Coils of fear

BARBED COMMENT: Despite a year of ceasefire, the country is still crisscrossed by barbed wire and many Nepalis are trying to get on with their lives the best they can.

KIRAN PANDAY

Weekly Internet Poll #346
Q. Are you optimistic about the outlook for the economy for the rest of the year?
Total votes: 2,459
- Yes: 54%
- Neutral: 38%
- No: 8%

Weekly Internet Poll #347
Q. Do you think people in Kathmandu have similar priorities and political views as those in other parts of the country?
- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%

LaCie Ethernet Disk RAID
Gigabit Ethernet

New arrivals
Reebok
Showrooms and Outlets
Diktel Marg,
Shree Market Complex,
Pusa Sankat
Kumanepaly 1/1 Boxail Mall
Kasheermandi, Dukker Marg and Boudha.

Land Rover
Discovery 3
All Terrain 4WD
Luxurious interior
Matches for all lifestyles

Land Rover
SWAT BORDERS

Times nepaltimes.com
27 April - 3 May 2007
16 pages
Rs 30

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A new order
Use the smarts of the Nepali people

A year after the historic Jana Andolan II, the contours of a new political order are visible in Nepal. The political parties and the Maoists have made significant progress towards establishing the conditions and decision-making mechanisms that have been created. There is a timeframe for the transition and consensus on key reforms. A high degree of trust has been established in this transitional process between the prime minister and the Maoist leadership. Given the complicated transitions precipitated by the People’s Movement, and the size and scope of the challenges, the successes are significant. Nepalis are in an open historical moment in which they can shape their future.

However, the past year’s accomplishments are under- appreciated or misunderstood because of a failure of communication between the political elite and the Nepali people, and an unfamiliar political process. In a highly politicized environment where rumour and innuendo substitute for deliberation and discussion, a perception of inefficient or unfair process has a high cost. The people’s impatience with the dynamics of Nepal’s decision-makers and the Maoist movement which brought them to power has been manifest in violent actions, such as the madhesi uprisings. Significant risks must be managed to create conditions for a new, prosperous, democratic Nepal. First, the Maoists must indicate a true commitment to a multi-party political system. A test will be how far the leadership can control the violence and extortion still committed by the Maoists’ rank and file. Second, demands for inclusion from communities mobilised on the basis of group identity must be channelled through a legitimate political process, not extra-legal means. This requires a two-way process for communication and management of expectations between the Maoist government and the Nepali people.

Third, development, rule of law, and security of property are essential to ensure the economic re-building of the country, for investment and job creation, which in turn support political progress. Fourth, for the constituent assembly to be free and fair as possible, and be the mechanism used to address the constitutional legitimacy of the government and parties, it will be fraught with difficulties. If the parties fail to set a clear programme that will result in an unrepresentative assembly, the potential for further unrest will be tremendous. They must learn from the Maoists’ efforts to ensure that their candidates reflect Nepal’s diversity. The Maoists have made significant progress by the cantonment of Maoist and government troops must be conducted through a political process, adequately funded, and designed to ensure that the constituent assembly is representative, sustainable, and respected. This is a precondition for any further dialogue and execution of a political transition.

The constituent assembly must be an inclusive process, and resourceful in the Nepali people. It must be mobilised on the basis of group identity, and redefined to serve the people, who have not yet reaped the benefits of development and the realisation of collective goals. The message from the Nepali people, who have not yet reaped their peace dividends, is clear: govern with us and for us, not despite us.

The people want to be part of a new political system that recognises and relates to their concerns. This requires redefining the political system, and radically restructuring the relationship between citizens and state. At the village level, Nepal has in many ways reversed the tragedy of the commons. Impressive community micro-hydroelectric, power, forestry, and education programs demonstrate the power of collective action. This energy and ingenuity needs to be mobilized at the national level.

It is important that leaders within civil society, the business community and the government jointly articulate a vision for the future that is both credible and actionable. This is a precondition for peace and development. Nepal is a state of stalled development or prolonged insecurity. The collective will, determination, and rededication of the Nepali people must be drawn upon to work towards shared national purpose. The government must remove the threats that progress to new political order. The opportunity is too important, and the consequences of failure too great.

Kunda Dixit

The price of radicalism

The MJF has created a political vacuum it can’t fill anytime soon

JANAKPUR – Towards the end of the Rana oligarchy, this religious town and its surrounding area became the centre of oppositional politics. The Nepali Congress, which was instrumental in mobilising the movement, consolidated its position here through the 60s. Since then, the larger Madhesh area—Mahottar, Dhanusa, Sarlahi—had been the heartland of the party’s support base.

STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

Not any more. The Madhesi Janadikar Forum (MJF) has done more damage to the Rana oligarchy than the seven behaves like traditional politicians with their identity politics of Upendra Yadav, but their desire to get into the mainstream. Their desire to get into the mainstream. Their desire to get into the mainstream.

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LAST CHANCE
Yash Ghai’s ‘One more chance’ (Guest column, #345) hits the right note on the delayed, postponed, what-have-you elections to the constituent assembly. What he calls the ‘wrong’ style of the transition has been in part due to the initial promise of fast change. The only thing that was fast was the descent into ‘democratic’ mudslinging. No surprise that the issue of constitutional reform itself was not taken seriously in their fear of electoral defeat, the parties, instead of supporting the work of the Election Commission, are willing to amend the interim constitution as often as it takes to prolong the life of the interim parliament.

Ghai is right—the party hacks have lost one good chance to show their commitment to a democratic, peaceful, progressive, and culturally diverse Nepal. After a year of politicking and date delimitations, a good chance to show their commitment to a peaceful, progressive, culturally diverse Nepal. Everyone was surprised when all the parties—including the Maoists—need to rise to the occasion this time.

Santosh Khanna, Glasgow

Yash Ghai presented a thoughtful analysis of what needs to happen, why, and when. But as heartbreakingly as it is to admit this, many of us who have lived and worked in Nepal for a couple of decades or more, have given up. If there were any way to see how this beautiful country and its resourceful and resilient (non-politician) citizens could reclaim the opportunities and innocence it once had, I’d jump to it. But what I’m starting to acknowledge is that it’s becoming just another grubby little country and that the people who are its biggest strength will in a generation look like your staid, unaggressive, selfish citizens of miserable countries.

J Smith, email

ALL THE PEOPLE
Your front page editorial ‘Bridge-building’, #345 was timely and put across a message that we cannot hear often enough. Now, more than ever, we need to pay attention to development and growth would follow, to the benefit of all. The truth, as the government on a large scale. The truth, as the

As unfortunate as the current situation is, I believe that we are still, albeit shudderingly, on the right path towards long-term stability. The sporadic protests we are seeing now happen in all post-conflict countries, possibly due to the power vacuum caused by sudden political change. I don’t think the country will ever go back to an outright civil war, but if the lawmakers get it wrong this time round we will be in a big, big political mess. After enduring so much hardship the Nepali people deserve better than destructive politics akin to Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, and Pakistan. All the parties—including the Maoists—need to rise to the occasion this time.

Santosh Khanna, Glasgow

CK LAI
Most of the so-called intelligentsia in Nepal are biased, but the degree can vary. C K Lai’s ‘An unfinished uprising’ (#345) also falls in the same category. Mr Lai seems preoccupied with the notion of neglect of the tarai only and repeats this. But the truth is the neglect of development in the pahad is even worse. Everybody agrees that our rulers failed to fully integrate the tarai into the mainstream. To some extent, people of the tarai region are also to blame for not being interested in integrating themselves. The spread of hatred by MfJ activists against pahadis is unprecedented. Certain people in Kathmandu pass derogatory remarks against migrants not only from the tarai but against all migrants. All forms of discrimination against our people by anyone must be stopped immediately.

Abhi, New Delhi

CK Lai has tried to draw some historic bases for the madhesi crisis. But the example of deputation of government officials should not be taken as ruling out the pahadi inhabitants. It can be viewed from the angle of building harmony. For example, most of the schools, government offices, and local businesses in the western hills are staffed by madhesi. Can it be concluded that madhesi have colonised the western pahad? Intellectuals like CK Lai should construct some indicative viewpoints in order to resolve current stereotypes and address all Nepalis with dignity.

Puspa Raj Pant, Aberdeen UK

Kudos to CK Lai for the wonderful and thought-provoking columns and also for the delightful Ass columns on the back page for coming up with a ‘Maoist monarchy’. Great job, folks.

B Bhatta, email

LETTERS
Nepal Times welcomes feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms can be accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with ‘letter to the editor’ in the subject line.

Email: letters@nepaltimes.com
Fax: 977-1-5521013
Mail: Letters, Nepal Times, GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal.

SPLENDID
What a splendid issue: great images, good writing, a good mix of subjects, and just the right note of scepticism without cynicism. Is

Surya B Prasai, email

LAST CHANCE
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The war may have ended, but there is no peace in Holeri

RAMESWOR BOHARA in ROLPA

No one would have ever heard of the tiny town of Holeri in Rolpa if this hadn’t been where the war started 11 years ago.

In February 1996 the Maoists launched their ‘people’s war’ by raiding this post. In July 2001, the station was attacked again and 71 policemen were abducted.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala returned and we were told we could go. Two days later after Buda agreed to give a ‘donation’. She was released.

However, the Maoists have refused to allow the police back.

The police station in Holeri that was destroyed in 1996 is still in ruins. The Maoists have refused to allow the police back.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED: The police station in Holeri that was destroyed in 1996 is still in ruins. The Maoists have refused to allow the police back.

“We’ll fix you.”
- Comrade Sharad

There had been an all-party agreement that villagers of Dahaban would get priority on water. But as water became scarce in the dry season, Maoists from the nearby cantonnement started taking the water. When villagers complained to the local administration, the Maoists threatened to kill local leaders, including the vice chairman of Sakhi VDC, Ghanashyam Khadka.

On 18 April, three journalists happened to walk into an all-party meeting in Dahaban to resolve the dispute in which many local villagers were also taking part. Maoist Fifth Division commander, Comrade Sharad was gesturing aggressively and threatening party leaders in a loud voice: “We’ll fix you.”

When CDO Tendon KC tried to calm him down, Sharad said: “Watch it, if you do anything I’ll break your arms and legs.”

Just as we had started taking pictures of the proceedings, Sharad and another Maoist named Abirasha started roughing us up. We tried to say we were press, but they started shouting at us of being spies and took away our cameras. The CDO, political leaders and villagers were too afraid to speak up. We found out later this is standard behaviour of Maoist cadre in Rolpa and local politicians are terrified to even speak with Sharad.

All three of us were forced to get down from our bikes by Abirasha and detained. “You go when I tell you to go,” he said. Two hours later, our cameras were returned and we were told we could go.

Rameswor Bohara
New bank
Citizens Bank International is Nepal’s newest commercial bank. The bank provides home loans on a tenure of 25 years, the longest of any commercial bank, at interest rates ranging from 7.75% to 10 percent. Other services include vehicle and education loans, ATM facilities, SMS banking, remittance services, and internet banking.

 Pokhara Lakmi
Lakmi Bank has opened its second branch in Pokhara, bringing the total number of branches it has to nine. The new branch, located in Pokhara’s Industrial District in Kundahar, is Lakmi’s fourth in the last six months.

Ohm
Ohm Solutions is the sole authorized distributor of ZTE brand mobile phones. ZTE is China’s largest listed telecoms manufacturer and offers CDMA, GSM, and PHS technology products. Ohm Solutions will market at least five different models of ZTE mobile phones from its showroom in the Computerland building at Ramshahpath.

 Grade A
Wai Wai now comes fortified with Vitamin A, in addition to the extra calcium and protein the noodles already contain. Every flavoured oil packet inside all Wai Wu, Wai Wai Quick, and Wai Wai Tenz noodles contains approximately 150–200 IU Vitamin A. The vitamin helps improve the immune system and eyesight.

 ACE
Tata Motors has launched the TATA Ace in Nepal. After Sri Lanka, Nepal is the second international market for this pickup. Ace has a 168hp IDI 700cc diesel engine, and is priced at Rs 690,000. The Ace is sold through Sipradi Trading and comes with a warranty of 36,000km or 12 months, whichever comes first. Over 95,000 units of the pickup have already been sold in India and Sri Lanka.

 Best and brightest
Instead of yearning for ‘the best’ leaders, we should try make those we do have more accountable

 I n conversations with Nepali professionals working abroad, two questions come up frequently: Why do we get the same old names as our politicians? Why is it that our best and the brightest are not in public leadership positions when a New Nepal is being born? Needless to say, “the best and the brightest” is used to mean “Nepalis like us, with fancy degrees and global exposure”.

 Answering those questions requires examining what it takes to grow a career in politics. Despite lofty talk about public participation through grassroots voices and youth empowerment, Nepali politics remains an activity for, by, and of old men from the telegram era.

 A career path typically goes like this—if you don’t have politician parents or cousins, you spend your years and then 20s either as a village activist or in the junior wing of a national party. For the lucky few who complete high school, college-level politics, debate with graffiti slogans, fistfights, and calls for shutdowns, becomes the bridge to the national league.

 Indeed, many of today’s netas are elected in radicals who burnedished their credentials as anti-Panchayat jailbirds of the ’70s and the ’80s. Others are former village school teachers who were more committed to their students’ mastery of Marx than of Mahawara Mada.

 As in any other profession, career management is critical. You need to be clever to secure the blessings of mentors who can introduce you to other power wielders. But it’s suicidal to be a maverick. As the currently-delineated careers of Gagan Thapa (picturesd) and Man Mohan Bhattarai signal, grasing the news items sections in Kantipur all too frequently spells doom. So, lie low. Do your grunt-work silently, even at the expense of putting your family through hardships for many years while farming over the old guard publicly.

 The goal, after all, is to obtain an election ticket to represent a constituency in the general elections. It doesn’t matter that you have never lived in that locality or that only 50 voters know you. What matters is that the selected five-life members of your party’s central working committee like you to enough to throw their weight behind your campaign. Once you’re an MP, your chances of becoming a cabinet minister are about how you assure others that you can rake in money to enrich the party. And so goes the arc of your political career.

 Unless you are careful, you will be elbowed aside by party insiders. But you will rarely be displaced by lateral entrants—highly educated novices who come in wimpy advisors and not as your bare-knuckle rivals. These are the ones who spent their youth climbing up career ladders elsewhere.

 Given this closed set-up, is it any wonder that Nepali politics is designed to be filled with characters who adhere to this formulaic script?

 Instead of accepting this reality and making the best of it, there’s this persistent yearning to be led by the best and the brightest. David Halberstam, an American journalist who died early this week, wrote about how America’s elite, drunk on the invincibility of their intellect, led their country to humiliation during the Vietnam War. The Pan-African system, conceived and managed by some of Nepal’s finest brains, ended in disgrace.

 For our democracy to lay deep roots, we need to focus not on a handful of our best and the brightest (whoever they are!), but on the consistency and the quality of the public vigil we exercise through activism, media, and the courts. Once our politicians see the extra they are more interested to perform and deliver or face the consequences of their decisions, that awareness will be the best and the brightest thing to occur in our democracy.
After the 1990 movement, there was a surge in investment in media in Nepal. There has been similar rush for investment in Nepali media since last year’s Jana Andolan. Over a dozen FM stations, and some TV channels and print outlets have been awarded licences to operate. New investment in media reportedly totals over Rs 2 billion. Sagarmatha Television and Avenues Television are ready to go on air, and six new FM stations have gone on air in Kathmandu since last May.

Bhaskar Rajkarnikar, former chairman of Advertising Agencies Association of Nepal and coordinator of Ad Avenues, is busy working on the Avenues Television project. Our sources tell us that he has already received a hefty loan from Machhapuchchhre Bank and that he is pushing to start broadcasting as soon as possible. Rajkarnikar’s three investors have so far put up Rs 350 million. Although he did not want to tell us who the investors are, one of them is understood to be Yunus Ansari, son of royal minister Salim Miya Ansari. Similarly Rs 480 million has been invested on Sagarmatha Television, and, according to Jiban Bista, its managing director, former chairman of the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agents Nirmal Gurung is one investor. Others are former chairman of the Thamel Tourism Board Anil Joshi, who is also involved in the import-export business, and Sunyajy Ashik, a businessman and dealer in Raymond shirts. It is being said that the Maoists are also investors in Sagarmatha, but Bista dismisses these as unfounded allegations. “We are totally transparent, all our investors are Nepalis, and none are affiliated with the party,” he said. The station aims to go on air by May 2008.

Naya Patrika, edited by Krishna Jyotsa Debkota, hit the newsstands on 14 April. The over Rs 50 million invested in the Maoist-leaning tabloid comes from the Maoists and British Gurkhas. Debkota denies these reports and said, “I have invested a little, and Nepalis in Europe have invested some, but that is all.”

Meanwhile the daily Rajdhani, run by foreign employment agent Mahendra Shrestha, is also looking for more funding. It is understood that former royal minister Naryan Singh Pun was supposed to invest, but that the two sides could not reach a deal on shares. Recent news reports suggest that the Maoists are also looking to invest in Rajdhani, but editor Jibendra Simkhada denies flatly that the paper is looking for new investments at all. “Newspapers last as long as there is democracy. We suffered a lot under the royal regime, but with democracy we are doing much better,” he said. He added that the quality has become better because they have reorganised the newsroom.

Himalmedia is also undertaking a feasibility study for a daily and says that the research is aimed at assessing the mode of publication of the paper, and what kind of paper the planned daily will be. Just a few months ago Newsfront started under editor Yubraj Shrestha. The former editor of The Rising Nepal, Lok Deep Thapa, has also started a weekly called Chronology. Journalist Bib Ram Bhandari is also trying to garner support for a royalist paper.

In addition, political parties are also trying to invest in media and the Maoists are making some organisational changes in their Radio Ganatantra Nepal. Since becoming the Minister of Information and Communications, Krishna Prasad Mahara has publicly expressed interest in changing the structure of the radio station, and that is why training programs are being organised for Maoist cadre. Radio Nepal is also training more people so they can run programs like Ghana. There are no new big businesses which can support the Rs 2 billion media industry. The challenge for the new TV stations, radio outlets, and print publications is to look for advertisers. Existing media houses will have to hold on to their advertisers. Rakesh Bhattat, chairman of the Advertising Agencies Association of Nepal, says the market cannot meet the new demands being created in the media industry. He adds, “If the new media outlets are being set up with the intention of creating new markets, that would be fine. But it is very difficult to enter the present market as it is.”
We've achieved democracy in broad terms since 24 April, 2006, but the political parties remain undemocratic. The People's Movement was successful last year because the political parties promised to mend their ways. They'd suffered during the royal regime, but the leaders of the parties have not been allowed to work. The parties have efficient youth leaders, but they have not been allowed to work. The Gyanendra in Naryanabiti may be weak, but the Gyanemardas within the political parties are still very strong. The new order of things does not just mean new kings with old ideas, which is why there is an urgent need to end the nepotism inside the parties and make way for new leadership.

The People's Movement did result in some achievements, one of which is that regular Nepalis found a voice—for example, singer Rubin Gandharba is now more popular than the king. However the period of transition has just become longer and the political situation is still not stable. The law and order situation is getting worse, the supply situation is deteriorating, and there are many political uncertainties that need to be addressed urgently. We are on the right track towards democracy, the Maoists have given up arms, and the parties are thinking about long-term plans. The reason for much of the uncertainty is that there is no democracy within the political parties. The parties have efficient youth leaders, but they have not been allowed to work. The Gyanendra in Naryanabiti may be weak, but the Gyanemardas within the political parties are still very strong. The new order of things does not just mean new kings with old ideas, which is why there is an urgent need to end the nepotism inside the parties and make way for new leadership.

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PRANAYA SJB RANA

Theatre is booming in Nepal and many people associated with it seem rather bemused. Mahesh Shakya, 22, can’t believe his luck. When he first auditioned at Gurukul for a small supporting role, he didn’t expect that just two years later, he’d be starring in Aarohan’s acclaimed production of Abhi Subedi’s Mayadebi ko Sapana.

Then there’s Gurukul itself. Twenty-five years ago, the theatre, established by a group of Kathmandu theatre artists, didn’t expect it would ever attract audiences of over 100, or host a month-long theatre festival. The ongoing Aarohan National Theatre Festival is showcasing productions by 27 groups from all over the country, from Ilam to Parbat, Dang to Surkhet, Panchtar to Morang to Dang.

Many plays draw upon the decade-long insurgency and last year’s Jana Andolan, while others are rooted entirely in their specific local ethnic and cultural milieu. The themes of the plays and motivations behind the productions are as diverse as the country itself—and more than alarmist proponents of the homogenisation bogeyman would have you believe.

Rauta, by the Mithee Kala Kendra from Nepalgunj, is about the life and times of a group of Rauta people. Kishor Amung’s Kathaa: Sanaika Dhunharuko, is about a Damai family caught in the Jana Andolan and the struggle for democracy. Gangalal ko Chhau, performed by Morang’s Letang Natya Samuha, is about the ‘martyr’ Gangalal and the aftermath of his death. Hetanu’s Tarunga is presenting Anikaalko Yatra about the survival of Chepang culture.

“Theatre in Nepal is more vibrant than in many other places,” argues Pushpa Acharya, writer-director of Samayantar. “There’s more life here, more energy, because we have all of our rich, varied culture to draw upon.”

Acharya, who leads the Chitwan-based Narayani Kala Manch, believes that Nepal needs “cultural theatre”, and his own Samayantar epitomises this belief. The play is about the life of a Magar family, punctuated by joy and sadness. There’s pathos and moments of reckoning as well as vibrant colours, folk songs, and dances, witty repartee, and laugh-out-loud moments.

There’s a vibrant theatre movement on in Kathmandu, and this month some of the best companies are performing in Kathmandu. There’s a lot going on in Nepal, and many people associated with it seem rather bemused. Mahesh Shakya, 22, can’t believe his luck. When he first auditioned at Gurukul for a small supporting role, he didn’t expect that just two years later, he’d be starring in Aarohan’s acclaimed production of Abhi Subedi’s Mayadebi ko Sapana.

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Theatre seems to be booming outside Kathmandu. “We perform regularly for big audiences of over 200 in our hometowns and villages,” says Prakash Angdembe, director of Cho: Lung, a play based on a Limbu myth performed by Jhapa’s Shriantu Pictures. In Chitwan, Acharya says, there are regularly audiences of four to five hundred.

Many actors and directors we spoke to who had travelled in from outside the Valley say this is because the theatre and acting have maintained their connection with traditional values in most places, and so seen as a way of preserving cultural mores and perspective on life. “Our large audiences may not be very well-informed or sophisticated, but they have an instinctive joy in our plays, and they attend to show their support for us,” explains Anurag of Bhojpur’s Matribhumi Theatre.

Sunil Pokhrel, artistic-director of Gurukul and one of the most energetic members of the theatre community says things will only get better for actors and audiences. “Our core audience is mainly students,” he explains. But events like this Festival attract attention, and our audience is diversifying to include people of all backgrounds and all age groups.”

Plays communicate directly with the audience, and are the original interactive art form. “Theatre has all the elements that people respond to—music, dialogue, actions—and so has the power to touch everyone,” says Angdembe. In melas and haats around Nepal plays have traditionally been the glittering centerpiece of the festivities, as much part of Nepali culture as lok dohori. Because the theatre has traditionally been accessible and non-elitist, drama often is social commentary, a mirror that shows society for what it actually is.

“Our plays usually deal with history and culture,” says Gamsiyana Khatiwada, director...
of Gangalai ko Chitaa. In Morang plays about history and patriotism are popular, says Angdembe, but his company performs its Limbu-influenced plays outside the hometowns of the actors to give other communities a taste of Limbu culture.

"Theatre is what it always was," argues Birendra Hamal, veteran actor and director of over 30 plays. “Even 20 years ago, we had abstract drama, socio-political plays, and even solo performances, the difference now is the attention from the media.” Hamal is directing Abhi Subedi’s one-man play Samaya Sisir Yatra. And, contrary to all the starving artist jokes, in a few places in Nepal you can make a highly respectable and more-than-adequate living as an actor. Angdembe says: “Back home in Jhapa, our families encourage acting and parents push their children to pursue the theatre. It’s definitely possible to live comfortably as a theatre artist.”

This isn’t the national norm yet, unfortunately, but there are enough young actors and directors, like Khagendra Lamichhane, who has contributed Peeda Geet to the festival. “Where there’s a will there’s a way. There are struggles, but if you want to be an actor badly enough, you can do it. Acting as a profession is possible.”

The Aarohan National Theatre Festival 2007 runs until 11 May at the Gurukul Theatre, Old Baneshwor. There is a new production everyday, and two performances of each, at noon and 5.30 PM.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Company/Actor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 Apr</td>
<td>Anikaalko Yatra</td>
<td>Taranga, Hetauda</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Apr</td>
<td>Kamlari</td>
<td>Kamlari Samuha, Deukhuri, Dang</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Apr</td>
<td>Ek Raat</td>
<td>Shristi Natya Samuha, Dharan</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Apr</td>
<td>Deshie Gumaekaharu</td>
<td>Nalwaya Nepal, Udaypur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>Buddhishanti Dhwonchalecha</td>
<td>Shreeka Natya Samuha, Lalitpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 May</td>
<td>Paninaam</td>
<td>Kshitiz Natya Samuha, Panchthar</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>Sahid Number 206</td>
<td>Birendra Hamal</td>
</tr>
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<td>4 May</td>
<td>Kathaa Sanaaka Dhumarsa</td>
<td>Mahabirumi Theatre, Bhojpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 May</td>
<td>Bishnapan</td>
<td>Jyotipunj Sign Theatre, Kathmandu</td>
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<td>6 May</td>
<td>Andhako Hatti</td>
<td>Anam, Dharan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May</td>
<td>Ganthaganthya</td>
<td>SEED Nepal, Parbat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Sati Kalasa</td>
<td>Bageena Samuha, Surkhet</td>
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<td>9 May</td>
<td>Arichal Marangbura</td>
<td>Santali Kalakar Pasid, Morang</td>
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<td>10 May</td>
<td>Aahal</td>
<td>Sanskriti Sanjshan, Kathmandu</td>
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<td>11 May</td>
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<td>Ranga Sarathi, Kathmandu</td>
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Outgoing Call Only Re. 1
The X factor
Politics is what separates human from beast

Two words that can be spat out as an insult in polite company are ‘politics’ and ‘bureaucracy’. I dare say their Nepali versions work pretty well as pejoratives too.

Ask almost anyone what’s wrong at the moment and you’ll hear them blame politics and politicians. Many will include bureaucrats and the civil service too. Go to America and you’ll find that surveys of popular angst and alienation rank politicians near the bottom, or the top, of the league table of annoying creatures; bureaucrats often finish a close second, especially now at tax time.

But it shouldn’t be this way. Politics and bureaucracy are strengths, not weaknesses, of democracy. Without these forces and their practitioners, we are lost, at war, repressed or worse. We are in a state of nature. You could say democratic politics and a functioning civil service are the highest institutional achievement of humankind, if you don’t mind the snorts of derision and the laughter that you’ll encounter.

Without politicians and their party games, we’d be stuck with fumble-handled royalties and sycophantic courtiers to run the country. That has been tried and found to be a comprehensive failure. Army generals might be tempted to step in and impose a little discipline on this rowdy place. They too would leave a bigger mess than they found.

After those right-wing experiments, perhaps the extreme left would have a go, as the Khmer Rouge did in Cambodia. It took more than a million dead Cambodians to prove the utter fallacy and evil of that experiment in efficiency and discipline. Ten of millions died in the various exercises of power in Mao’s China. And how about Hitler’s Germany for efficiency and apolitical government?

Wait. I hear people from the general direction of the World Bank and the IMF saying that all we need are apolitical technocrats to run the country, get it back on its feet. Or else. Let’s see, it’s worked in… umm… Bangladesh. Yes, it’s working a treat down there with those two dreadful women and their gangs of thugs sidelined and politics on hold while the structural adjustment goes on. Or so some say.

In fact, Bangladeshi technocracy will fail just as surely as its Pakistani or Thai versions will. Not perhaps in spectacular meltdown, but in the continuing inability of the polity and nation to develop resilience, maturity, and capacity. Technocrats should stick to ‘techno’ and leave the ‘crat’ to the demos.

Politics is what separates human from beast.
Early this month I had the privilege of trekking through the western foothills of Gauri Shankar from Barhabise to Dolakha—so close to Kathmandu and yet devoid of crowds of trekkers. We climbed high above the Sun Kosi into remote mountain pastures, basked in rhododendron groves, goggled at langur monkeys, and were warmly welcomed by the nuns of the Bigu gomba, some of whom had rolled up their sleeves to help build a new block there. We marvelled at neat terraces of barley and wheat, swam in chilly rivers, and watched the lightning.

Aside from all those wonders, we were struck by the constant atmosphere of warm camaraderie and the diversity of the staff on our camping trek. The sirdar was a Sherpa and his deputy a Rai. The marvellous cook a Bahun, his assistants a Sherpa and a Rai. Our porters were two Chhetris, two Tamangs, and two Newars.

And these people had not been gathered from all over Nepal. The porters were from a single village above Barhabise, and for six days we walked through a patchwork land, passing settlements of Gurungs, Tamangs, Sherpas, Chhetris, Thangmis, and more.

Look at the ethnic conflict prevalent in much of the world, and you realise that this diversity is one of Nepal’s greatest assets. Of course the country is wracked by hierarchy and discrimination, but society here still has a tolerant and open dimension that outsiders should envy. In the past, politics hasn’t taken on the ethnic, caste, or sectarian dimensions seen, for example, in India.

Yet some now want an ethnic carve-up of Nepal. In front of me is the Maoists’ map of the country. My trekking route is in “Tamang-saling”, the Kathmandu Valley in “Newa”, Everest in “Kirant”, the eastern tarai in “Madhesh”, the western tarai in “Tharuwan”. The Federation of Indigenous Nationalities and other ethnic organisations are now demanding similar ethnically-based structures for the country. And given the turai tensions, we now officially have federalism, though we don’t know what kind.

Federalism, of course, can be highly successful, especially in large countries where decentralisation makes sense. Germany, the US, and Canada are successfully federal but not, largely, on an ethnic basis. But history suggests that ethnically-based federalism is a dubious idea. The former Yugoslavia was an ethnic federation and it collapsed. Apartheid South Africa drew up internal ethnic borders to keep the black population divided; with democracy, it removed those borders on a non-ethnic basis.

In any case, Nepal differs from all of these in that its ethnic and caste groups are so much more mixed up. Think of the patchworks of villages around the country; or the diversity within villages and towns. Nepal’s status quo is not, of course, fine. The Bahun-Chhetri domination of state affairs has alienated most Nepalis. The exclusion of dalits, janajatis and madhesis—and, of course, women—is shameful and has been to the extreme detriment of the country. Nepal must wage a social revolution to counteract that history: maybe measures like quotas are needed, maybe non-ethnic federalism will help. But playing with ethnicity is dangerous and can turn neighbour against neighbour.

Because breaking up by ethnicity is hard to do
G-8 has been making aid pledges it never meant to meet

**Broken promises**

At the G-8 Gleneagles Summit in 2005, member countries pledged to double aid to Africa by 2010. Soon after, I was invited to a small, high-level follow-up meeting. I asked for a spreadsheet showing the year-on-year planned increases, and the allocation of those planned increases across donor and recipient countries.

The response was chilling: “There will be no spreadsheets. The US has insisted on no spreadsheets.” There was no plan on how to fulfil the promise. Indeed, there were clear instructions that there would be no such plan.

For the first year after the Gleneagles meeting, aid numbers were padded by misleading accounting on debt cancellation operations. With those operations largely completed, the data now reveal the stark truth: development aid to Africa and to poor countries more generally is stagnant, truth: development aid to Africa and to operations. With those operations largely no such plan.

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For the first year after the Gleneagles meeting, aid numbers were padded by misleading accounting on debt cancellation operations. With those operations largely completed, the data now reveal the stark truth: development aid to Africa and to poor countries more generally is stagnant, contrary to all the promises.

Between 2005 and 2006, overall aid to Africa, excluding debt cancellation operations, increased by a margin 2 percent. Total official development assistance to all recipient countries, net of debt cancellation, actually declined by 2 percent. Even the World Bank, which usually takes the donors’ line, recently acknowledged that, except for debt cancellation, “promises of scaled-up aid have not been delivered”.

One senior G-8 ofﬁcial told me the aid promises are all lies anyway. I don’t agree with that, but such cynicism is alarming, as it shows the nature of discussions at the highest levels of the G-8. These are not achievable financial goals. The G-8, representing nearly a billion people, has promised to increase aid to Africa from $25 billion in 2004 to $50 billion in 2010—a difference that represents less than one-tenth of one percent of the income of the rich donor world!

The Christmas bonuses—just the bonuses—Wall Street paid totalled $24 billion. Spending on the Iraq war, which achieves only violence, is over $100 billion per year. The G-8’s commitment could be honoured, if rich countries cared to. To salvage its credibility, the G-8 needs to make crystal clear—again—that it will honour its commitment to increase aid to Africa by $25 billion per year by 2010. That way, cynics within the G-8 governments can understand their assignments. The G-8 also needs to present a plan of action. The lack of speciﬁc commitments by speciﬁc countries is a shocking display of poor governance.

Finally, recipient countries need to be informed about the year-to-year increases in aid, so they can plan. The increased aid should be directed at building roads, power grids, schools, and clinics, and at training teachers, doctors, and community health workers. Such investments require timelines and plans and years of implemenation, and clear commitments so recipients can use aid in a sensible and accountable manner. If the G-8’s problem is incompetence. The US government doesn’t know what it is doing in Africa, because over the years America’s aid agency has lost its leading thinkers and strategists. Moreover, the Bush administration politicised the delivery of aid by channelling it through private religious groups that are part of the administration’s political coalition. That’s why much US funding on AIDS follows religious structures rather than science.

What needs to be done is get the process of aid more complicated. African countries have already identiﬁed their high-priority investments in health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure (including roads, power, and internet connectivity). These investments could be increased systematically, via a fund, to help these countries achieve the MDGs. The plans are there, waiting for G-8 funding.

Rich countries need to stop lecturing the poor, and focus on delivering aid. How can they lecture developing countries when they refuse to cut the assistance to other rich countries to help maintain their own aid levels?

Jeffrey Sachs is professor of economics and director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

**Loose change**

W ill World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz’s troubles finally catalyse real change at the World Bank? Will there be an end to the arcahc practice by which the United States president unilaterally appoints the head of the world’s most important development agency?

Facing an extraordinary rebuke from the Bank’s ministerial oversight committee and open revolt from his professional staff, Wolfowitz has tarried hope of limping through the last three years of his term. The immediate uproar is over the exceedingly generous pay and promotion package that Wolfowitz awarded in 2005 to his girlfriend as compensation for leaving the Bank to pave the way for his arrival. At a time when the Bank has been emphasising high standards of governance as the key to development, the recent revelation of the details of that arrangement has dealt a serious blow to its credibility.

But even if Wolfowitz is forced to resign, nothing will be gained if US President George W Bush is allowed to choose his replacement, as US Presidents have done ever since the Bank was founded after World War II. Instead, the Bank’s head should be chosen in an open and transparent process that selects the best-qualified candidate, whether from the US, Europe, or the developing world.

A big part of Wolfowitz’s weakness is the way he came to his job, an in-person appointment from a US administration weak at international cooperation. The World Bank is a development finance institution. Wolfowitz’s background at the US State and Defense Departments gave him no real expertise or experience in either area. His claim to fame was his role as architect of America’s failed war in Iraq. By all accounts, Wolfowitz is brilliant, but an open, transparent, and multilateral selection process would not have chosen him to head the World Bank.

I myself have long advocated shifting the Bank’s centre of gravity from lending to outright grants, a policy that the Bush administration strongly endorses. But choosing someone with no obvious background or experience in economic development was not the way to make progress on this front.

Why does the world let the US dictate the Bank’s top position? It is a sorry tale of poor global governance. Europe does not get its way because it wants to maintain Europe’s equally outdated privilege of appointing the head of the International Monetary Fund, the Bank’s sister institution. Asia has little choice but to defer to the US and Europe because it is grossly under-represented in both organisations. Africa’s leaders are loath to do or say anything that might interrupt rebalancing efforts are proceeding at a glacial pace. At the World Bank, nothing seems to be happening at all.

Perhaps when Gordon Brown becomes the UK’s next prime minister, he could convince the G7 group of rich countries to demand change. As head of the Fund’s ministerial oversight committee, Brown understands the issues well.

Or perhaps the Wolfowitz debacle will be the catalyst. Maybe, at last, the next World Bank or IMF president will come from outside their usual domains. There are plenty of great potential non-American candidates. South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has ably served as head of the World Bank’s oversight committee and would make a brilliant candidate. One could be a qualified American, like Bill Clinton.

Jeffrey Sachs is professor of economics and public policy at Harvard University and was formerly chief economist at the IMF.
**Same-same**

A new study says South Asia’s political parties are a) similar and b) could learn from each other

The worst victims of every experiment in controlled democracy have been political parties. They have failed to emerge as principal actors of political process.

With the exception of India, which was closer to the Soviet Union than to the USA, malfunctioning parties are common features of most countries going through the democratization process.

Some of the clearest illustrations of this come from the experiments in limited democracy carried out during the Cold War and the 1960s in particular. In Indonesia, this hybrid regime was herded by a military strongman-turned-civilian ruler and called “guided democracy.” In Pakistan, General Ayub Khan called his dictatorship “basic democracy” and parties are today little more than platforms for ambitious individuals. In Bangladesh, political enterprises are inherited like family firms. Political parties in Nepal, where King Mahendra spoke of “indigenous democracy” suited to the “air, water, and soil” of Nepal, can be seen as a microcosm of the South Asian scene.

International IDEA’s new publication, Political Parties in South Asia: The Challenge of Change, is a study report of political parties of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Its seven chapters discuss the context, content, circumstances, conditions, and course of the region’s major political parties.

Although most donors realise by now that poverty alleviation requires democratic governance—which in turn cannot occur without vibrant, dynamic political parties—party building continues to be uncharted territory. There is no formula, no replicable method for creating effective political platforms.

The problems with South Asia’s parties are legion—those with hoary pasts (like the Nepali Congress) are decadent. Those with ideological insecurities, such as the UML, turn to populist demagoguery. Extremist forces like the Maoists are marked by desperation. And its most parties of significance, dynastic succession and despotic tendencies are the norm rather than exception in their internal functioning.

This is where comparative study becomes of paramount importance, especially to see and build upon the commonalities of experience. In doing this, Political Parties in South Asia comes to a striking conclusion—all of us in South Asia are more or less same-same, like that only. Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan can learn the importance of taking to wrench enemies for the sake of democracy from Nepal’s octogenarian Girija Prasad Koirala. Pushpa Kamal Dahal can offer lessons in pragmatism to Prabhakaran. Madhab Nepal can benefit from the experience of Jyoti Basu. Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina should meet Jayalalitha, the superstar of political comebacks.

Like most donor-funded studies, this work is data-heavy, figure-dominant, fact-deficient, and truth-starved. It has many tables and no pictures, lots of history but no memories. There is long analyses and little synthesis, a lot of explanation but less insight.

Now lack of subjectivity may have been the very explanation for this work. This publication is highly recommended to those who want to be considered serious students of South Asian politics.

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**Life outside Earth**

An intriguing new planet is discovered and the asteroid Vesta puts in a must-see appearance

In a landmark finding in history, astronomers have reported discovering the most Earth-like planet outside our Solar System to date, a world that may have liquid oceans and thus life above.

European scientists found the body, estimated to be 50 percent wider than our Earth, orbiting a so-called red dwarf star relatively close to Earth. The object is estimated to weigh as much as five Earths and would have more than twice Earth’s surface area.

Other curious features of the new planet are that its gravity is so low that its surface would be around twice as strong as on Earth, and its year is just 13 Earth days long, as it completes one orbit about its sun in that time. It’s 14 times closer to its star than we are to our Sun, but since its host star is smaller and cooler than our Sun, the planet nevertheless would lie in its habitable zone.

With suitable temperatures for liquid water, the host star, Gliese 581, is among the 100 closest stars to us, lying 20.5 light-years away in the constellation Libra, the ‘Scales’.

In the 104th year since its discovery, asteroid Vesta (below), the brightest of all asteroids, makes one of its best showings ever. Vesta, at opposition on 31 May and will be at 170 million km from the Earth, almost as low as it can get. This is a very favourable opposition with the asteroid nearly as bright as it can get. Vesta will be visible to the unaided eye from a dark site with no Moon in the sky. Star charts available on the internet can help find Vesta, which is in the constellation of Ophiuchus.

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**Beautiful at any Age**

Nepal Pashmina Industry

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**Times**

27 APRIL - 3 MAY 2007 #346
**EXHIBITIONS**

- Landmarks of New York photography exhibition at Tribhuvan University Central Library until 3 May.
- A People War travelling photo exhibition at NAFA, Bal Mandir, until 5 May, 10AM-6PM.
- Focus paintings by Rajesh Manadhar, Bipin Raj Shrestha at Banyo Fiesta, Naubal until 5 May.
- Colours of the nepals and petals an exhibition of paintings based on botanical art by Neera Joshi Pradhan, 10.30 AM-6PM, except Saturdays at Park Gallery, Pulchok, until 15 May. 5522307
- Sacred Realms mixed media works by Seema Sharma Shah at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, until 26 May, 11AM-6PM daily. 4218048

**EVENTS**

- Monosoon Wedding a film by Mira Nair, 27 April, 6.45 PM at the Lazimpat Gallery Café.
- Ciné-dîner movie screening of No Man’s Land followed by dinner, 27 April 7PM at Alliance Française, Rs 300. 4241163
- The Honest Thief an adaptation of a play by Habib Tanvir, performed by Studio 7, opening weekend 4-6 May, further performances on 11-19 May and 18-20 May. 7.15 PM at the Naga Theater, Hotel Vaja, 4271695
- The Spirit(s) of Cricket at Hotel Yak & Yeti live cricket in a widescreen projection and a World Cup special cocktail selection at The Pub, until 28 April. 4248999
- Koninginnedag at the Red Onion Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- Sun Dance Festival at The Last Resort featuring Nepali and International musicians 28-29 April. 4700525
- Aarohan National Theatre Festival 2007 featuring theatre groups from all over Nepal, two shows a day on noon and 5.30 PM, at Gurukul, until 11 May. 4466965
- Pottery course by Santosh Kumar from the Dehi Blue Pottery Trust, at Newa Art Ceramics in Midhyapur, Thimi, 25 May-24 June. 9841257968

**MUSIC**

- Open Mic Night at Via Via Café, every Friday, 8PM onwards.
- Live Music at the Red Rose Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- DJ Raju and the Cloudwalkers live at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, every Friday and Saturday. 4491234
- Fusion and classical Nepali music by Rudra live at the Courtyard, Le Meridien, Gokarna every Friday, 7PM onwards, Rs 800. 4451212

**DINING**

- Indian BBQ summer cocktails and spicy BBQs with live music by Pizza B, 27 April, Rs 799 net per person. 4479498
- Weekend special with sekuwa, bara, barbeque, Fridays at Ambassador Garden House, Lazimpat, 5.30 PM onwards. 441709
- Mongolian BBQ Wednesdays and Fridays, 6.30 PM on, unlimited barbeque with Carlsberg beer, shandy, or cocktail, Rs 1,000 Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel. 4422828
- Flavours of the Middle East every Friday and the taste of Thailand every Wednesday, lavish buffet dinners at The Café, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234
- Saturday Brunch at the Waterfall Garden, Radisson Hotel, 11.30 AM-3PM. Rs 799 plus vat inclusive of free flow of Carlsberg and soft drinks. 4411818
- Light nouvelle snacks and elaborate cordon bleu meals at LaSoOn, Pulchok, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- Continental cuisine and wine by the fire place at Kiltroy’s, Thamel, 4250440
- Smorgasbord lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4376280
- Trendy martinis and appetizers at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency. 4491234
- Gyakok lunch and dinner at the Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, minimum of four guests at Rs 450 per person, two hours order in advance.
- Retro brunch barbecue with the Crossfire Band at The Poolside, Le Meridien, Gokarna from 12-4PM, Rs 1,000 inclusive of barbeque with Carlsberg beer, shandy, or cocktail, Rs 1,000 Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel. 4422828
- Pizza from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- Snoritais & Margaritas Inner Gorge live at Fusion—the bar at Dawkar’s, Rs 599 includes a Mezza platter and a Margarita pitcher. 447848
- Jazzebell Café enjoy great food, exotic cocktails and music, Chakupal, Patan. 2114075

**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

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**Sacred Realms**

An exhibition of paintings and drawings by Neeraj Joshi of the people and flora of the eastern part of Nepal, 20 April-2 June at the Naga Theater, Hotel Vaja. 4271695

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**KATHMANDU VALLEY**

Nepali weather by Ngaminda Dahal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.45-21.15</td>
<td>on 102.4</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>20.45-21.15</td>
<td>on 102.4</td>
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**ABOUT TOWN**

Tara Rum Pum is about Raijeev (Saif Ali Khan) who has always been passionate about race cars. While working on the track as part of a pit crew, he meets Harry (Javed Jafferi) and Radhika (Rani Mukherjee). Harry manages Raijeev, now RV, as a driver in a failed racing team while RV and Radhika fall in love, and get married. The movie is about their life and how they face the huddles that come their way.

Call 4442320 for show timings at Jai Nepal. www.jainepal.com

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**FOR INCLUSION IN THE LISTING SEND INFORMATION TO EDITORS@NEPALTIMES.COM**
HAPPENINGS

INFORMATION: Ambassadors, politicians, and other bigwigs at the official Democracy Day celebrations in Tundikhel on Tuesday.

NOW YOU SEE ME: King Gyanendra visited the Dakshinkali temple to ritually slaughter five animals on Tuesday, also Democracy Day. The road to Pharping was cleared in advance of his motorcade and top army brass were in attendance.

POST PERFECT: The residents of Juthapouwa in Palpa worked hard to restore their local police post and make the situation conducive for policemen to return last week to run it.

WE’LL GIVE YOU THE BOOT: Democracy Day celebrations in Basantapur on Tuesday came with a warning to politicians to shape up or watch out.

ACTORS AND BUILDERS: Kathmandu’s new theatre group Shilpi performed Yubaraj Ghimire’s A New Nation directed by Rajan Khalliwada at Patan Darbar Square on Wednesday.
The maoists and madhesis may be at each other’s throats in the tarai, but in parliament they are shoulder to shoulder raising fists and shouting slogans. Strange bedfellows.

The comrades are supposed to have taken donor-funded tuition classes on parliamentary behaviour from veteran MPs last week. They were coached on how to raise objections from the floor without using four-letter words, the etiquette of table thumping without brandishing a handgun, and the elaborate rituals of speaking at Zero Hour about Year Zero.

But they must have flunked the course because the honourable Grey Coats have taken the practice of gheraoing the rostrum to an unprecedented level of theatrics. After watching the MPs grinning at tv cameras this week, the Ass is willing to bet that if the media is kept out of the chambers no one would bother to gherao the Speaker.

Speaking of the speaker, you should have seen the Honourable Mr Nembang stifling a yawn and walking out in disgust as the MPs went through their daily ritual of mistaking the rostrum for Ratna Park. Just as well the Speaker is off on an IPO jaunt, poor man needs a break.

So Comrade Sitaula has been hospitalised with hearing problems in his right ear. Come to think of it, the Ass had noticed symptoms ever since he became Home Minister last year. And when the madness clamoured for his resignation, he just didn’t listen did he? In fact he was retained as minister of interior in the interim government at the insistence of Comrade Awesome. We all thought Sitaula was being stubborn, now we know the man couldn’t hear a thing. We wish the minister speedy recovery. I SAID WE WISH YOU SPEEDY RECOVERY.

Last week, the Ass raised the issue of our Maoist ministers keeping two body guards. Now, several alert readers have drawn his attention to the fact that COAS Gen Katuwal has taken a great leap forward by having a female bodyguard. Award the jarsap another star for inclusiveness and demolishing stereotypes. Still another reader notes seeing Minister Deb Gurung taking both his body guards into a Buddha Air flight recently. The comrades sat on seat 2 A while 3 A and 3 B were taken up by his two bodyguards (both male). The Maoist guard in fact was carrying a firearm in full view of fellow passengers. Hey, what are the containers for?

Of all the full-time professionals in our civilian society movement, Padma Ratan Kaka has been a fixture even before the 1990 uprising. Whether it is workers carrying out a talabandi on a hotel, revolutionaries doing talabandis on schools, or activists marching for a Newar Autonomous Republic you can be sure Padma Ratan Dai will be there. And sure enough there he was last week outside the US Embassy handing out Puntay Rios to BN,lz when convincing them to call off their fast on to death.

It had been a decade or more since we had seen Kamred Tuladhar cry in public. But there he was wishing Vladimir Ilyich happy 130th birthday last week at the BIR when he broke down and wept while delivering his homily to the Father of the October Revolution. The audience was so moved the man got a standing ovation. Yus!

Kingji just doesn’t give up, does he? While the rest of the country is getting ready to usher in a Loktantrik Republic he is determined to keep his country a Tantrik Kingdom by appeasing the gods with the sacrifice of five animals at Dakshinkali. The astrologers told him to conduct the sacrifices on Tuesday, which also happened to be Loktandra Day in order to put a voodoo curse on the anniversary celebrations at the Army Pavilion on Tundikhel. His Ex-Majesty got the royal praetorian guards to clear the route to Pharping and even got the army band to strike up God Save the King on the occasion. Wait a minute, isn’t the army now supposed to be under a civilian chain of command? Asa@nepaltimes.com

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