

Shikhar Travel Trip Insurance

Traveling Abroad ? Get relaxed.
Shikhar Travel Trip Insurance is here to insure your journey.

Shikhar Travel Trip Insurance covers the following:

- Medical and Emergency Expenses
- Personal Liability
- Loss of Passport
- Delay/Loss of Checked Baggage
- Personal Liability

Shikhar Insurance

"Trust us, we will Deliver"

P.O. Box : 11133, Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal Phone: 4764514, 4764515, Fax: 4764513

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 358

Q. What does the continued oil shortage tell us about this 100-day government?

Total votes: 3,345

Doing a good job 7.8%

Doing a lousy job 25.1%

Doing nothing 67.2%

Weekly Internet Poll # 359. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com
Q. Should the YCL be part of the election 'security arrangements'?

Paini

HOME FURNISHERS

Trapanewar (near to Thapathali), Nepal, Ph: 4234861, 4232246

BOXLIGHT Projector

BRIGHTNESS 3000 ANSI lumens (standard) 2500 ANSI lumens (eco)

CONTRAST RATIO 500:1

DISPLAY TYPE 0.63" HTPS TFT LCD x3

WEIGHT 11.4 lbs / 2.9Kg

CAS CAS Trading House Pvt. Ltd.

P.O. Box: 2932, ComputerLand Building, New Plaza, Putalisadak, Kathmandu

Phone: 977-1- 4440271, 4430958, 4430659

E-mail: sales@casnp.com

Web: www.castradinghouse.com

NEPA MARBLE BATH HOUSE

Drumbarah, Ktm. Tel: 4431357, 2511841

Today's

purity at its true form..

Today's natural mineral water

Mahendra Pool, Pokhara

Ph: 061-520069, 520889

Email: aquagroup.com.np



MIN BAJRACHARYA

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE:
Pulchok residents queued for hours on Thursday morning for water, as the city faces another water shortage.

Slowly, momentum is building for a November election

One by one

PURNA BASNET

The parties are finally moving. There seems to be a recognition that an election-conducive environment must be created relatively quickly. A constant reminder from the parties and civil society is that “no election in Nepal has ever been held under ideal conditions.”

The UML started planning its campaign strategy at its central working committee meeting two weeks ago. The two Congresses are intensifying their unification drive. The Maoists, busy with their verification troubles, are second-guessing the elections

based on the ongoing violence in the tarai. But even they are expected to chart out a plan for the elections at their meeting next week of high level party workers and ‘PLA’ commanders.

The janajatis feel they are close to a deal. “The government has assured us that the current electoral law actually works, and for now we are ready to accept that,” Pasang Sherpa, president of the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, told us.

The focus is the madhes, though, and Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula’s ultimatum to the armed factions has not been heeded yet. But a

strong consensus is emerging among the eight parties that a more diplomatic approach in the tarai could help kickstart those talks.

The MJF is talking again with the government this week, and most of its demands have already been fulfilled. With the MJF on board, “the armed factions in the tarai can either be talked to or be bought,” says a commentator.

A flexible approach to negotiations with all agitating fronts accompanied by election programs in the villages could help bring the situation closer to normal. “Security is also psychological,” says Narhari

Acharya of the Nepali Congress adding, “security forces alone don’t make people feel safe, the political parties have to go door-to-door to make them feel that this is for real.” At least initially, the eight parties could hold joint programs to build up the psychological momentum for an election.

Editorial
All things considered p2

Focus on Bangladesh
Interview with Fazle H Abed p4

The parties are being outwardly cautious about the elections because of the uncertainty of how they will fare. The UML seems to be sensing that the tide is turning in its favour, while the NC and the CPN-M are uncertain. The two Congresses need to be unified, and the Maoists are making overtures to the UML for leftist unity. ●

Land Rover

Freelander 2

All Terrain 4WD

Luxurious Interior

Matches for all lifestyles

LAND-ROVER

GO BEYOND

AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Euro Gears Pvt. Ltd.

Kat-75-2 Teku Road, P.O.Box 4790 Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 4261235, 4371104

Fax: 4420877, 4262069

E-mail: eurogears@mos.com.np

SERVICE CENTER :

Delta Motor Works Pvt. Ltd.

Dhumbarahi, Kathmandu Tel: 4371104



Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Editor: Kunda Dixit
Executive Editor: Anagha Neelakantan
Design: Kiran Maharjan
Director Sales and Marketing: Sunaina Shah marketing@himalmedia.com
Circulation Manager: Samir Maharjan sales@himalmedia.com
Subscription: subscription@himalmedia.com, 5542525/535
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu 5543333-6, Fax: 5521013
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hatiban: 5547018



Labour complications

What our embassies should be doing but aren't

Last month, 127 Nepali workers were deported from Qatar after getting involved in 'activities that violated domestic law'. Last week, 37 Nepalis stopped work at a factory in Malaysia after not being paid and they were detained.



GUEST COLUMN
Nishchal N Pandey

What is most disturbing about the Qatar incident is that this is the first time such a harsh action has been taken by authorities there against Nepali workers. The acting ambassador stationed in Doha was denied permission to even meet the arrested Nepalis. These episodes have exposed the cavalier attitude and helplessness with which the Nepal government and its diplomatic missions have been handling foreign employment, which is so vital to the economy.

Lessons should have been learnt after August 2004 when Nepalis were taken hostage in Iraq and yet we didn't even have a

single Arabic-speaking officer on duty who could begin negotiations with the abductors. Our embassies are poorly equipped and staffed, budget is scarce, coordination and communication with Sital Nibas back home, and MoFA's own relations with line ministries is poor.

Worse, promoting foreign employment and facilitating Nepali labour abroad, especially in the Gulf countries, has never been a priority for the government although remittances have clear rural linkages, and is a second major source of revenue. At a time when our exports are declining and tourism is stagnant, remittance from Nepalis abroad is all we have to maintaining macroeconomic stability and preventing collapse. However, the growth rate of remittances itself is in steep decline: shrinking to 3.1 percent against the whopping 47 percent growth in 2006 compared to 2005.

The government has announced the opening of a slew of new embassies in countries like South Korea and Israel which are important destinations for Nepali workers. However, it is not more embassies we need, as much as upgrading the quality of service they provide to Nepalis in these places.

Besides widespread exploitation both by domestic middlemen and employers in destination countries, Nepalis are being regularly victimised by our own diplomats. This is particularly true in the Gulf where hapless workers who have spent fortunes to get jobs are cheated and mistreated. There are numerous complaints against Nepali diplomatic staff in host countries, including that they refuse to meet victims and

do not even speak decently with them. What an irony that the diplomats' salaries are paid by the remittances sent home by those very workers.

There are immediate short-term measures that can be taken to attend to workers who face problems: attempt to resolve the issue with the employer; after a fatality approach the sponsor requesting early settlement of salary, service benefits, arrange dispatch of personal belongings of the deceased, provide passage for the bodies, visit hospitals to meet Nepali patients; coordinate with local police authorities and immigration on matters relating to labour and welfare, crime and legal offences.

In the longer term, the state has to coordinate among line ministries to streamline overseas work so people are not cheated, that their earning potential is maximised through training and workers are apprised of their rights, legal position, and the laws of the country they are going to.

The Labour Act of 1985 officially recognises the potential of migrant labour beyond India. But little has been done since then to develop a coherent labour export policy or to backstop the sector with training and support packages.

The long-awaited labour agreement between Nepal and UAE is expected to guarantee minimum wage as well as legal recognition of Nepali nationals working in the UAE. While similar agreements with other countries will ensure the rights and privileges of Nepalis, it is the government back home that needs to do more for the welfare of its own citizens. ●

Nishchal N Pandey is former executive director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

We have often said in this space, only half-jokingly, that the person most responsible for pushing this country towards a republic is king Gyanendra himself.

Given the paranoia Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his young comrades are displaying about the king and his dark plots, it seems to be the Maoists who are keeping the monarchy alive. At this rate, the comrades may lose their reason for being if the monarchy should cease to exist.

To be sure, the present monarch could very well be up to his old tricks. At his birthday bash last week, he is reported to have dropped broad hints that he is ready to "strike a deal". This could mean he is ready to negotiate using the threat of anarchy as a bargaining chip. Despite public calls to abdicate from his staunchest supporter in the eight party government (Prime Minister Koirala) as well as his erstwhile ally (ex-US ambassador James Moriarty), king Gyanendra still doesn't seem to understand his time is up. The only way to save the monarchy, if at all, is for him and the heir apparent to step aside. But for many people, even that option is just not worth the trouble any more.

In their wisdom, the Nepali people have largely disregarded the republican clamour to scrap the monarchy before the November election and want to leave that decision to their elected representatives in the constituent assembly. In this period, the king can also be impeached by a two-third majority of parliament if there is any indication of mischief. In the run up to the polls, it should be clear that anyone fomenting violence, disorder, and lawlessness is aiding and abetting royal revivalists who don't want an election to an assembly that could vote the monarchy out of business.

It is true that the main political parties warmed their hands in the fires of the madhes this winter and enjoyed watching the Maoists squirm. They also cynically used the troubles as an excuse to postpone elections they weren't ready for. They still aren't ready, but they've run out of pretexts. It is crunch time, and they better get their election machinery cranked up.

There are two challenges to free polls: continued Maoist threats against political parties campaigning in rural constituencies and the violence in the east-central tarai. But the parties can't say "conditions aren't right for polls" anymore. They have to make them right.

Although it is highly unlikely that the parties are going to learn from their past mistakes, one thing they should keep in mind is that this is not a general election. It is a mechanism to let the Nepali people decide the structure of our polity.

All things considered, it is our collective future that is at stake here, not about who wins and becomes minister in the next government.



Lost in seminar space

There's so much hot air circulating these days

The venues of symposia, seminars, workshops, discussion meetings, and congresses change with the season. Public consultations in Bharatpur or Nepalganj in the winter, and Charikot or Dadeldhura in the summer. Brainstorming in Pokhara and Dhulikhel all year-round. In the monsoon, you're safest in the Valley, and the city's seminar rooms are packed these days.



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

But despite being punctuated by buffets, high teas, and cocktail receptions galore, these colloquia test almost every participant's patience. And they all end in agreement to reconvene to discuss the same thing.

The medium of conversation is the single biggest reason most consultations end up being tedious. It is difficult enough being interesting in one language. But to

say something original in a non-native tongue is almost impossible. Research shows that children who begin to learn in English rather than their mother tongue are slower by about 10 percent. It's even worse when the lingua franca of a country is their second language, and English, learnt at later stage, the third or fourth one.

Every language carries its own value system. Sanskrit is tradition and Nepali has hierarchy built into its grammar. English has been the language of the British Empire for far too long in South Asia not to carry the authority, legitimacy, and power that comes with being the medium of the masters. It's no coincidence that the Valley's socio-political elite choose to converse among themselves in English. Even if sponsors condescendingly agree to accept comments in Nepali—expression in any other language of Nepal is seldom permitted—participants conform rather than assert their right to be treated as equals.

Seminars are held simultaneously, and public figures have a taxing schedule that leaves little time for preparation. After a

while, each speech elicits yawns even from co-panellists. Politicians suffer acutely from this: the more seminars they attend, the less time they have for their constituents. Consequently, they have almost nothing new to say after a while.

Speechifying by rights activists, civil society motivators, multi-disciplinary consultants, and celebrated mediapeople is even harder to endure. Whenever they speak outside their area of direct concern—which they do more often than should be allowed—they resort to anecdotes and generalities. Such presentations may begin promisingly, but meander through meaningless descriptions and unintelligible explanations. They always run over the allotted time and respond to no civil attempts to bring them back to the issue at hand.

Politically correct expats have three time-tested ways to shine at seminars. Praising Nepal and Nepalis is a foolproof method of getting the audience's approval. Recounting tangential anecdotes about

living in a remote Cambodian village is a clever way of sidestepping controversy. Celebratory talks with platitudinous references to the supposedly positive contributions of foreign aid—especially from natives of the countries in question—are becoming the norm.

Every participant knows these talkathons are largely pointless, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, but we always accept the invitation: it makes us feel wanted. The satisfaction of making an easy 'contribution' to the betterment of society is a bonus.

The symposia will continue for quite a while. Rumour is, anyone who can write a decent proposal can have a few million rupees from various donors to 'create awareness' about the constituent assembly election. People who can ramble on about conflict, democracy, and the rule of law will remain in demand. But even if only to add some colour and variety, organisers should invite some real people too—domestic workers, farm labourers, factory hands, priests. ●

LETTERS

MONARCHY

Prime Minister GP Koirala witnessing the Bhoto Jatra paradoxically annuls his much-loved anti-republican position—his support for a 'ceremonial monarchy,' if the term largely carries religio-cultural responsibilities as Sudhindra Sharma construes ('Unceremonial monarchy, 'Guest column', #357).

However, Sharma's remark that 'the presence of the head of the state in a Hindu-Buddhist religious festival is a setback to the idea of a secular state...' is feeble. The basis of his argument is what he calls 'one of the pillars of secularism—the separation of state and religion'. While theoretically secularism postulates the separation of state and religion, it seems impossible pragmatically. Secularism is an antonym of hierocracy. In a hierocracy, religion dictates the affairs of the state, whereas in a secular state it is the contrary.

The key issue between secularism and hierocracy is not of separation of state and religion rather of subordination of religion to state or vice versa. Thus, the head of the state attending the Hindu-Buddhist religious ceremonies does not impede the spirit of secularism as long as it is done indiscriminately (eg, solemnising Christmas or Id), and does not use the state's coffers improperly.

Nima Ghising, Jorpati

● Sudhindra Sharma incorrectly assumes that there is a contradiction between upholding tradition and pursuing development. It is precisely the lack of traditional values—a sense of duty, sacrifice, honesty, self-control, etc—in much of our government (whether the monarchy, politicians, the judiciary) that has most adversely affected the development of the country.

The role of traditional institutions in the so-called Naya Nepal is completely ignored by our so-called progressive elites. If our Naya Nepalis would take a break from making sweeping ideological statements and condemnations from their newspaper columns and instead engage in dialogue with traditional institutions, we could perhaps understand how modern and traditional forces can work together for everyone's welfare.

The Bhoto Jatra issue is an example of how traditional institutions have been bewilderingly sidelined in what is a very traditional affair. What right do Sudhindra Sharma, Girija Koirala, or Gyanendra have to decide the chief guest? This is not a political issue, it is a religious and ritual issue, and the sole authority should be the local priesthood.

Rishi R Sharma, email

● I agree with Sudhindra Sharma that Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is on the one end seeming to break from a tradition that was rooted in hero worship, and on the other, seeming to restore it. This double standard is incongruous in a person in whom people have vested their faith. When Girija Ji formalised the ritual, he inhabited the ghost of the king.

Haribol Acharya, email

● I have no problem with Girija Koirala going to Bhoto Jatra. But they should have got him to actually climb on the chariot and show the bhoto.

Gyan Subba, Kumaripati

● Nine of the 20 top-ranked countries in the world for HDI are monarchies ('2007 to 2007', Guest column, #356). This could indicate that a constitutional monarchical system is beneficial to a country. One part of the agreement between rulers and citizens is tradition. Long traditions usually indicate stability. Adhering to tradition also gives governments a certain legitimacy. King Gyanendra has been severely castigated and his powers decisively restricted. Declaring a republic now could give the impression of the other parties caving in to pressure from the Maoists, while alienating a large part of the people of Nepal who still support the institution of the monarchy. It might be important for the

constituent assembly to distinguish between the unpopularity of the actions of king Gyanendra and the institution of monarchy.

Lars G, USA

● I am happy that the king is not getting money from the government. But now the Maoists are. Why do the Nepali people and the Nepal government always have to pay money to families or anyone's personal army?

SS, email

MAO & MORIARTY

The interview with Pushpa Kamal Dahal after his visit to Switzerland is hilarious ('Fitting reply to those who call us terrorists', From the Nepali Press, #357). Even though politicians are not known to be truthful at all times, Prachanda's forked tongue befits a snake in words, deeds, and character. He lies about his commitment to the constituent assembly election when the Maoists do not heed the current interim constitution—which they helped formulate—and when the Maoist atrocities and extortion against the Nepali people continue unabated and in violation of the peace treaty they signed.

One true friend of the Nepali people has been the outspoken US ambassador here. He has seen through the Maoist farce and calls them what they are: terrorists ("No royal revival", #357). That's why Prachanda wants to get the support of liberal European nations with leftist leanings for his plan which will destroy all traces of democracy and freedom in Nepal. On a personal note, Prachanda, your terrorists have killed an innocent relative of mine, beheading him with a khukuri. His wife and children live in agony to this day. We will never forgive you. You can fool some people some time but you can't fool all the Nepalis all the time.

VT, email

● Outgoing US Ambassador Moriarty was right. I strongly believe that the Maoists are trying to establish a totalitarian communist state. All along they have been saying that their moves to join the mainstream and the seven-

party deal are compromises they've made to fulfil their party's ideology. Their commitment to 'competitive democracy' is a front and a farce to grab power after which they want to initiate a structural reform based on class and other Maoist ideologies. Here, the media (who might be out of business if the Maoists succeed), civil society and especially the middle class need to unite and keep up the pressure so this dangerous dream of taking Nepal to the stone age is not fulfilled. We might need a new movement to protest against everything the Maoists are doing now.

Sunil Sharma, Teku

● Who among the Nepali people trusts Prachanda? Girija Babu is one of the most honest and reliable people to run Nepal. Oops! Forgot we have foreign ambassadors running the country.

SKhanal, email

● James Moriarty has trampled on all diplomatic norms and etiquette. Where in the world do we see an ambassador conducting himself like an elected politician? Now he can go back and ask Prez Bush to step down or 'abdicate' the presidency for failing in Iraq.

R Rana, email

MESSY MIDDLE

'Communist Quicksand' (State of the State, #356) was a rare disappointing article from CK Lal. It was confusing and full of rhetoric, and the message got lost somewhere. He addresses both sides of the argument, but does justice to neither. Seems like dictatorial control is catching up with our handful of good writers.

Name withheld, email

● I think 'Under My Hat' was much more real and funnier than your new satire under 'Backside'. I don't know whether it is a coincidence, but it looks like the current factional and messy politics of Nepal, not really putting out a clear message. Using the term Ass doesn't make it any better.

B Raj Giri, email



Show Room
East Side of Royal Palace
Nag Pokhari
Tel: 4442437
Open: 9am-6pm

KALINTA™

Italian Posters
Gift Objects
Mounting & Lamination
Custom Framing
Imported Matting

picture framing

HOT PRESS

www.subisu.net.np

www.truecable.net.np

Everyone Is Heading Towards Subisu's True Cable Broadband

Travel & Tourism

Household

Government Bodies

Health

Diplomatic Missions

Banking

NGOs/INGOs

Airlines

Education

Manufacturing

Are You ?

Get Stable, Reliable & Secure Connectivity!

An ISO 9001:2000 Certified Company

SUBISU CABLE NET

Business Solution Provider

FIRST and TRUE Cable Internet provider in Nepal

P.O. Box. 6626, Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal
T : +977 1 4429616/617, 4424862 F : +977 1 4430572
email info@subisu.net.np



MONIKA DHAKHWA

“Development is about human beings”

Fazle Hasan Abed is the founder and chairperson of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). He gave up a thriving accounting career to help Bangladesh’s independence movement. After the birth of the country in 1971, he started BRAC to help refugees and victims of war integrate into society. He spoke with columnist Ashutosh Tiwari in Dhaka recently about his work, which has by now grown into a diverse array of social and commercial services to help the poor get out of poverty. With an annual budget of \$436 million—three-quarters of which is self-generated, and with a 48,000-strong staff, BRAC is the world’s largest NGO with branches in Afghanistan and Africa.



Ashutosh Tiwari: What development changes have you seen in Bangladesh since the first decade of its birth?

Fazle Hasan Abed: Bangladesh has changed dramatically in the last 30 years. Life expectancy at birth used to be 47. Today it is 63. Infant mortality rate was 142, and under-five mortality rate was 252. Today, they are 62 and 174 respectively.

Bangladesh used to produce 15 million tons of paddy for 74 million people on nine million hectares of land. On eight million hectares today, it produces 40 million tons for 143 million people.

Seventy-six percent of the population was under the poverty line in 1976. Today, that is down to 40 per cent, though the number of poor is similar. With poverty declining at 2.2 percent every year, Bangladesh can expect to be a middle-income country in about 20 years.

One of BRAC’s early work involved immunising children. How did that come about?

I was struck that New York City in 1903 and Bangladesh in the late 1970s had the same infant mortality rate. From 1903 to 1925, New York’s infant mortality declined fast. They started supplying chlorinated piped water to households. They rebuilt their sanitation systems. They introduced universal primary education. They spread knowledge about the nutritional value of food through mass media. They immunised everyone. On learning this, I decided to start a children’s immunisation programs in Bangladesh. Immunisation was the most cost-effective public health intervention my small NGO could handle at the time. Besides, it was 1979, which the UN had declared the Year of the Child.

Persuading the government to help you must have been easy, since your work would reach out to millions.

Not quite. To reduce the rate of infant mortality, I needed to purchase vaccines from abroad. I needed fridges in villages to store the vaccines, but most rural regions were not electrified. I needed all the health workers in the country mobilised to administer the vaccine. But the government said, “We have waited thousands of years for vaccination. Why don’t we wait for five more years when all the villages will have electricity? Meanwhile, you can do something else.” So, we visited households door-to-door—13 million of them!—to teach village women how to make oral rehydration fluids by themselves with salt, sugar, and water in the right ratios. This bit of simple knowledge had the potential to save lives every year.

How did BRAC become the world’s largest NGO?

The oral rehydration intervention was BRAC’s first national program. Encouraged by its success, I convinced UNICEF to supply vaccines to start a national immunisation program. BRAC took charge of mobilising health workers and immunising half the country’s children, while the government took responsibility for the other half. In four years, millions of children were vaccinated against childhood diseases. BRAC’s nationwide success with immunisation programs gave us tremendous self-confidence. We then thought: why not also take agricultural, educational, healthcare- and livestock-related services to the poor? That is how BRAC grew. In the late 1980s, we had about 5,000 staff. By the late ’90s, that number was 20,000. Now we have about 48,000 full-time staff in Bangladesh, and that number excludes the staff of the 60,000 one-teacher schools that we run.

What are one-teacher schools?

Of the 19 million Bangladeshi children, 16 million are enrolled in schools. Of the remaining 3 million, BRAC has taken in about 1.6 million as students at its one-teacher schools. The model is that we have one teacher for about thirty children of different ages and skills. This arrangement seems to work well for children who, for various reasons, are not enrolled at formal schools. A variation of this model also seems to work well in isolated communities where there are a handful of children, not enough to open an entire school. In desert communities in Rajasthan, India, I saw that they gathered children of various ages at once, and gave them three years’ worth of literacy skills in one year. There are isolated communities in Nepal too. Using this model in those communities could be a way Nepal could work toward meeting its Millennium Development Goals.

BRAC is known for bundling microfinance services for the poor with market access. How does this approach work?

Microfinance is BRAC’s largest program. This year, we have given out \$900 million to 6 million borrowers, most of whom are women. Next year, we expect to give out more than a billion dollars as loans. Our borrowers meet our staff every week to pay their instalments. What we have done is connect our loans to income-generating activities. For instance, a borrower may buy a cow that gives her two litres of milk a day. She may sell that milk to her neighbour at 7 taka per litre. But I know I can sell that milk at higher prices in urban areas. BRAC collects milk from her at 18 taka, pasteurises and packages it, and sells it in Dhaka at 30 taka per litre. Both the borrower and BRAC make money providing a product to the market.

Similarly, a woman may borrow 5000 taka to buy vegetable seeds. But she can’t find high-quality vegetable seeds. BRAC produces high-quality seeds, which it then sells to her. Over time, with higher yields and higher sales, her income goes up, and that raises her family’s quality of life. In poultry too, we give out high-quality day-old chicks, and have trained women to offer vaccination services in villages. Our chicken lays 240 eggs a year compared to the 40 a year a *deshi* bird lays, thereby fetching farmers more money. We thus see microfinance as a tool to raise the income and quality of life of the poor by connecting them to the market.

Under BRAC’s umbrella are vegetable packhouses, fashion and handicraft retail outlets, dairies, banks, internet service providers, a university. What are you doing right that most donor agencies are not?

My view is that most donor agencies do not understand development. Development is about human beings, about individuals, their families, their livelihoods. At most agencies, doing development is a job, and they do good professional work. But until your thinking is in terms of how what your actions affect other human beings, you are not doing development. You are doing a job. Every time I go to Aarong, our retail outlet, for example, I ask a salesgirl, “How much have you sold in the last two hours?” She will say something like, 18,000 taka worth of goods. I tell her that a third of it goes to the producer in village. That means one village woman is employed for a month. This sort of thinking—making rural producers and farmers the centre of what we do—has served us well. Above everything, I want to make the lives of poor people better, more liveable—that underlies everything I do.

In the last few years, BRAC has set up branches in Afghanistan and in parts of Africa. What motivated you to do that?

We went to Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Donors were ready to fund programs, but there was a need for a BRAC-like entity that could provide development services. We thought we could help them with our Bangladeshi experiences. Today BRAC Afghanistan provides everything from microfinance to maize seeds to the poor. It runs on an annual budget of \$80 million and has about 6000 staff, most of whom are Afghani women.

Last year, we decided that we should also be in Africa to replicate our Bangladeshi experiences. We want to make a difference in the lives of the poor in Africa. Donors are confident about our approach, and we are already in southern Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Nepal’s experience with microfinance has been a mixed bag. It’s hard to provide microfinance services in thinly populated hilly areas. The operating costs are too high, and there is no provision for related services, such as training. Often, the problem may not be with microfinance per se. It might be with how poor the people are in the first place. In Bangladesh, we have found that microfinance does nothing for the ultra poor. These are the people who can hardly afford two meals a day. They have malnourished children. They have no social support. They are doomed to stay poor generation after generation.

In 2001, I decided to help the ultra poor by giving them outright grants. The idea was to make one-time asset transfer that allowed them to have regular stipends for meals, access to free medical services, schooling for children, and income-generating activities. We looked for ways to reduce their vulnerabilities and strengthened their ties to the better-off people in their villages. We have found that after two years of handholding and confidence-building, most of these people can get out of chronic poverty, and graduate to a level where they can merge with the microfinance group. We have helped hundreds of thousands of families break the cycle of poverty in this manner, and today we run what is considered to be the world’s most effective program for the ultra poor.

With such a diverse portfolio, people might say you are running a parallel government.

I see BRAC adding to the work that the government is already doing. Some government officers like our work, and some feel threatened. That’s the way it goes.

How do you manage your organisation in terms of recruiting and retaining staff?

We do not pay high salaries. Most of our recruits are from local colleges, people who appreciate our values and share our concern for the poor. Most grow in their roles and stay with us for years. We put an emphasis on training, on continuous skill development, and on value development. Our training centres are always full. Unlike most NGOs, we also do research. We have a large research wing. Creating new knowledge and continuously learning from what worked, what didn’t work and why, is important for our growth and success.

Next in Focus on Bangladesh: Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank



PICS: MIN BAJRACHARYA

New money, new faces

The stock market may appear very bullish, but that’s an illusion

KIRAN NEPAL

On 11 July, the Nepal Stock Exchange index shot up to 632 points, nearly twice what it was in June (383.83). The main reason is share prices, particularly of banks and finance companies, which are increasing rapidly. In 2006, the market capitalisation of Rs 20 billion worth of shares was Rs 87 billion. This year capitalisation is just 10 percent higher, but share values have hit Rs 168 billion. For example, Standard Chartered shares valued at Rs 3,800 each a year ago have today hit Rs 5,000. Most experts say this growth

can’t last long and that the stresses of the transitional phase will calm things down. Shambu Prasad Panta, assistant manager of NEPSE, has a gloomier outlook. He says the rush to invest in shares has been in the hope of a November election. A postponement would push NEPSE to the brink of collapse. In addition, the financial sector and market insiders are talking of a lot of “new money and new faces” in the share market. One analyst explains that the new faces are entrepreneurs with good credit at banks, manpower companies, and Maoists. The new money is that borrowed on low interest from

capital deposit by 20 percent each year. The Nepali stock market right now seems to be driven almost entirely by rumour and speculation. The currency in the capital market does not

correspond to the number of shares. In the Nepali capital market, the number of transactions do not square with the jump in index growth. As of last week, share values increased this year by Rs 27 billion, while

actual transactions totalled only Rs 7 billion. Financial analyst Sujeev Shakya says this is a bad sign: “In a healthy, transparent stock market, there should be a parity between the market price and the transactions.” ●



Warm & Tender



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

Did your paper arrive on time this morning?
If not, call our

Customer care @ 5547002

DIRECT LINE



Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.
Hatiban Lalitpur

Fair & Lovely

THE POWER OF BEAUTY



Believe in the power of beauty. Believe that beauty is a means to an end. With beauty you can change the world. Believe that change begins with you. Believe.

Labour reform

Editorial in *Abhiyan*, 16-22 July

It is probably because Nepal's political parties used the labour movement to do politics that the unions have not been able to rise above politics. That is why instead of working for the rights of the workers and industrialisation, the unions are just political pawns of their mother parties. Worse, the unions have been used to disturb industrial security which has affected not just industrial productivity but in the long term the nation's economy. The environment today is worse than even during the conflict years. Proof is in the number of companies, even multinationals, that have quit after the peace process. Not only is this a waste of investment, but it also ruins the lives of workers and undermines national revenue. The interventions by the labour unions are not in the interest of the labour force.



KIRAN PANDAY

AN EYE FOR AN EYE: In March this year, entrepreneurs called a *banda* to protest the beating by Maoists of Hari Shrestha, owner of Woodlands Hotel (far right)

In most industrialised countries labour unions represent the interests of workers and the industries, not of political parties. In Nepal, the unions haven't spared the essential services sector, which in many countries are out of bounds. It is clear that Nepal's labour movement is so politicised that it is not in the interest of the citizens and the nation. The latest target of the unions is the banking sector, where in the name of labour rights there is an increased risk of anarchy. In many of these institutions, union representatives use party pressure to get jobs just to collect their paychecks and sow disorder. The most negative effect of this is on fellow-workers in those companies. This can't go on. If it does, the industries will just close down and everyone will be out of their jobs. It is important for the unions to remember that if there are no industries, there will be no workers, and no unions either. For this, unions should be represented by workers and not by party cadres. To save what is left of the industrial and services sector, there is an urgent need to redefine and depoliticise the labour movement. Business as usual will mean no business in the future.



Wrought Iron | Cane | Wood

Quality furniture from

A KARSHAN INTERIORS

Kupondole, Lalitpur, Ph: 5545055 | email: akarshanint@wlink.com.np



Weaves & Blends

cashmere accessories • home • knitwear

showroom: tel: 2121200, kumarpo, jwastakel, lalitpur factory: tel: +977 1 4495569 fax: 5533337 email: weavens@gmail.com.np OPEN SUN - FRI 10AM - 7 PM

Also available at: GALERIE BOUDHA

showroom tel: 2140702, boudha, kathmandu, fax: 5533337 email: galerieboudha@ndcnet.com.np OPEN: ALL DAYS 10am - 7pm

Hunger in tarai

Editorial in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 18-31 July

When you ask people in the drought-stricken eastern and central tarai “How are you?” they reply “I am hungry.” That is the other side of the reality of madhes these days, one that is eclipsed by the headlines about the struggle for political representation, and news of violence. It is the humanitarian crisis caused by the failure of the monsoon last year, this year's prolonged drought, and the resulting shortage of food. This is affecting the most vulnerable and excluded sections of Nepali society: the Muslims, dalits, women, and children.

The prolonged political agitation had already affected the region's economy and widened the gap with the rest of the country. But the food crisis is going to exacerbate the suffering. A very small percentage of the farms in Siraha, Saptari and Dhanusha have irrigation, most are rainfed, and that is why there is the danger of food shortage.

The plight of the farmers and daily-wage workers has been worsened by frequent bandas and blockades on the highways. The administration existed only in name even in the best of times, but these days most government and non-government service delivery has ground to a halt because of the absence of staff.

Wrong path

Hari Roka in *Nepal*, 15 July

When the interim parliament met to discuss his government's policies and programs Prime Minister Girija Koirala didn't bother to appear. It was later learnt he had gone for the inauguration of the new US embassy, and that he and outgoing ambassador James Moriarty laid on the mutual admiration thickly. He called the US ambassador the “spokesman for democracy”.

The ambassadors of the US, UK, and India emerged as powerful after 11 months of the king's direct rule. They backed the ‘twin pillar’ theory that the king and the parties must work together. They went door-to-door visiting politicians to promote this doctrine. This policy was doomed to failure and the king staged his coup. Then came the 12-point agreement, and Moriarty tried his best to sabotage the alliance between the parties and the Maoists. But he couldn't counter the people's force.

The Indians and Americans would have united to cut the Maoists down to size and they did. What interest does America, from across the seven seas, have in Nepal? Why should India interfere? But it is clear that both countries are involved in the current instability here.

India is an emerging regional power and it wants a monopoly in the Nepali market, to dominate the expansion of capital. It needs the ‘white gold’ of our hydropower and water to drive its economy. But even India doesn't

have enough capital to invest to develop these sectors, and needs American multinationals involved. Nepal is a strategic buffer zone. Putting these two factors together, there is convergence of Indian and American geopolitical interest here. By mobilising people like Jayakrishna Goit, Upendra Yadav, and Jwala Singh, it can kill two birds with one stone: maintain the status quo, keep Nepal on even keel with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and have an upperhand in discussions over natural resources.

Modern imperialism is not easy to understand. It is no more about military conquest, but an open wallet. When Koirala was praising Moriarty, the prime minister didn't realise he'd become America's stooge. Or did he just pretend not to know? What Koirala should understand is that he is the leader of an independent and sovereign nation put in office by the people's movement, not by Moriarty or Shiv Shankar Mukherjee.

Unsatisfactory

Interview with Minister for Information and Communication Krishna Bahadur Mahara in *Naya Patrika*, 18 July

Are you satisfied with performance of the government?

The government has been unable to a satisfactory job.

Isn't it double standards to criticise the government you are part of?

We haven't been able to work in accordance with the aspirations of the people. I am just bringing out that fact in public.

The government hasn't worked like a coalition. The status-quoist mentality within the Nepali Congress has been a major hindrance in the functioning of the government. Even the UML is reluctant to break free from the old ways.

How do you rate your own performance?

I am not disappointed, but I am not satisfied either. I haven't been able to do what I thought I could.

What are some of the achievements of government?

The consensus on a republic and the amendment of the constitution authorising parliament to remove the king are among the achievements. In our [Maoist-held] ministries we have succeeded in breaking the passivity of the state machinery, while working to check irregularities and corruption.

On what issues do you not agree with the government?

The promotion of army officers. One of the important aspects of conflict resolution is the restructuring of the security apparatus. While on one hand the PLA has not been given the bare minimum and there are games being played to reduce its numbers, the army is gaining strength. We fear there is a relationship between the palace and the Congress.

There was also not enough discussion about the budget in the cabinet. The budget is very traditional and does not address the many changes that have taken place, like local autonomy.

Bank unbalance

Saptahik Bimarsa, 13 July

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat is under pressure to dismiss Nepal Rastra Bank governor Bijay Nath Bhattari. Bhattarai has been suspended since the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority charged him with corruption and irregularities.

Meanwhile, acting governor Krishna Bahadur Manandhar told parliament's finance committee that there would be a shortage of banknotes after Dasain. Under the prevailing laws, only a full-fledged governor can sign on the currency. Mahat cannot appoint a new governor without dismissing Bhattarai. There are many consequences of not having a governor. The Bank's internal administration is likely to be affected, and the monitoring, control and management of the finance sector will be ineffective.

Peace for polls

Interview with Jhala Nath Khanal, UML central working committee member, in *Jansatta*, 14 July

Will the UML go to the villages alone, or wait to campaign jointly?

The UML has been established as a leading force. Our only discussion with the eight-party leaders has been centred on the need for a peaceful environment

The chief election commissioner has doubts about law and order.

At a recent meeting, our party discussed the situation in all 240 constituencies. We don't see big challenges in the hill districts. Even in most tarai districts the situation is good, only in the central tarai, there is a problem. If talks with the different groups end positively, our party has concluded that the election can take place.

Should the army and the Maoist combatants be mobilised for the elections?

The army issue is for the eight parties to decide. On the Maoist combatants, there should be consensus on sensitive matters like law and order.

Is there any chance of left party unity?

Given how eight-party unity has worked for the establishment of democracy and in uprooting the monarchy, left party unity should be possible. But it should not be just for the elections. Any prospect of unity depends on a common agenda.

How do you think the government is doing?

The administration is very weak and there is a Nepali Congress hegemony in the government. The NC doesn't respect the principles of a coalition government and has often acted alone.



Sign: Election
Red boat: Government
Orange boat: YCL

चुनाव नेपाल, 22 July

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“The Nepal Army will never compromise on terrorism and extremism.”

Army chief Rukmangad Katuwal in Nepal, 15 July

SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

'We think foreigners are smarter'

UML general secretary Madhab Kumar Nepal in Nepal, 15 July

चुनाव

What is the level of foreign influence in Nepali politics?
In their interaction with our party, there is no interference. If the state is weak, it becomes vulnerable to interference. Right now Nepal is in a special situation, so international assistance is of utmost importance. But Nepalis have to make sure our country does not become a playground for foreigners. The international community's will have more confidence in us if our actions show that there are no activities against them here.

The prime minister meets foreign envoys before making big decisions, and the parties are also meeting foreign ambassadors.
I cannot answer why the prime minister is meeting the envoys. But I can say that our party is not being pressured by foreigners or seeking unsolicited advice. We may have failed to react when the envoys commented on internal affairs, especially relating to the Bhutani refugee issue, or on our resources. But whatever we do, we have to make sure it is benefits the nation.

What was India's role in the 12-point agreement?
I don't know what India's role was. I did not tell anyone in India I was talking with the Maoists. We did consult many groups in India before the meeting to make sure we would not be arrested during our meetings with the Maoists. In that sense, India helped us but the agreement took place because of our own initiative.

Why are politicians so dependent on New Delhi?
When we are weak we have to get the approval of

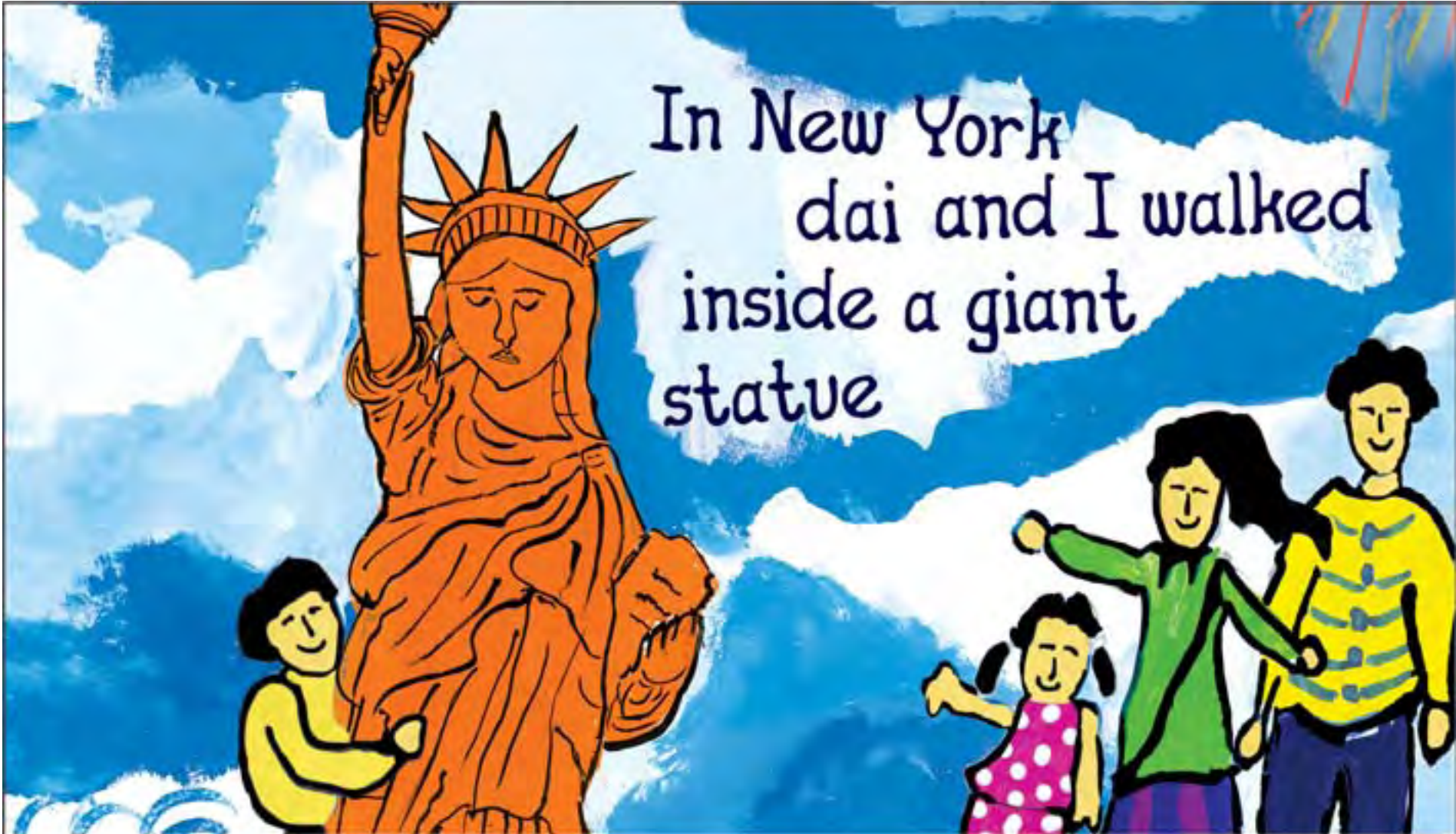


MIN BAJRACHARYA

the international community even for small changes. Sometimes we are compelled to listen because we maybe did not use our bargaining power. We also think foreigners are smarter, stronger, and better decision-makers than us.

Was your recent trip to New Delhi in search of support?
If I have the support of Nepali people, the rest of the world will have to agree.

The UML used to call India and the US imperialist and expansionist.
This is not the time to call names. We are heading towards an election, we have to cooperate, work hard to gain support. We do not want to have preconceived ideas about anyone. We will evaluate the way foreigners behave with us in a global context.



In New York
dai and I walked
inside a giant
statue



Around the world with American Tourister



Exclusive American Tourister Brand Stores at: Jamal Tel: 4244856, Bluebird Mall Tel: 4228833 ext. 4452, Kupandole Tel: 5526989
Bhatbhateni Departmental Store Tel: 4419181, Namaste Super Market Tel: 5520026, NIWA Stores Pokhara Tel: 061 532611

The smart way since 1933



Monsoon mountain madness

Being a little adventurous and less hysterical about leeches has unexpected rewards

PRANAYA SJB RANA

Typically, people think of trekking in the monsoon a pain. There are unpredictable sporadic showers that become torrential in minutes, the trails are slippery, there are landslides, and the leeches can find their way anywhere.

But there are beautiful sights you take in only during the monsoon: huge fields of blossoming wildflowers, wild mushrooms as big as your head, the mountains rising majestically from a garland of clouds.

You just have to know how to do it. Some of the many monsoon trekking routes do get more difficult at this time of the year, so added vigilance is good. And it can be hard to preserve one's equanimity in the mud. It gets into your boots, up your pants, and in your hair if you fall. Soon, you will loathe the mud or love it. You slip, fall, get up, walk, and fall again. The cycle continues.

But the rain brings with it freshness. After a heavy rainfall, everything smells clean and in the hills, away from the stench of the city, this is invigorating and worth all the trouble. And the view. Nothing beats a monsoon view. After pouring their guts out, the clouds are faint and wispy, and rising above them the mountains look more like the mysterious abode of the gods than ever—beautiful, imposing, and pure. The fields are a patchwork of colours, with flowers of every shape, size, and hue in full bloom. The hills are a lush green, compared to the gold brown of the summer and winter.

The mud and leeches soon become minor annoyances. Even a route travelled many times before becomes fresh and new. The rain is energising, unlike the bitter cold winters, and the suffocating muggy summers.



RISHI AMATYA

Ravishing rainy day routes:

Mustang

You could avoid the rain almost entirely by flying into **Jomsom** and heading through Upper Mustang to Lo Manthang. You might have to wade through some pretty wide streams at this time of year, but keep a sure footing and enjoy the bracing water. The magnificent Kali Gandaki keeps you company for the first two days, past Chele (3030m). Be careful from Chele to Ghemi where the rocky, narrow trail can get slippery after a rare rainfall. The next day you reach Lo Manthang (3760m), the walled capital of the Loba Bista kings that is rich in well-preserved local architecture, monasteries, and some rather curious people.

Muktinath

In the monsoon, the trail from **Beni** to Jomsom in Nepal's most celebrated rainshadow area is pleasantly bereft of travellers. The well-preserved villages of Marpha and Tukuche, the wide, leech-safe trail that is actually a mule highway and the looming sight of the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massifs towering 5km over you make the walk up as dramatic as Muktinath's sacred flame. Cross the Thorong La into Manang if you want to—and it's a pleasure in the monsoon to not have to fight the hundreds of trekkers who cross over the pass everyday in peak season-or just fly out of Jomsom.

Nar Phu

The recently-opened areas of Nar and Phu valleys are perfect for the adventurous traveller. In five to seven days you get from the roadhead just past **Besisahar** to Phu (3,761m) through increasingly rugged and uninhabited terrain. This is no apple pie trail, but the monsoon view of the 6,981m Kanguru is priceless. A one-day trip to Nar and then over the Kang La (5,240m) brings you back to the Annapurna Circuit. If you haven't had enough, you can spend a day in Manang, then up Thorong La (5,416m), and down the other side to Muktinath. And forget about leeches at this altitude.

Gosainkunda

Less than a day's bus ride brings you to **Dhunchu**, and from there it's a couple of days up to the holy lake of Gosainkunda (4,000m). When the clouds give you a break, they reveal the breathtaking Ganesh range. Take a dip in the crystalline, freezing waters, feel cleansed of all sin, and then either continue northeast to the Langtang Valley and down to Kathmandu, or walk through Helambu coming down to Sundarjal in two days.

Securing a future

The tussles over security sector reform have only just begun



UNMIN

JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

The verification of Maoist combatants, stalled for close to three weeks, is likely to resume in a few days. But the underlying problems in verification, namely the future of the people in the camps, will not go away. Neither will the bigger

concerns over reform of Nepal's security sector.

The Maoists, who say they see signs of a 'disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration' (DDR) in UNMIN's verification process, want discussions to start right away on a broader and more equitable model, as they see it, of reform and restructuring of the

security sector. The Maoist leadership is concerned it will have less bargaining power in the SSR process if the verification reduces the size of the PLA substantially. Military rank and size will factor in significantly in any restructuring of the security forces.

After yesterday's Joint

A LONG MARCHPAST: It was drill as usual at the Chulachuli cantonment site two Fridays ago, but the fighters, promised positions in the Nepal Army by their leaders, face an uncertain future.

Monitoring Coordination Committee meeting, Maoist member Nanda Kishore Pun said his party's "disagreement" with UNMIN would be discussed in greater detail at talks between the CPN-M and UNMIN top brass, and after extensive consultation with PLA commanders in the cantonments.

The pressure has also been mounting on the Maoist leadership from their fighters. The combatants have been living in poor and restricted camp conditions through last winter and now the monsoon, and are getting restive. The strict questioning in the verification process is not helping. "Most of our company commanders have been disqualified, and those found qualified have been categorised as recruits. They feel humiliated and degraded," says an irked senior commander. Pun downplays the tensions within

the party but admits there is a lot of "positive pressure" from the camps.

Sources in the Nepal Army and some of the parties say they are not buying the SSR model for dealing with the former PLA. A Nepali Congress leader said his party flat out rejects any suggestion of an integration of the two armies. "The Maoists have been staking claims to senior titles in the Nepal Army for their military commanders," says a former NA major familiar with the SSR discussion, adding "That will be very hard to sell."

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement states that the interim government must constitute a committee to deal with the fighters in the camps. Top Maoist commanders met Minister for Peace and Reconstruction on Thursday morning to ask that the already-constituted Maoist Combatant Integration and Rehabilitation Special Committee be activated.

But there are concerns that this committee too, like the other five headed by Minister Poudel—who is also second in government, his party's general secretary, and head of the government negotiating team—will be slow to act. Critics say Poudel is overstretched, and point to the madhesi and janajati negotiations, which have been stalled for close to six weeks. "Verification may resume, but the sticking points will remain," says an army-watcher. ●

रेशम फिरि रेशम फिरि

अब उत्कृष्ट नेपाली गीतहरूको
रिङटोन्सका साथ
नेपाल टेलिकम
र
मेरो मोबाइलमा

Ringtone	Album	RT ID
Resham firiri	Folk songs	N2005
Changu Narayan	Various Artists (Lok)	N2050
Trishulima buneke	folk songs by Kumar Basnet	N2006
Joban Sorako	Various Artists (Lok)	N2066
Meri aamai	folk songs by Mira Rana	N2009
Basa Tanma	Mann	N2104
Ishwor Tailer	Muna Madan	N2121
Sapana Ki Pari	Gajal	N2144
Ukali Jyaan Ko	Basai	N2152
Timro Baisalu	Kranti	N2150

For example to download "Resham Firiri"
Type RT <Space> N2005 & send to 27221*

Only compatible with nets that support RTTTL Format.
For more info call 9805002722 or visit www.thtlive.com

Mail to: tthtlive@thehindumalayanimes.com
*Each download will attract Rs. 10/- plus all applicable Govt. Taxes.

Damned if you do

Damned if you don't

Despite polls announced for 22 November, the carnival atmosphere that normally accompanies elections in the Stagnating World is noticeably absent. Fears of instability, ‘donation terror’, and YCL abuse weigh heavily on the populace, as many worry election fever could easily turn viral. With the tarai in flames, guns everywhere, and a barely functioning government it’s hard to imagine a free and fair anything

MOVING TARGET Foreign Hand

taking place. The fact that nobody understands what a ‘Constitutional Assembly Election’ actually means is the least of our worries, since it appears that the country faces a no-win dilemma however this turns out. Much of the problem lies with the reality gap between truth and propaganda. While there’s a chance the Maoist leadership can distinguish actuality from dogma and wishful thinking (though




we’ve seen little evidence of this) the same cannot be said of the cadre. Any conversation with party activists reveals they are fully convinced 80 percent of the citizens back them, and that this is sure to result in a massive triumph at the polls. In fact, all indicators point to a Maoist support level of 15 to 20 percent on a good day. This disparity between perception and

reality will likely lead to trouble as the following scenarios describe: The comrades have always employed threats and bullying to get their way and are unlikely to change tactics now. Their catchy election slogan ‘Vote for Us or Die’ has already been delivered personally to each house in the districts, and should the Maoists achieve a strong result through such coercion, the UN will notice. Reports by international observers exposing electoral fraud are sure to be rejected, the Maoists will claim historical victory, and a nasty confrontation becomes inevitable. The next option is not much more comforting. Should the polls be held in a free and fair atmosphere, and the Maoists accrue less than 25 percent of the vote, reducing their influence from the one-third of seats they presently hold in parliament, they are sure to cry foul. Such a result may reflect the aspirations of the people but is unlikely to be accepted by the party and it will accuse royalists, regressive forces. and Foreign Hands of manipulating the vote. Since Maoist doctrine condemns elections as a bourgeois tool used to keep the people down (don’t ask me how) anyway, it will be easy for the party to backtrack on their shaky commitment to parliamentary politics. Unable to admit failure or mistakes and convinced of their role as the people’s saviour, the party’s fundamental belief that democracy is pointless will be confirmed if the voters refuse to do their bidding. Any other reaction could lead to self-doubt and the nagging suspicion that their decade-long civil war was a colossal waste of time and lives, home truths seen as self-evident by most but still beyond the comprehension of the comrades. Whichever way it goes, the quandary remains. In one case we have the Maoists fiercely defending election results skewed in their favour through intimidation. In the other we have them rejecting with equal fervour any outcome that doesn’t meet their delusional expectations. Take your pick ●

Super Bowl - 2007


A fun filled corporate event.



Date: 28th July, 2007
Venue: Bowling Boulevard

**Dinner & Dance
after prize distribution**

Event by:



REGISTER TODAY.
For booking & more info:
Applaud Event & Promotions
9851051898, 9851046744, 9851064065



MASTERING THE QUALITY OF SOUND SINCE 1887...

Speaker Packages	Keyboards
Amplifiers	Drums
Cinema Station	Acoustic and Electric Guitars
Home Theater System	Pianos and Portable Grand

0% Finance

Under **InstaBuy** scheme for Visa and MasterCard cardholders of **Standard Chartered**

Visit our showroom at:
Kantipath, Mountain Plaza, Tel: 016212509, 9841225613, 9841258392
Beats International Pvt. Ltd., Tripureshwore, (Next to Blue Bird Mall), Tel : 4245775
www.global.yamaha.com

Cosmopolitanism unveiled

Openness is a two-way street in a liberal society

There is little in the history of liberal theory to help with immigration. As a result, in Europe and the United States, the debate over immigration is dominated by illiberal voices, the most insistent are those of politicians promising to protect the homeland's cultural integrity against the presumed degeneracy of the alien.



OPINION
Alan Wolfe

Xenophobia is an illiberal response to immigration from the right, but multiculturalism represents the same from the left. Many multicultural theorists, committed to openness toward immigrants, are not committed to the openness of immigrants to their new home. For them, newcomers, living in an environment hostile to their way of life, need to preserve their cultural practices, even if some of them—arranged marriages, gender segregation, religious indoctrination—contradict liberal principles. Group survival counts more than individual rights in the moral accounting of many multiculturalists.

One way to commit to openness when

addressing the question of national borders is to recognise cosmopolitanism as a two-way street. Immanuel Kant said the circumstances in which we find ourselves must be judged against the circumstances in which, but for chance, we *might* have found ourselves.

It is unfair that someone born in the US is likely to live longer and better than someone born in Kenya. This doesn't mean the US must open its borders to everyone from Kenya but it does mean that a New Yorker should recognise that advantages he may have over a Nairobiian are due to an accident of birth, rather than merit. From the perspective of Kantian cosmopolitanism, the least an American can do is to welcome a certain amount of immigration from Africa.

One can understand why, living in a foreign country they may perceive as hostile, some immigrants close themselves off, and that some host countries, such as France, are too hasty in demanding that immigrants accept new ways of life. But living a closed life in an open society is self-defeating and not something a liberal society should encourage.

An example of the cosmopolitanism bargain came in 2006, when Britain's former foreign minister Jack Straw raised

concerns about the nijab, the full-head covering worn by some Muslim women. Straw defended women's right to wear less intrusive headscarves, but argued that something is seriously wrong when, in conversation with another person, one cannot engage in face-to-face interaction.

Straw was saying that to wear the nijab is a decision to close yourself off from those around you. He was not making a xenophobic argument that Muslims do not belong in Britain, or a multiculturalist one that Muslims be allowed wear whatever traditional garb best expresses their cultural and religious sensibilities. Nor was he asking for full assimilation of immigrants to British customs. Instead, Straw was carefully illustrating what it means to be open to others while expecting openness in return.

Some argued that Straw was interfering with religious freedom. In fact, liberal values sometimes contradict others. Islam, for example, has historically permitted certain forms of polygamy, but no liberal society is obliged to extend religious freedom in ways that undermine its commitment to gender equality.

Straw pointed out that wearing the nijab is not commanded by the Koran and is a cultural choice, not a religious duty. So

long as other ways are available for Muslim women to cover their heads, not wearing the nijab is a way of signifying one's membership in a liberal society at minimal cost to one's religious commitments.

For liberals, a society open to all would have no rights worth protecting, while a society closed to all would have no rights worth emulating. But a liberal society will allow people in and make exceptions for conditions under which they must be kept out, not keep people out and make exceptions for when they should be allowed in. A liberal society will view the world as teeming with potential that, though threatening to ways of life taken for granted, forces people to adapt to new challenges rather than protect themselves against the foreign and unknown.

A liberal society will not focus on what we can offer immigrants, but on what they can offer us. The goal of openness implied by immigration is worth preserving, especially if both its demands and promise apply across the board. ● (Project Syndicate)

Alan Wolfe is professor of Political Science at Boston College, and author of How America Lost Its Sense of Purpose and Moral Freedom: The Search for Virtue in a World of Choice.

Almond Delight
with Almond oil, Peach and Cream

Energising Honey
with Fruit Extracts, Milk Cream and Honey

Orchid Touch
with Exotic Petals and Jojoba Oil

LUX

Brings out the star in you

ANGEL FACE

New Road
Ranjana Galli
Tel: 4263868



Voila! The baby Radcliffe is finally an adult. Last we heard of him, he was already shedding clothes for a theatre production of *Equus*. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the fifth instalment of



CRITICAL CINEMA
Diwas Kc

the omnipresent series, you can see him with a full boost of angst, and-let's face it testosterone. Potter's transformation is not subtle. In *The Goblet of Fire* he was still a callow, insecure wizard, looking outward for help. In *The Order of the Phoenix*, Harry is a teacher, a leader preparing for imminent vanguardism, whose biggest troubles are internal. New director David Yates has also given up the fanciful tricks and games of the previous instalments to focus squarely on JK Rowling's vivid political iconography. With the magical thrills slashed down, a lot of fans will find this film to be less of a Harry Potter experience than they are used to, and pernickety moms will probably feel alienated as the Potter enterprise disconnects from its previous innocence and playfulness. But many others are perhaps ready

for this darker, danker turn. After all, we are to believe that our young hero will vanquish authoritarianism and racism in the end. Since the return of Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes), the world of Harry Potter is troubled by increasing repression. Voldemort's army is on the move, as the wizard government attempts to extend its executive power. Terror is pervasive and, just like in the real world, has come to bite principles such as equality and liberty in the behind. Reminiscent of any of the insidious fascist regimes of the 20th century, 'disappearances' galore occur and ordinary people cling on to the status quo, apathetically looking away. Epitomising this trend is the toad-faced Dark Arts teacher Dolores Umbridge, a brutal, self-assured disciplinarian (played flawlessly by Imelda Staunton). Umbridge is the most formidable character in *The Order of the Phoenix*, all the more creepy for an uncanny resemblance to someone you know in real life. Rowling's response to all this is a radical resistance. Harry and his friends' commitment to collective action and their talk about "fighting for a cause" form an irrefutably left-leaning venture. But leftists searching for cultural icons in this gargantuan

Art mirrors life

And as in the real world, idealistic or charismatic figures get all the screen time

Hollywood enterprise will have to be satisfied with the knowledge that while Harry and Dumbledore could stand up against hegemony, they are hardly revolutionaries. David Yates deserves credit for being able to keep up with Rowling's prolific symbolism, and for not reducing them to simple binary formulas. In this regard, the choices he and screenplay adapter Michael Goldenberg made in truncating the book seem reasonable.

Unfortunately, the narration is patchy and omissions glaring. The shoddy treatments of the fatality of Sirius Black (Gary Oldman) and the predicament of Cho Chang (Katie Leung), for example, speak of a negligence that makes the movie experience feel stingy. Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson) have barely anything to do. The new characters look compelling, but again are underdeveloped. On the whole though, the picture manages to sustain the

Harry Potter allure. And even if by itself *The Order of the Phoenix* isn't an outstanding piece of work, it does triumphantly pique one's interest about future instalments (and of course the final book coming out tomorrow). ●

Director: David Yates.
Cast: Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, Imelda Staunton, Ralph Fiennes, Michael Gambon, Alan Rickman.
2007. PG-13. 138 min.

"POVERTY ALLEVIATION & DEVELOPMENT- OUR CONCERN"

Our Country Nepal needs you and the Gateway is **National College**

We create social doctors and engineers, who know how to manage the processes of development professionally and skillfully

Join Bachelor Programs of
Kathmandu University- BDevS and BDFin

BDevS


Bachelor in Development Studies (BDevS)

A four year eight semesters interdisciplinary program focusing on sustainable development.

BDFin

Bachelor in Development Finance (BDFin)

A four year eight semesters program focusing on finance and financial sectors.



National College
Centre for Development Studies
Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Tel: 4440410, 4420871

Website: www.nche.edu.np

Real Pomegranate Nectar

Pomegranates are a great source of potassium. Pomegranate juice contains anti-oxidants that help protect your blood lipids from oxidation. It also helps prevent plaque build up in your arteries. More studies have shown that pomegranate seeds appear to enhance immune function as well. And here's how your family can enjoy the natural goodness of pomegranates everyday!

thank goodness it's here !



The Original Goodness

Dabur

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Amalgam** a group exhibition of paintings by national and international artists at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 20 July-20 August, 11AM-6PM. 4218048
- ❖ **Heartbeat Series 5** a group art exhibition by 12 young artists, 4.30 PM till 2 August at Baryo Fiesta, Naxal. 9851050299

EVENTS

- ❖ **Freedom Writers** starring Hilary Swank and Patrick Dempsey, 20 July, 6.45 PM at Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Grand Yarthing** horse racing festival, part of Destination Manang 2007, till 22 July in Manang. 4423643.
- ❖ **7th Bagmati River Festival** heritage walk along the river starting from Kalmochan Ghat, Teku, 25 July, and clean-up campaign at Chobar, 28 July, 7-10AM. 9851031431
- ❖ **HIV and AIDS: a social issue** a Youth Initiative workshop, 26 July, 10AM-5PM at PIC, Heritage Plaza, Kamaladi. Rs 100, 23 July deadline. 4107599
- ❖ **School Bullying** a workshop by Niti Rana, 28 and 29 July at The New Era, Battisputali. 9851023958
- ❖ **Pottery classes** one month course in coil and slab methods and two month course in wheel work, starting 1 August. 9851101837
- ❖ **Film South Asia 2007** Festival of South Asian documentaries, 11-14 October. www.filmsouthasia.org
- ❖ **Toastmasters** a communication and leadership program, organised by Kathmandu Toastmasters Club every Wednesday 6PM at Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI) building, Tripureswor.



MUSIC

- ❖ **Moksh live** presents Inner Groove and friends, 20 July, 8.30 PM at the Moksh Bar, Pulchok. 5526212
- ❖ **Free music workshop** by KJC faculty, 21 July, 1PM at Gyanodaya College, Jhamsikhel. 5528362
- ❖ **Jazz at Jatra** every Saturday 7PM onwards, at Jatra Café and Bar, Thamel.
- ❖ **Soul of Raga** live classical and fusion music, every Friday night at Nhuchhe's Kitchen, The Organic Bistro. 4429903.
- ❖ **Open mic night** at Via Via Café, every Friday, 8PM onwards.
- ❖ **Live music** at the Red Onion Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- ❖ **Ciney Gurung** every Wednesday and Rashmi Singh every Friday, live at the Absolute Bar, Hotel Narayani Complex, 7PM. 5521408
- ❖ **DJ Raju and the Cloudwalkers** live at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, every Friday and Saturday. 4491234

DINING

- ❖ **Starry night BBQ** with live music by Ciney Gurung at The Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La, every Friday 7PM, Rs 666 inclusive of a beer. 4412999
- ❖ **5th Annual Monsoon Wine Festival** 16 wines at Rs 150 a glass and Rs 600 a bottle, at Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 4250440
- ❖ **Monsoon Magic** live jazz by Inner Groove and a variety of cocktails from the summer special menu, every Wednesday, Rs 599 at Fusion – the Bar at Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Friday evening BBQ** with live music, at the Hotel Himalaya, 7PM, Rs 499 net. 5523900
- ❖ **Walk and lunch** every Saturday at the Shivapuri Heights Cottage. 9841371927
- ❖ **Fresh summer bites** salads, soups, sandwiches, and sorbets at Hotel Shangri-la daily 12-3PM at Rs.499. 4412999.
- ❖ **Kebabs and curries** at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9841290619
- ❖ **Krishnarpan** Nepali specialty restaurant at Dwarika's Hotel, six to 22 course ceremonial lunch and dinner. 4479488
- ❖ **Weekend special** with sekuwa, bara, barbeque, Fridays at Ambassador Garden House, Lazimpat, 5.30 PM onwards. 4411706
- ❖ **Flavours of the Middle East** every Friday and the taste of Thailand every Wednesday at The Café, Hyatt Regency, Boudha. 4491234
- ❖ **Light nouvelle snacks** and elaborate cordon bleu meals at La'Soon, Pulchok, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- ❖ **Continental cuisine** and wine by the fire place at Kilroy's, Thamel. 4250440.
- ❖ **Smorgasbord** lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4375280
- ❖ **Retro brunch barbecue** with Crossfire Band at Le Meridien, Gokarna from 12-4PM, Rs 1,000 including swimming. 4451212
- ❖ **Calcutta's rolls, biryani, kebabs** Indian cuisine at Bawarchi, Bluebird Mall Food Court. 9741000735
- ❖ **Woodfired pizzas** at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel 4262768, Bhatbhateni 4426587 and Pulchok 5521755
- ❖ **Pizza** from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- ❖ **Jazzabell café** enjoy great food, exotic cocktails and music, Chakupat, 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
- ❖ **Wet and wild package** at Godavari Village Resort, every Saturday and Sunday, unlimited swimming, buffet lunch with a beer, Rs 690. 5560675
- ❖ **Monsoon madness** two nights three days package at Rs.5999 for a couple at Shangri-La Village, Pokhara. 4412999

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



Quest Entertainment

Harry Potter returns for his fifth year at Hogwarts still shaken by the tragedy of the previous year's Triwizard Tournament. With the Ministry of Magic denying the truth about Lord Voldemort's (Ralph Fiennes) return, Harry (Daniel Radcliff) has come under suspicion from the wizarding community. As Harry struggles with the problems at school, including the hateful new teacher Dolores Umbridge (Imelda Staunton), he tries to learn more about the mysterious Order of the Phoenix and their role in the fight against the Dark Lord.

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

सहभागितामूलक संविधान निर्माणका लागि संविधानसभाको निर्वाचनमा सहभागी भई आफैंले छानेका प्रतिनिधि मार्फत नयाँ संविधान निर्माण गरौं ।

नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग

JAZZ free Music Workshop
by KJC faculty
on Saturday, 21 July 2007
Time : 1 pm
Venue: **Gyanodaya College**
Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur, Nepal
Phone: **5528362**
www.kofjazz.com

ADMISSION OPEN for Summer '07 Session
DIT, BScIT, BCA, PGDIT, MScIT
PGDCA, MCA, BBA, MBA, MBA-IT
MBA-Banking, MBA-HCS

Sikkim Manipal University
of Health, Medical and Technological Sciences

INFOMAX COLLEGE
of Information Technology & Management
Ramgawa, Phulbari Marg, Pokhara - 11, Nepal
Tel: 98077 61 525736, 521343
Email: mail@icim.edu.np | Website: www.icim.edu.com.np

WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



KATHMANDU VALLEY

Fri	Sat	Sun
29-20	28-19	26-19

It's a tragic monsoon irony—a series of cloudbursts kills 50 people in west Nepal the same week farmers in other parts of the country are desperately wishing for rain. The Valley has received just a third of its usual July quota so far. Thursday afternoon's satellite picture suggests that respite is on its way. The low-pressure trough over the Bay is being charged and the moisture-rich clouds of the system should pass through the foothills, bringing vigorous rain along the southern Mahabharat and those parts of the midhills that remain thirsty. The Valley will probably receive a significant portion of its July quota of moisture in the coming week. Expect muggy days and temporary showers punctuated by scorching sun.

Cushion, Curtain, Candles, Gifts, Bedspreads, Bean bags, Carpet & Rugs, Home Accessories

Serendipity
Decorative Items & Lifestyle

Exclusively at:
7, Hotel Woodland Complex Durbar Marg, Kathmandu Tel: 01-4231514, 9841251051

Steamed American Corn

CUP CORN
naturally healthy!

EXCITING 3 FLAVOURS
• Original
• Masala
• Pepper

Bhatbhateni, Bluebird Mall, Kathmandu Mall
Kastamandap Bazaar, King's Burger, Beans Cafe

WORLDSPACE
SATELLITE RADIO

REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC
OVER 40 PREMIUM CHANNELS
Rock, Jazz, Blues, Pop, Oldies, Country, Hip Hop, Alternative Rock, Classical
BBC, CNN, NPR, Sports
CALL 9741033404

KHAO SHONG

100% COFFEE

अष्टमिन्स एफिन्स फिन्स
अष्टमिन्स एफिन्स फिन्स (एफिन्स) फिन्स
अष्टमिन्स एफिन्स फिन्स (एफिन्स) फिन्स
अष्टमिन्स एफिन्स फिन्स (एफिन्स) फिन्स

रेडियो सगरमाथा
एफएम 90.2 थोप्लो 8 मेगाहर्ज

नेपाली रेडियो
नेपाली आवाज

हालचाल
राजा खबर खाना पाउन
हालचाल
विहान: ८ वख, ११ वख
अधरान्त: ९ वख, ८ वख
राति: ६ वख र राती: ८ वख

अमेरिकी सिमन्त सञ्चार कार्यक्रम
Tuning In To Language and Culture
बजार हुने समय । हरेक शुक्रबार बिहान (८:१२-८:३८)
हरेक आइतबार बिहान (१२:००-१२:००)
+ रेडियो सगरमाथा विभिन्न सुनी, अमेरिकी सुनारी-
(रेडियो सगरमाथा र अमेरिकी राज्यपाल, अमेरिकी
केन्द्रीय सरकार)

सम्पर्क: ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४, ९७४१०३३४०४

हरेक विहान ८:०० देखि राती ११:०० बजे सम्म सुचना सिमन्त र राज्य सञ्चारकर्ता मार्फत सञ्चाली जाती रेडियो सगरमाथा ९०.२ कोशी र मेगाहर्ज



KIRAN PANDAY

NATIONAL MOURNING: Sushila Koirala, wife of the late BP Koirala, passed away on Friday. Those who paid their respects spanned the political spectrum, and included Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula and Speaker Subhas Nembang.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

LONG WAY TO GO: Jagadish Pokhrel, vice chair of the National Planning Commission releases the UNDP report on Millennium Development Goals, *Progress and Challenges in South Asia, 2007* on Friday. He is flanked by Junko Sasaki, acting resident coordinator of UNDP (right) and Frances Turner, deputy regional director of UNICEF ROSA.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

TALK SHOP: Addressing the Constituent Assembly Discussion Group about the challenges ahead were Ian Martin, CP Mainali, Anil Jha, CP Gajurel, Lila Mani Pokharel, Bimalendra Nidhi, and Jhalanath Khanal. Kanak Mani Dixit moderated, at Yala Maya Kendra on Thursday evening.



SURESH MAHARJAN

HALF-FREE: Kamaiyas freed seven years ago protesting that the land and employment long promised to them has still not materialised, at the Maitighar Mandala on Wednesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

GET YOURS NOW: The post-SLC rush by colleges to admit students was at its peak on Friday despite a partial banda.



Hotel
GOODWILL
Since 2002
Room Rate:- US\$ 15/- to 50/-
Your Home in Patan

HAPPY PRICE MENU
All Day 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM

NRs. 50/-



GOODWILL
Health Club
Limited Membership Open
A Complete Health Club in Patan

GOODWILL
Family Restuarant
Promotional Price... in dine-in orders.
For Details:
5544520, 5522406
Kantesh, Lalitpur-6
Email: goodwill@twinkl.com.np

acer Aspire 3684NWXMI
Rs. 54,000

- Celeron M 440 (1.86 GHZ)
- 512 MB DDR II Memory
- 120 GB HDD
- DVD-Super Multi double-layer drive (DVD+/-RW)
- 14.1" WXGA Acer Crystal Brite™ TFT LCD
- 5 in one card reader
- Built in 0.3 megapixel Camera
- Linpus Linux

acer Aspire 5573ANWXMI

- Intel Core Duo T2350 (1.86 GHZ)
- 512 MB DDR II Memory
- 120 GB HDD
- DVD-Super Multi double-layer drive (DVD+/-RW)
- 14.1" WXGA Acer Crystal Brite™ TFT LCD
- 1280x800, 16.7M colours
- Built in Bluetooth
- Linpus Linux

Please contact for the price.



acer
warranty
available only
from Mercantile
and it's
authorized
partners.

MERCANTILE
OFFICE SYSTEMS


Mercantile Building, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu
Tel: 4220773, 4243566, Fax: 977-1-4225407
Email: market@mos.com.np

- STAR OFFICE AUTOMATION: PUTALI SADAK, 4220480, 4246994, 4242358
- HIMALAYAN TRADING HOUSE: POKHARA, 061 521756
- GAUTAM COMPUTERS & PERIPHERALS: NEW ROAD, POKHARA 061-539529 / 533529
- SAGAR INTERNATIONAL PVT. LTD.: PUTALI SADAK, 2002400
- THE WAVES GROUP TRADING PVT. LTD.: LAUNCHAUR, KATHMANDU, 4427264, 4422327
- BIRAT INFOTECH ENT.: BIRATNAGAR, 021 525150
- COMPUTER & ELECTRONICS TRADE LINK: BUTWAL, 071-542699

UJYAALO 90 F.M.

5:00 am
to
11:00 pm

SIDHA KURA,
PRASTA BICHAR




Our Coverage Area
Our Partner Radio Stations
Communication Corner VSAT

Across the Country...

Kayakairan	6:00 am
Nepal Darpan	8:00 pm
Nepal Khabar	12 Noon 3:00 pm Evening 6:00 & 10:55 pm

We are broadcasting
News in English
Very Soon...



Ujyaalo National Network (UNN)
Communication Corner Pvt. Ltd.
Sanepa, Lalitpur, Tel: 5551716, 5547034, Fax: 5549357 E-mail: info@unn.com.np, Website: www.unn.com.np

Resam Firiri

The only thing more embarrassing than not being able to appoint Nepali ambassadors for over a year is the fact that we still don't have a national anthem. So, while the Marseilles played at the Bastille Day celebrations last week, we didn't have our own **anathema**. No one listens to us Asses, but in a previous column we had recommended announcing Resam Firiri as our interim anthem at least until Byakul Maila's lyrics are put into song. But given the vacillation on ambassadorships, how can one be sure the eight parties will like the new national tune and actually adopt it?



Anyone who was stranded last week at the airport because of the lightning strike by taxi drivers will have used a lot of bad words unprintable here (like *% of a \$#@”+ or even ?^&~=*) to describe the drivers of the 50-year-old taxis who blocked the entrance to the country's only international aviation gateway. One of Kathmandu's major tourist attractions are these vintage Datsuns and antique Toyopets which charge you an arm and a leg to take you downtown, unless of course you **lose some more limbs** along the way.

The Ass has uncovered the real reason: the government wants to scrap the taxis, but the owners want to buy non-Indian brand taxis above 1,000 cc for the same duty waiver as Indian-made Marutis get. So the fight is between powerful lobbies of Japanese and Korean cars against the even more powerful importers of Indian cars.

If this is what they do over cars, imagine what will happen when the dogfight between Airbus and Boeing really starts over Nepal Airline's fleet expansion plans: pilots parking their planes haphazardly all over the runway to shut the airport down? Anything is possible in the New Nepal.



Among the people who were stuck at the airport last Friday were various arriving and departing Kathmandu-based dips, peacekeepers, warmongers and our very own Matrika Yadav. The Ass has given the **Deforestation Minister** a lot of grief in the

past months over his affinity for logging, but the man deserves a medal for refusing to fly business class to and from Bangkok on his health checkup. **Comrades Blooming Lotus** and **Red Flag** had no such qualms on their recent jaunts to Switzerland and Norway, nor Comrade Ananta to Hong Kong. Wonder, though, if Matrikababu was put off by the fact that Thai calls the front of its plane 'Royal Orchid'. Being the champions of national capitalists, maybe the entire politburo should now stop driving around in stolen Boleros and switch to Made in Biratnagar Hulas Sherpa SUVs (also known as '**Nepali Humvees**').



The other folks complaining about having to use Tata Pickups instead of Toyota Landcruisers are UN arms monitors. On one particularly hot afternoon **somewhere in the southwestern sector** recently, UNMIN staff actually took their eyes off the CCTV cameras to emerge from their air-conditioned trailers to admire a convoy of Japanese automatic suspension 4WDs belonging to INGOs.



It's business-as-usual in the four-star party. Looks like efforts to unite the party by BP Day on the 21st is coming to nought mainly because GP can't forgive The Sher for **doublecrossing** him, and joining Gyancha in 2002.

Over at Balkhu HQ Makunay survived his party's CentCom meeting despite Jhallu's spirited effort to dislodge him. Guess what they were arguing about: Makunay had analysed that Nepal's polity was divided into four groups: royalists, capitalists, lefties, and ultras. Jhallu's take was there are only three groups and that the Maoists are also socialists. Comrade 'Leftist God' Bam Deb disagreed with both and postulated that Nepalis are either republicans or monarchists. Given the number of puret bajes in the UML, politburo it's not surprising they're **splitting hairs**.



ass@nepalitimes.com

Weekends @ Dhokaima



Happy Hour
Every Friday
6:30-9:30PM
[Free snacks]

Sunday Brunch
10AM-2PM



DHOKAIMA
ठ्याफे

Patan Dhoka
Phone: 5522113
dhokaimacafe@yahoo.com

"A pleasant cafe ... with a nice garden and bar set under a sprawling walnut tree."
- Lone Planet Guide Nepal



WASHINGTON, DC. 5-STAR COMFORT ALL THE WAY.

Awarded the prestigious 5-star status by Skytrax,
Qatar Airways flies to over 80 destinations worldwide.
For more information please contact your local travel agent or
Qatar Airways at 16600122444.
Book online at www.qatarairways.com

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية

