meridien Kathmandu Gokarna Forest Golf Resort and Spa, two nights three days at Rs 8,888 and one night two days at Rs 4,444. 4451212
- ❖ **Sun and Fun** Three days and two nights package at Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, Rs 7,499. 4412999
- ❖ **Harmony** of the mind, body, and soul at Club Oasis, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4491234
- ❖ **Aesthetic living** with nature at Park Village. 4375279
- ❖ **Pure relaxation** at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. 4361500

For inclusion in the listing send information to [editors@nepaltimes.com](mailto:editors@nepaltimes.com)

## YAK YETI YAK

by MIKU



In contemporary India, a king without a kingdom lives in a majestic fort. His powers are gone, but the royal guard, Eklavya (Amitabh Bachchan) continues to live in a time warp. He's spent his entire life serving the royals and guarding their secrets, but now he is old and going increasingly blind. With the sudden demise of the queen (Sharmila Tagore), the heir to the throne Prince Harshwardhan (Saif Ali Khan) is brought back from his chosen life in London, but a series of events threatens the happiness of the royal family, leading to an explosion of violence and murder.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal  
[www.jainepal.com](http://www.jainepal.com)

Indulge yourself with some of the best  
Porkchop and lambsteak

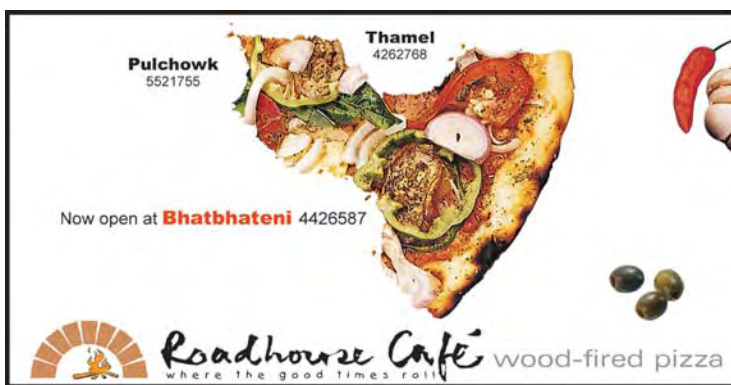


Courtyard Restaurant  
Kamaladi, 4253056

## Ladies Go-Kart Race 2007



Date - Saturday, February 24, 2007  
venue - Tiger Karts, Swayambu  
Participation fee - Nrs 3,000  
To sign up call  
Elephant House Tel: 2191500



## NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



There are reasons why Kathmandu sees snow once in over 60 years. What happened this week was a rare collision. The westerly waves from Siberia were active, making it a cold, rainy day, but then an easterly hit Kathmandu at the same time. This collision disturbed the supercooled water in the clouds, which then fell in the form of snow mixed with water. Kathmandu received 45mm of rainfall within 24 hours on 14 February, a record for the month. Back in 1987, the Valley received 25mm, which remained the all-time high until this week. Nights will remain frigid in Kathmandu over the weekend, as Thursday afternoon's satellite picture shows thick clouds all over Nepal. The high mountains up north are likely to get more snow. The weekend will be a mixture of sun, clouds, and possibly some more rain. Things perk up early next week, though.

## KATHMANDU VALLEY



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

नेपाल सरकार  
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
सूचना विभाग



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](mailto:radio@radiosagarmatha.org),  
[www.radiosagarmatha.org](http://www.radiosagarmatha.org)





EYES ON THE PRIZE: Pushpa Kamal Dahal, speaking at a mass meeting in the Valley for the first time on Tuesday, is photographed by his son Prakash.



POLITICAL ANIMALS: NC leaders Mina Panday, Laxman Ghimire, and Ram Chandra Poudel, Secretary of Socialist International Asia-Pacific Luis Ayala, and NC leaders Sushil Koirala and Prakash Man Singh at the Socialist International Conference at Birendra International Convention Centre on Sunday.



SNOW LINE: Trucks and buses were caught in a traffic jam at Sanga after Wednesday afternoon's unprecedented snowfall.



GREEN AND WHITE: The hills around Kathmandu as seen from Bhaktapur's Nalinchok.



BHEDA KO OON JASTO: Himalmedia staffers took a break on the office rooftop in Hatiban on Wednesday afternoon to enjoy the snowfall.

On 19 January, protestors in Lahan torched five buses carrying over 350 passengers. Most of them lost their luggage and did not have even a change of clothes. The town's hotels and guest houses were overflowing and at one point there were 20 people to a room. Sick people couldn't get to hospital, food was in short supply, shops remained shut. News was sporadic and people were desperate: far from home, cold, hungry, tired, and fearful of what could happen next.

Kumar Sah, a 29-year-old resident of Lahan, felt enough was enough. He defied curfew, crossed barricades, and put his own life at risk to help stranded travellers. Sah mobilised his social welfare and human rights organisation, Jana Uthan Kendra, and got a group of young people to start helping travellers who were stranded. The group went to the Marwari Samaj Sewa and requested free food and shelter for the travellers, and then canvassed Lahan's Naya Bajar for funds for the sick who needed immediate medical help and to buy bus tickets for others. The Jana Uthan Kendra organised an ambulance to take a cardiac patient to Kathmandu and a week after the bus burning,

# Lahan's hero

Sah got 53 women and children airlifted to Kathmandu.

Through all this, Sah, who contributes to the Lahan-based *Nawajagriti* weekly, took part in protests. "We were agitating against the state's discrimination," he explains, "but the travellers were just caught in the middle, it was my duty to help them."

"Every Nepali has the right to travel and be safe,

and I was only respecting that," he adds.

When asked if serving people during protests was difficult, Sah answered: "Asking for what is rightfully yours is never easy, but not to help those in need because you have to sacrifice a little is not humane."

Devraj Pokhrel in Lahan



DEVRAJ POKHREL

NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY

NPI

**Nepal Pashmina Industry**  
Main Showroom: Soaltee Mode (On the way of Hotel Soaltee) | Tel: 4273292, 4277023, 4283644  
Thamel Showroom: Opposite Sanchaykosh Building | 4264775, 4410947  
Fax: 977 1 4270092 | Email: npi@mos.com.np | Web: www.npi-nepal.com

[ A great escape to change your life style ]

A destination for complete pleasure in the heart of the Jungle\*

\*FOR FREE PACKAGES (3 days & 2 nights or 2 days & 1 night stay) please see Himalmedia subscription scheme.

**RHINO RESORT** Pvt. Ltd.  
A JUNGLE RESORT IN CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

Meghauli, Chitwan, Nepal  
City Office: PO Box: 1912, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 4265454 Fax: 977 1 4265453 Email: rhinoresort@wlink.com.np www.geocities.com/rhinoresort



# Marxbad, Leninbad, Stalinbad, Maobad

Some of you are displaying an insalubrious interest in whether the much-anticipated March of the Naked Babas in Support of Monarchy on Friday will come to anything. We think not, high and spirited though they may be.

And despite Ram Sharan ('Gloom and Doom') Mahat's whining, the country's short- and medium-term prognosis looks very bright since PKD is determined to turn Nepal into the "richest country in South Asia" by the end of the decade and a "Switzerland" soon after. The fact that he was standing behind portraits of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao when he says this must mean something. Apparently he listened to tapes of Madan Bhandari's speeches from 15 years ago to take cues on delivery and rhetoric for his coming-out address on Monday.

More interesting is to see the personality cult manifestations of His Fearsomeness on posters, hats, billboards, and even Young Maoists' smocks. (The Ass can take a lot, but not the sight of **revolutionaries in smocks** collecting money by the roadside.)



The Ass has decided to give up trying to figure out who is **stabbing whom in the back**. Thursday's bund was ostensibly to press for janajati demands, but it had the tacit support of the Seven Plus One parties who wanted to prevent the arrival of Hindu fundos from down South for Shivaratri. And then Upendra Yadav is not, as it may seem, for madhesi representation so much as the resignation of the Home Minister Krishna Sitaula. Comrade Awesome is Sitaula's main protector in his struggle against First Daughter Sujata, who wants Sitaula's job—a quest for which she is telling everyone pretty openly that she has the backing of the Americans and the Indians. So how come Upendra Yadav goes to the Reporter's Club in Sujata's Pajero?



Sorry to have jumped the gun on Devyani's wedding last month, your favourite Ass was getting somewhat ahead of himself/herself about this jinxed nuptial which is once more in doubt because the poor girl is in hospital with meningitis. The selection panel for the invitee's list at Bijaya Bass apparently decided to invite His Erstwhile Majesty to Delhi after all. But Baluwatar, which didn't even allow the king to go to Hetauda for the winter, has not yet given the nod despite shuttle diplomacy to put pressure on Singha Darbar via the Delhi Darbar. The 7+1 seem to have decided it would be politically problematic to allow him to go to India at this time although it seems to have no similar qualms about letting four-time-PM Deuba and Arzu go.

The Ass's opinion, for whatever its worth, is that since the wedding is going to be a royal bash of Indian **maharajhs-turned-politicos** we should insist Kingji go so he can see that even if Nepal soon becomes a republic he could become a politician.



So our jaundiced Cabinet finally decided after a heated debate to replace the Buddha (who replaced King Gyanendra) with Mt Everest in the Rs 10 banknotes. Nepal has a long tradition of naming airlines after the pantheon (Sita Air, Buddha Air) but emblazoning banknotes with portraits of the Compassionate One could irreparably harm relations with fellow-Buddhist nations. The Cabinet, however, is still deadlocked on who to replace KingG with on Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. So besides the diesel shortage, electricity shortage, water shortage, and LPG shortage, we're soon going to have a shortage of banknotes. Which maybe just as well because there is nothing to buy anyway.

For decades, a British mint has been minting money by minting our banknotes. In anticipation of another large order from the Rastra Bank, it sent a former British ambassador as its salesperson here recently. But the Cabinet's inability to decide on the design for the notes means the whole deal is now up in the air. As for the Rs 10 bills, they are going to be fittingly printed in Indonesia, a world leader in depicting **social volcanoes on non-polymer banknotes**.



ass@nepalitimes.com



**Weaves & Blends**

cashmere accessories • home • knitwear

showroom: tel: 2121200, kumaripati, jawalakhel, lalitpur factory: tel: +977 1 4495569 fax: 5533337 email: weavesb@mail.com.np OPEN SUN - FRI 10AM - 7 PM

Also available at: GALERIE BOUDHA  
showroom tel: 2140702, boudha, kathmandu, fax: 5533337 email: galerieboudha@infoclub.com.np  
OPEN: ALL DAYS 10am - 7pm

**FUJITSU**

## Slim and Light

Rich multimedia entertainment on-the go.

Fujitsu recommends Windows Vista™ Home Premium.



**Ultra portable at less than 1.7kg\***  
Redefine the concept of ultra portability with a slim and stylishly-designed exterior.  
\*with weight saver option



**Dual Layer DVD Super Multi Writer**  
Supports multiple formats of re-writeable DVDs and CDs and a large storage of up to 8.5GB of data.



**Fingerprint Recognition Technology**  
Enjoy instant access to secured files with just a swipe of your pre-registered fingerprint.



LifeBook S6240

Powered by Intel® Centrino® Mobile Technology.

**FUJITSU**  
PARTNER

Authorised Distributor for Nepal

**ATC Exim Pvt. Ltd.**

2/F, Ratna Plaza, Dharma Path, Kathmandu  
Phone: 4223704, 4244809, Birgunj: 522276

Fujitsu PC Asia Pacific Pte Ltd  
Website: www.pc-ap.fujitsu.com



Wireless connectivity and some features may require you to purchase additional software, services or external hardware. Availability of public wireless LAN access points limited. System performance measured by MobileMark® 2002. System performance, battery life, wireless performance and functionality will vary depending on your specific hardware and software configurations. Celeron, Celeron Inside, Centrino, Centrino Logo, Core Inside, Intel, Intel Logo, Intel Core, Intel Inside, Intel Inside Logo, Intel Viv, Intel vPro, Itanium, Itanium Inside, Pentium, Pentium Inside, Xeon, and Xeon Inside are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Windows Vista and the Windows logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. All product information is correct at time of printing.

POND'S INSTITUTE  
TOKYO • NEW YORK • MADRID

**HAPPY**

Only your face can truly express what you are feeling. That is why it needs more than just body lotion. Your face needs the expert care of the new Pond's Cold Cream with 10 essential skin nutrients and moisturisers that nourish and protect your skin.

NEW

**Nourish**  
Soya protein, Sunflower oil and skin lipids for soft, supple skin.

**Protect**  
Mineral Oil, Emollients and Silicone Conditioners to preserve youthful beauty.

**Moisturise**  
Sodium PCA and Glycerin to maintain the skin hydration balance.



10 essential skin nutrients and moisturisers

BECAUSE YOUR FACE SPEAKS FOR YOU