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Who needs politics?

What we really mean is there's more to life than politics, despite the lack of movement in the 'higher' reaches of the Nepali state. In this issue, we've made an effort to drag our weary eyes away from the parliamentary shenanigans to where people are actually doing something productive. You might be surprised, pleasantly, too.

BEATS TREKKING: Nepal's longest suspension bridge (344m) swings 135m above the Modi Khola in Parbat District.

KIRAN PANDAY

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BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

‘Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his comrades in the bush want the present constitution scrapped. Presumably, they want to have a dictatorship of the proletariat declared in its place. The Unified Marxist-Leninists, on the other hand, saw the Maoists stealing their thunder so they half-heartedly put forward their own bright ideas for constitutional amendments. Then there are the people on the hard right who are furious that their masters lost power, and now want a new constitution that will set right the “wrongs” of the Jana Andolan.

So, there you have it: the entire political spectrum except for the centrist NC organising to remould the constitution. We have to ask ourselves: What are they after? Why now? And who benefits?

Our view is: it ain't broke, so don't fix it. The snowball effect of public cynicism about the state of the country has little to do with flaws in the constitution. It has to do with short-sighted, narrow-minded and self-serving politicians who don't deserve to rule. Blame the driver, not the car. Blame the carpenter, not his tools.

The most curious call for change in the constitution comes from the ultra-left. As with all their revolutionary forebears, the end justifies the means in the single-minded pursuit of power by the shortest route available. Care a hang for the consequences. Then there are erstwhile partyless parliamentarians like Rajeshwar Devkota, who really has nothing left to lose

by calling for major rectifications in the constitution. As the UML's General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal says elsewhere in this issue, we need a national government to ensure that the next elections are clean. Pretty clever move by the comrade from Balkhu in taking the wind out of the sails of Messrs Pushpa Kamal Dahal to his left and Rajeswar Devkota to his right.

Nepalis, being generally gradualists, have indicated by their ballots in the past ten years that they like things to evolve in less unsettling ways than total revolution. Nepalis aren't prepared to give up the essence of the Constitution - that of creating a pluralistic society with a parliamentary form of government, and independent institutions to monitor its functioning.

Changes in the constitution are perfectly natural, and even desirable. However, change for the sake of change may be good politics, but it is bad democratic practice. Having said that, Madhav Nepal must be thanked for bringing the discussion back to where it rightfully belongs - to strengthening democracy, not

discarding it altogether. Which seems to be what the two lean and hungry Bahuns from Gorkha, Comrade Baburam and Pancha Rajeshwar, want.'

Those who say nothing has changed in Nepal in the past one year are wrong. Nothing has changed in 10 years.

It is to prove this point that we are reprinting nearly verbatim the editorial from this paper from issue #18 of 24 November, 2000 titled 'Left, right. Left right'. It is a tragedy that a country's politics, its main political discourse, has made so little progress in 10 years.

The paralysing infighting and factionalism are the same, the shocking lack of commitment to national development and economic progress is identical. Even the dramatis personae are the same, as seen in the front page picture of the issue from which the above editorial is reprinted.



KD

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

Egoistic altruism

Last week, I went to a big five-star hotel to attend the presentation of the research findings of a Kathmandu-based NGO. In a few hours, ten different people were given the opportunity to express their findings and viewpoints. There was a lot of talking, but nothing was being said.

It turned out to be a session organised merely for the NGO and its international donors to compliment each other and feed each other's egos with kind and pleasing words. The research findings were predictable but vague, there were no facts, and there was no valid evidence. There were shortsighted shortcuts to generalised conclusions, one of which is

always the same: "It was difficult! Circumstances did not allow us to complete our work as hoped, but we were successful and more action is needed. So we need more funding for new programs."

Some people in the meeting called the research 'groundbreaking' and 'a big success'. But when more funding is happily given, we continue agreeably, exchange some more gratifying words in meetings in the biggest hotels of Kathmandu, keep scratching each other's backs and all feel good about the great work we are doing! But nothing changes, except the bank accounts of the people working in the NGOs, the big international donors and the government.

The development world in Nepal is guilty of egoistic altruism. Organisations, national and international, use the notion of doing good for disadvantaged people for self-gratifying reasons. And they all support each other in keeping up this shameless farce, because this is the very paradox of development work. The goal of any development intervention should be to ensure its sustainability to the extent that external actors are eventually not needed anymore. But if an organisation solves the problems of its beneficiaries, then it is out of a job. So if I really do my job well, I am out of a job. Some people work for the job, others work for getting the job done. In Nepal, the vast majority of

people do not work to get the job done; they merely work to keep their job. And that leads to egoistic altruism: a dreadful disease that this country needs to cure itself of to really develop and flourish.

True development is decreased egoism and increased altruism. This development should first of all start with the government and the national and international development agencies. Only if we develop in that sense can the true growth of this beautiful country happen. The Buddha said: "True charity has no notion of giver, gift and receiver." In Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha, charity and development is sadly about the

giver in the first place, the gift in the second place. There is no true place for the receiver, except in the empty words uttered by the majority of the development clique.

I fear, however, that this clique will keep talking, will keep saying nothing and is just concerned with feeding its collective ego. It's a waste of time to keep pointing fingers. Let's become true agents of change by working on what we can control and influence. Work with a win-win attitude, be authentic and work with genuine compassion and altruism. Then true development, growth and magic will happen in Nepal.

Etienne Duijf

POWDER KEG

When a government becomes a club of some privileged men, then the young men, women and children have to maintain the government at the expense of their wellbeing ('Vacancy, Nepal', #507)). When those suffering are poor and ignorant, it is not as serious as when they are educated and unemployed. A nation with a majority of such educated, unemployed youth is a powder keg.

Nirmal

SEXISM

Gender discrimination is one of the disturbing flaws of human civilisation ('Who owns a woman's body', #507). Growing up in a rather uneducated community in Nepal, I always thought gender discrimination was confined to the eastern hemisphere where the

majority of people are uneducated. After living in the US, I am quite disappointed to learn that gender discrimination is actually a global problem. I still believe with proper education we can mitigate this problem. I am optimistic that a day will come when people will overcome that fear and renounce the traditions that have been keeping us back.

Satish Shrestha

OLD IDEAS

The Maoists' state restructuring concept is based on *State and Revolution* by Lenin ('Hollow state', #507). It is based on the premise that a revolution has to force (not through social transformation but violently) the restructuring of the existing state. It was mainly based on the strategy to overthrow the autocratic, and very repressively feudal, system of the Czars. Nepal is not at the same

developmental stage as Russia then, nor is the world. The international political paradigm has changed a lot since. To hang on to that concept and base restructuring on the same premises is just madness and reveals the dogmatism and blindness of Baburam Bhattarai's intellectual capacity.

Kamal Kishor

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Not just the democratic parties of Nepal but all freedom loving citizens who aspire for liberty, equality and fraternity should make demilitarisation of the PLA and disbanding of the paramilitary YCL the bottom line for dealing with the Maoist Party ('PLA Program', #507). How Britain dealt with the IRA should be a lesson for us. But why do they, and other European countries, not adhere to the same principle, and advise us otherwise?

Mohan Rai



On the blogs a little light music

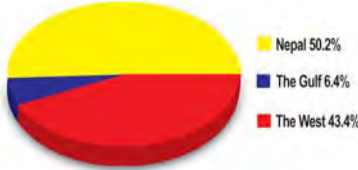
Nepali Kukur croons along to Pakistani pop. Follow the racket to nepalitimes.com/blogs



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Q. Where is the grass greener for you?

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Q. Did you enjoy Manisha Koirala's wedding?





India changing



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

Travelling through Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Shimla and Goa over the past three weeks gave me a glimpse into the astonishing changes taking place across urban India. Wealth and mobility are transforming the country in ways unimaginable until a few years ago.

The 'India Shining' narrative, based largely on high growth figures and the corporate boom, was more than half a decade old when the BJP picked it up as a campaign slogan in 2004. Congress promoted a more rooted campaign revolving around *aam aadmi*, the common man. Voters went with the latter, indicating that GDP figures did not really touch them. What mattered more was the simple promise of jobs, controlled prices, dignity, communal harmony, and access to opportunities.

This message was reinforced in the 2009 elections. Congress did not win because of the nuclear deal with the US, or because the economy was rescued from the global meltdown. Analysts believe it was the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act that won Congress the elections.

In states across India, voters are sending out similar signals. They are rejecting politics and an economy based solely on industrial growth, which often involves displacing the poorest Indian citizens from their land. Mamata Banerjee's success in challenging the Left in West Bengal is due to her appropriation of the latter's 'pro-poor' stance to the extent of being 'anti-industry'. This resonates

with the poor, and unreported by the national media, scores of protests by slum-dwellers against the systematic demolition of their homes have taken place across urban centres. The Naxalite challenge in central and eastern India may be rooted in a complex set of factors, but the tendency of 'democratic' parties to readily become agents for extractive mining industries and the lack of justice are central causes.

India faces multiple challenges, from growing inequality to political discontent and armed rebellions. But we should not forget that the Indian

India has changed, and so has its self-perception. If only Nepali politicians could see it.

state has never been as equipped to deal with them as it is today. This strength is based on the economic trajectory of the past two decades, which the state is now reaping the dividends of.

The relentless infrastructural expansion of Delhi is striking. The metro now extends to almost the entire city. Airports have been modernised and passenger traffic has increased exponentially. More than IRs 200 billion is being invested in the Commonwealth Games, all in the name of 'national pride'. The national highway project and the

inter-related state highway projects promise to connect the country in an unprecedented way.

In Mumbai and Bangalore, young people who graduated five years ago have 'packages' of between IRs 1.5 to 5 million a year. Many are from lower middle class families. Their families, localities, schools and colleges now believe it is possible to improve their living standards beyond what previous generations imagined. Thousands of Indian tourists in Goa and Shimla are testament to the steady increase in disposable incomes. There is renewed cultural confidence, visible in the proliferation in the arts, literature and both Hindi and regional films.

The sense that India's time has arrived is unmistakable in power corridors. The bureaucracy is both younger and more arrogant, and has little patience for any real or perceived obstacle in India's quest for a position at high table. If that means being ruthless, flouting laws, trampling on the freedom of citizens, and constricting democratic freedoms, so be it.

Nepali politicians visit Delhi often, but they spend all their time with operatives and begging for appointments with politicians. It would be far more useful for them to get out and understand the scale and significance of the changes taking place in India; the multiple ways in which the state is dealing with its challenges; and the extent to which politicians and bureaucrats are willing to work in the 'national interest'. Unless they do so, Nepali actors will neither understand India's recent aggressive approach in Nepal nor be able to break out of the old paradigms of thinking about Indo-Nepal ties. 🇳🇵

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Pragatinagar’s progress



GIRI RAJ ADHIKARI

Pragatinagar lives up to its name

RUBEENA MAHATO
in NAWALPARASI

If you think plans mean nothing in Nepal, think again. There is a place in Nepal where plans translate into reality, goals are achieved on time and government offices do not reek of incompetence and corruption. Welcome to Pragatinagar VDC in Nawalparasi, a model village in every sense. Pragatinagar was once an inhospitable highway settlement 25 kilometres west of Bharatpur. Many now know it as the first VDC in Nepal

to declare itself a No Open Defecation Zone. But this was just the beginning. On May 26 this year, this VDC of 2960 households added feathers to its cap by declaring itself the first VDC with 100 per cent school enrollment, iodine coverage and birth registration. Pragatinagar also has the lowest level of malnutrition (2.5%) and one of the highest levels of adult literacy (86%) in Nepal. What do these statistics mean? Every child above five, irrespective of socioeconomic status, has access to education, every household with children consumes

HEAVY DUTY: A community mobiliser and her husband weigh their child to monitor growth

iodised salt (reducing malnutrition) and every child born is registered within 35 days of birth, ensuring its fundamental right to identity. The advances made in physical infrastructure are no less inspiring. The road networks are well managed, the water is safe to drink, and there are irrigation facilities as well as health and education services available. VDC secretary Rajendra Prasad Devkota is full of excitement when describing these achievements. “There are many VDCs that receive more assistance from the government. But every change that has taken place in Pragatinagar is because of the untiring efforts of the child clubs, women’s groups and community mobilisers,” he says. Pragatinagar’s amazing network of community stakeholders was set up with UNICEF’s DACAW program over a decade ago. Its child club network, comprising 20 clubs (including Nepal’s first, Jagriti Child Club), is one of the driving forces of Pragatinagar’s development. The network spearheaded the No Open Defecation campaign, conducting door-to-door visits, raising awareness, helping in toilet construction in all households, and

monitoring the campaign to ensure its success. A School Sanitation Program launched 10 years ago has also been successful. President of the child club network, Sanju Khanal, and acting secretary of Jagriti Child Club, Sagar Neupane, describe their watchdog role. “We work as a bridge between the community and the local authorities. We collaborate with the VDC in its every endeavour to ensure that the community benefits.” The community mobilisers, mostly women, are also key to Pragatinagar’s achievements. There are one to three community mobilisers in each neighbourhood who go from door to door weighing newborns, distributing vitamin A capsules, sending pregnant women for at least four compulsory medical check-ups, and handing out birth registration forms. These unpaid workers have no interest other than to serve the community. Maintaining the VDC’s achievements, they say, is a lot harder than reaching targets in the first place. Kamala Ghimire, 28, had her hands full with her two children, husband and in-laws. But now she looks after all the households in ward no. 5 as its community mobiliser. In the last decade she has wheeled her bicycle to every home in Pragatinagar. She has truly witnessed the transformation of her village and her only motivation, she says, is to see that “no child or

mother ever has to die for lack of proper health care.” It’s not out of place to wonder at the selflessness of people such as Kamala Ghimire. But instead of providing monetary incentives, VDC secretary Devkota leads by example. His office is plastered with detailed descriptions of the VDC’s expenses and sources of income, and this is updated every month for the benefit of the public. There’s even a fortnightly schedule detailing Devkota’s activities. He does it to instill a sense of ownership among the community and to make them feel that the VDC is accountable to them. “There is no place for irregularities and red tape in my office. If we want to involve the community, we have to earn their trust.” Devkota speaks of the challenges ahead, the limited resources and the infrastructure that is still needed to meet the targets Pragatinagar has set for itself. But going by its record, it is impossible not to be hopeful. Pragatinagar proves that all it takes to develop a place is not money or resources, but leadership and determination. 🇳🇵

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The lure of the national



FOURTH ESTATE
C K Lal

BIRGANJ—The Shankracharya Dwar near Raxaul is something of a gateway to the country of Hindus. With miniature replicas of Krishna Mandir and Pashupatinath precariously balanced on a concrete archway, the kitschy ceremonial entrance serves as a mark of Nepalipen. A bustling business centre on the border, Birganj takes its Hindu and Nepali identity seriously.

The tone of the local media is in line with the buildings along the main street: predominantly conservative, with a tinge of Hindu assertiveness. Along with Image, almost all the FM broadcasters in Bara, Parsa and Makwanpur can be clearly received in Birganj. With the exception of Bhojpuria FM, the primary language of broadcast of all the stations is Nepali.

Reportedly, 12 daily newspapers are published from Bara-Parsa. An exhaustive search of all the newsstands between the clocktower and Sri Ram Cinema—the commercial thoroughfare—resulted in a collection of only five dailies, all in Nepali.

The obsession of the Birganj media with ‘national’ issues—who said what after meeting whom in Kathmandu—is baffling. It’s not just the language; the content of newspapers and FM broadcasts appears to be even more nationalist than that of national newspapers and broadcasters. Unless it’s Hindu militants breaking plates



KIRAN PANDAY

The press in the periphery is more interested in national than local events

at Maoist camps or erstwhile prince Paras mouthing platitudes, local issues and events are glossed over to report on events such as the marriage plans of Manisha Koirala.

The sugar factory at Garuda is operational for just three months a year. Mill owners were tardy in paying sugarcane

farmers, so the latter switched crops. Now there is no sugarcane to process. This should have been a more important issue for the local media than the periodic hiccups of the NEPSE. The press prefers to report on the spiralling price of gold instead.

For Nepalis coming home, Indian Customs has always been troublesome.

These days, the guards rummage through baggage even more carefully, looking for *dal* and sugar. The explanation is terse and mocking: “You can take as much explosives as you want. That’s your government’s headache. But no *dal*, no sugar and no chemical fertilisers. These products are subsidised for Indian consumers.” For the local media in Birganj, these are trivial issues.

Journalists here set their priorities by what they see, hear and read in the national media. Most of them double-up as stringers for television, radio and newspapers based in Kathmandu. One such journalist complained bitterly, “Unless our dispatches deal with Gyanendra, Hindu militancy, armed groups or Karina Begum, they never make it to the newsdesk.” Unsurprisingly, the leftovers of such stories are used for their own papers.

As long as nationalistic aspirations are strong, local coverage is neglected. The lure of pan-Nepal identity is so overpowering that even the daily Prateek, one of the most respected publications in the Tarai, positions itself as ‘national’ and tries hard to imitate the content of Kathmandu broadsheets. Terai Television, perhaps wanting to be close to the action, actually moved to Kathmandu. The best talents in Bhojpur are mostly in the capital city. The owners of factories in the Birganj-Pathlaiya Industrial Corridor and the importers of Adarsha Nagar have their advertising-dispensing headquarters in Kathmandu. It’s no wonder Terai Television went where the producers were rather than stay with their purported audience.

Everyone in the media wants to be national, because fame and fortune does not lie in speaking to or for the periphery in its languages. 🇳🇵

THIS WEEK

No paper fit to print

Kantipur daily and *The Kathmandu Post* said they may have to halt publication soon if Indian customs refuse to release 1,000 metric tons of newsprint held for investigation in the port city of Kolkata. In a report published on Wednesday, *The Kathmandu Post* said, “No investigation, however has been carried out despite repeated requests. Nor has Kantipur Publications been given a clear explanation for the continued delay, which has meant heavy demurrage and possibility of the newsprint getting damaged.” The Indian Embassy says the investigation is a part of a routine process. “Customs examination of transit consignments is a routine administrative measure and the imputation of motives in such a matter by two newspapers, who seek to lay claim to responsible journalism, is highly regrettable,” it said in a statement.

Budget blues

The Maoist Party has said it will prevent the government from presenting the budget in parliament until the prime minister fulfills the terms of the 3-point agreement and steps down to make way for a power-sharing government. Parliament was scheduled to begin discussing the budget proposals this month.

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Who's bad?

STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

Private sector professionals in Nepal view the development sector with suspicion. They accept the easy media-fed diet of international non-governmental organisations as being 'dollar farmers'. Their self-image is that they in the private sector are doing 'real work' as opposed to doing mere 'development', which they have a hard time seeing as work.

As someone who's worked in and with both the private and the development sectors, I think it's time the Nepali private sector, the way it is currently structured, looks at the development sector with an open mind to better understand the latter's approaches to governance, accountability and providing career paths to employees.

Governance: It's an open secret that most Nepali companies, including banks and finance companies, have lousy systems for deciding how they are directed and controlled for results. Most are family



businesses, and some have only recently started hiring professional managers – that too, with mixed success. Most boards are stuffed with the in-laws and friends of the chairmen, and they think of the company as a trough from which to feed. Except for some that are accountable to shareholders abroad, it's safe to say that most Nepali companies do not see the value of having a robust governance system

in place.

In contrast, organisational governance is taken much more seriously in the INGO world. The global revenue figures of some of these INGOs dwarf that of many top-line Nepali companies. Since most Nepal-based INGOs have headquarters abroad, they are more likely to have fairly well-developed and globally validated policies, procedures and processes for how staff members

It's easy to bash INGOs, but how is your own company being run?

deliver work. That strength in governance also affects their field-based NGOs and community groups, which are held to a much higher standard of accountability than they would be locally.

Sure, instances of governance failure happen in the INGO world too. But when they do, the system tends to correct those failures much faster than they would in equivalent situations in the Nepali private sector, where much is dependent on the whims of the chairman or the CEO.

Accountability: Most INGOs raise funds from institutional and individual donors who are usually based abroad. These donors routinely demand rigorous accountability with regards to how much, where, why, and how funds have been spent for results that have been promised. Reporting requirements are stringent.

Most Nepali journalists who report that "INGOs are not transparent" are not serving their readers well when they do not even bother to read the annual reports of INGOs, who have to satisfy the demands of various countries' equivalents of Nepal's

Social Welfare Council.

Career path: Reading the Nepali press, one gets the impression that the local retail bank CEOs who earn the most are necessarily among the best managers. What the Nepali press forgets to mention is that, in the last 10 years in the INGO world, many home-grown Nepali professionals have risen much higher regionally and globally, and therefore command a much greater influence among their global peers. This has been possible because INGOs, unlike most Nepali companies, offer a better career path for their talented employees. And a Nepali who has run a global non-profit with offices in 65 countries has a range of mental models that few high-flying local CEOs can match.

Next time you hear a private sector professional launching into yet another attack against INGOs, why not turn the tables? "True, INGOs are far from perfect. But how does your company do governance; how are you accountable to customers; and what career path do you offer to your 'best assets', your employees?" A stimulating conversation is likely to ensue. 🇳🇵

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Pepsi Mania

Aswin Shrestha and Anish Shrestha won 32" Samsung LCD TVs in the fourth lucky draw of the Pepsi Football Mania campaign at Radisson Hotel on 20 June. The grand prize winner will win a Hero Honda Karizma ZMR. There are two Samsung 32" LCD TVs as well as Nokia mobile phones, Timex wristwatches and T-shirts, keyrings and posters to be won every week until July 11.

BOK piggy banks

As part of its Save for the Future social awareness campaign, Bank of Kathmandu opened 'Nava Kopila Bachat Khata' accounts with Rs 1000 deposits for 50 kids from Friends of Needy Children. The Bank also deposited an additional Rs 100 in each account and will deposit Rs 133.33 on the kids' birthdays. The bank also gave the children BOK piggy banks and educational materials at a function organised on Saturday. CEO Ajay Shrestha reiterated his bank's commitment to the causes of health, environment and education under its CSR initiatives.

VocaBoom

Hopscotch Edutainment is launching VocaBoom, the first vocabulary enrichment centre in Nepal. VocaBoom, a game-based classroom program, employs a practical approach to increase children's vocabulary through verbal essays, debates, quizzes, role plays, spelling rounds and original story narration. The 36-hour program is spread over 9 months. Registration will open on 25 June and classes will begin from the second week of July at Hopscotch Edutainment at City Centre. Call 9841336758.

LIC's Jeevan Astha

Life Insurance Corporation Nepal has launched Jeevan Astha, a guaranteed addition investment cum insurance plan. Jeevan Astha is available for three and five year terms only and provides Rs 80 per thousand SA and Rs 85 per thousand SA respectively per annum as returns. The product is available for purchase from all agents and branches of LIC from 25 June.



Have a tippie?

Gone are the days when the ladies tittered as they sipped a glass or two of fermented grape juice, sometimes adulterated with water. Men are as likely to join in and what's more, venture an opinion on the calibre of what's on offer. The wine market has boomed, and there's no supermarket worth the name without an excellent selection from around the world. So much so that Nepali winemakers have now ventured out into the light. So far they've had limited success, but it's worth bearing in mind that Nepal has only had a decade at its disposal to master the 8,000-year-old tradition of wine-making.

Makalu Wine Industries' Hinwa is at the forefront with a red and a white, while Pokhara's Dandaghare boasts four different combos. None of these are true wines in the sense of being derived from grapes, and opt to test an intriguing mix of mountain berries, herbs and honey. On your behalf, *Nepali Times* took the plunge.

Dandaghare white (Rs 525 / Rs 370)

A strong bouquet one wouldn't associate with grape wine, and a slightly murky colour. A relatively gentle taste to follow up, with some hints of dryness and sweetness. Not bad.

The cheaper of the two samples had a strong bouquet that one of our staffers described as the smell of 'jaad'. A hint of honey, perhaps, as indicated on the label. But the taste is thin, sour and rough on the tongue, and got us hot under the collar. Not in a good way.



Dandaghare red (Rs 400)

We didn't actually sample Dandaghare red, but were informed by usually reliable sources that it had more than a hint of liquorice to it. Hm.

Hinwa white (Rs 330)

Sweetish, reminiscent of dessert wine, though we weren't sure if this was the intention. Drinkably smooth, but you'd have to have a sweet tooth to persevere with this.

Hinwa red (Rs 330)

Also slightly sweet, with a light fruity bouquet, and more like a rosé than a red. A surprisingly sharp flavour and deceptively strong. Smell of *aiselu* and taste of *chutro*? Perhaps we'd had a few too many by then.



Making of a Nepali wine

If wines tell stories, then Hinwa definitely embodies that of Nepal. The fusion of wild berries with an improvised Nepali distillation process, and the collaboration of local communities with one savvy entrepreneur, make this a unique Nepali creation.

Fifteen years ago, Aish Narayan Shrestha started making wines, using the wild berries that grow above 8,000 feet in the eastern hilly region of Nepal. He organised villagers in Sankhuwasabha to collect *aiselu* and *chutro* in the forests, then sell it to his factory. Here the berries were mixed with sugar and left to ferment in plastic drums for a month. "Hinwa is entirely dependent on a natural process," says Sujan Shrestha, the son of the founder. "We have not yet adopted modern distillery technology."

Shrestha's Hinwa winery produces white and red wines, although the red is closer to rosé. About 12,000 bottles of Hinwa are sold every year. Some of it is also exported abroad. "We targeted the European market but could not meet its demands because of a lack of production," explains Sujan.

Production was severely hit when the Maoists destroyed their factory in 2001 for producing alcohol. But Hinwa pulled itself together and has quietly gained popularity among wine drinkers in Nepal. With production limited to a certain season a year, don't be surprised if your local store runs out fairly quickly. But don't worry; there will always be another year.

Shankar Dahal

Wining and dining has long been more than just an imported cliché in the urban centres of Nepal. It's not just the inexplicable volume of restaurants and bars popping up in every corner that testifies to the newfound Nepali desire to venture out of their dalbhat regimentation. But weddings, *bratabandas* and even *pasnes* are now cause for ostentatious celebration beyond the homestead, and every one of these occasions is witness to the clink of wine glasses to complement the ever ready beer and whisky.



The World's First 21:9 Cinema Proportioned LCD TV with Ambilight now on display at new PHILIPS showroom at Kantipath, Kathmandu.

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THE HUNGRY EYE

Casa de Cass,
Pulchowk



A good martini, it seems, makes an impression. Even better if a curl of citrus is suspended in the clear waters, tantalisingly calling to you. To resist is merely to desist, and what could be the point of that in the smaller scheme of things?

Casa de Cass is a fine spot for lunch, as UN House has discovered, but an even better plot for evening dining, perhaps because of the absence of said UN stiff. You may well have the place to yourself, unless the owner drops in for a chat, and the attentive waiter will make sure you don't regret your privacy as you float on the elongated notes of Chet Baker. A big bottle of red, then, and a neat triplet of bacon wrapped chicken in white sauce; a slab of king fish for my opposite number. We ate well, and drank even more. The martini was superfluous, but isn't that the point? *Nepali Kukur*

Marronnier, Chakupat



This one's a real tuckaway, and perhaps one that deserves to remain so, if only for the continued patronage of those who've discovered it through dint of cultured curiosity. Hint: it's above the Fuji Bakery and you'd be forgiven (though hungry) for retreating after opening the door to the sight of fine textiles on racks. Which they also sell, along with a fine selection of pan-Asian and continental dishes.

Try the Greek Taramo for starters, if you like (and you should like) smoked salmon and salmon pate on bread. If you feel a little bolder, lively up the Newar in you and order a few slices of rare buff to boot, as much of a riposte to carpaccio as kachila is to steak tartare. For the mains, to the strains of opera-lite, you have a choice of cutlets and steaks and what better to wash it all down than good old Star Beer, of tasty 7.5% vintage? My companion figured the plum soda was better, and she preferred the salad to her fatty pork, but we both rolled out feeling beery, and porky, and well done.

Nepali Kukur

EVENTS

Nepal International Indigenous Film Festival, in its fourth year, the festival will screen over 30 films from Nepal, India, Bhutan, Mexico, Sweden, Norway, and Cambodia. *Friday 25 June – Sunday 27 June, City Hall and Nepal Tourism Board*

Heritage Walk, Better World Family Nepal offers a chance to learn the history of your city, and the numerous temples you pass on your way to work. Anil Chitrakar will also provide some commentary. *Saturday 26 June, 6.30am, meet at United World Trade Centre, Tripureswor*

Geometrics, an exhibition of paintings about the intuitive responses of elements, geometry and colours in Thangkas by American artist Piero Passacantando. *Till Sunday 27 June, 11am- 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048*

Mind Body Library, a lecture on the life and teachings of Saint Kabir. *Friday June 25, 3pm, Babarmahal, 4102025*

Recite your own writing, not for those with stage fright or a weak heart. Share your writing and receive constructive criticism. *Saturday 3 July, 3.15pm, British Council, Lainchaur*



Film Screening - Masculin Feminin, by modern cine legend, Jean Luc Godard, a film vividly reflecting Paris in the '60s, with references to everyone from Charles de Gaulle to James Bond and Bob Dylan. *Friday 25 June, 3.30pm, Docskool, Gaurighat, 4471104*



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MUSIC



Sam Smala in Kathmandu, they are like a family of musicians who play their own songs with five performers inspired by jazz, gypsy jazz and world music. See this French group perform live in Kathmandu. *Sunday 27 June, 6pm, Rastriya Nachghar, Jamal, Call 4241163 for invitations*

Paleti - Laxmi Prasad Devkota, the popular music series will use poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota's poems as lyrics performed by various artistes. *Friday 25 June, 5.30pm, Nepa~laya, Kalikasthan, 4437893*

Chevrolet Concert Series, after a brief hiatus, the series is back with performances by Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory house bands and special appearance by Stairs of Cirith and 7th Gravity. *Saturday 26 June, 6pm, Moksh auditorium, Jhamsikhel, 5013554*

Good football, good music, another Friday with football and music. Subhaprabhat will be playing in between the games. Chef Birju will be serving beef tenderloin in honey mustard sauce, calamari, kimchi pasta and pork chops. *Friday 25 June, 7pm, House of Music, Thamel*

DINING

Rox Bar, watch the matches on the big screen at the bar and drink special cocktails prepared just for the occasion. For the sophisticates among you. *Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234*

Cinnamon Lounge, spacious lounge with a menu featuring grilled meat of various kinds. For the hungry man in you. *Jhamel, 5521339*

Le Trio, Boasts a 52" LCD screen, plenty of comfortable couches and a good selection of booze for all your football viewing needs. *Jhamsikhel, 9803160266*

The Factory, a bit pricey but lots of fun games, quizzes and buckets of beer. *Thamel, 4701185*



Chow down the good momos while you are waiting. *Sherpa Mall, Darbar Marg*

Boudha Stupa Restaurant & Café, enjoy wood-fired pizza and free wi-fi with a beautiful view of the Boudha stupa. *Everyday, 9 am to 9pm, Boudha, 2130681*

Caferina,

Outdoor projector screening means you have to wait for the darkness to be able to recognise Ronaldo from Ronaldino. Or realise that neither of them are playing.

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RSS

MEET THE NEIGHBOURS: Prime Minister Madhav Nepal poses with South Asian ministers during talks on ending violence against children at the Soaltee, Wednesday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

NO STAGE TOO SMALL: Local youths make the most of the World Cup in Kel Tole, Kathmandu, Tuesday.



SAMIK KHAREL

CROSSING CULTURES: Police General Subha Bahadur Sunam jams with Rebecca at the Police Club on International Music Day, Monday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

NOT FORGOTTEN: A family from Kathmandu feeds the elderly denizens of Pashupati's Briddha Ashram, Monday.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

by **NGAMINDRA DAHAL**

The first cycle of the monsoon stopped in eastern Nepal, failing to advance into central and western Nepal last week due to a lack of moisture. The second cycle brought heavy rains in most of the Siwalik and plains. As a result, the scorching temperatures have dropped by 3 degrees on average. Satellite pictures show the monsoon wave moving up to the hills where showery rains will continue to feature over the weekend. The Valley will catch up with its quota of rains this weekend. Enjoy the rainy nights.

FRI	SAT	SUN
30-20	29-21	29-20

The failed people



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If we complain about 'the way things are', then we cannot rule out a solution because of 'the way things are'

The day the Fund for Peace announced that Nepal ranked 26th on its annual Failed States Index, the most powerful members of the executive were having a heart-to-heart session. The ministers, led by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, chided the bureaucrats for inefficiency, failure to follow directives, and therefore the nation's economic backwardness.

Madhav Nepal was particularly displeased about the lack of progress in the maintenance of shoddy roads in the capital, a highway connecting his constituency in Rautahat to his other constituency in Kathmandu, and the establishment of a republic monument, or the giant horse that could fly. "You don't even obey the orders of the prime minister," he droned on.

The bureaucrats said they were helpless. There was too much pressure from the politicians to do things they didn't want to do, they said. Repeating what they had told the Public Accounts

Committee last week when asked why funds were being diverted to projects in powerful politicians' districts, they said in unison: "We are forced to."

In the wake of a string of new corruption allegations against various members of the cabinet, the meeting was, to say the least, illuminating. If those who set the agenda and those who execute them are helpless pawns in each other's schemes then no wonder we rank so high on the Failed States Index. No wonder we are chronically behind on development.

Only last week, it was reported that illegal tree felling in 25 locations in the Tarai had left long stretches of land almost bare. All this was happening under the patronage of community forest users groups and District Forest Offices, and even the Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation Deepak Bohara was found to be involved with the timber racket. This is the same ministry that orchestrated a



ROBIN SAYAMI/NAGARIK

Minister: Don't spend time doing nothing.

Secretary: Don't spend time cutting ribbons.

Climate Summit at Everest Base Camp and has accepted a £40 million grant from DFID to tackle deforestation.

After initially denying that any of the trees had been felled illegally, the ministry has finally started disciplining those involved. So far, one officer has

been suspended. Not fired. Suspended. "But we can't take action against everyone because the papers said they are guilty," said the secretary of the ministry. Fair enough. But how about for failing to do their job, which was to protect the forests that now no longer exist?

Accountability is meaningless if you have immunity. Just 0.01 per cent of civil servants were dismissed out of a total of 77,000 last year. When bureaucrats say they are helpless, are they afraid of losing their jobs or being transferred to a less lucrative department? Haven't the ministries of finance or home always been coveted places to work, as opposed to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs?

Politicians are made accountable by elections. Through their actions, or lack thereof, they have maintained a sense in the voters' minds that the electorate is incapable of bringing about change. Frank Herbert put it nicely in the *Dune* series: "if you think of yourselves as helpless and ineffectual, it is certain that you will create a despotic government to be your master." Our government may not seem despotic, but isn't despotism a system where people are treated as subordinates?

On Monday, both bureaucrats and politicians said they were helpless, even though they continue to collaborate efficiently when it comes to embezzlement and corruption. They meekly announced that new solutions were needed. The solution is simple: they should work for the people and the country; if they can't they need to be dismissed. If we are complaining about 'the way things are', then we cannot rule out a solution because of 'the way things are.' ■

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Feeling words

SURESH RAJ NEUPANE

Historically, there has been no way for visually impaired Nepalis to broaden their horizons. There was simply no reading material available in Braille.

There was little hope for them to keep abreast of contemporary literature, let alone aspire to emulate such luminaries as John Milton, author of 'On his blindness' and Helen Keller, who penned 'The story of my life'. Now, there may be some amongst the 30,000 visually impaired people in Nepal who can dream of following in their footsteps.

A Braille library has been set up in Thapathali by the Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind, Rotary Club Patan and Rose



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Visually impaired Nepalis limited to school curricula can now swim in an ocean of world literature

International. Sunita Thapa, coordinator of Nepal FM's *Bela ko boli*, says this has filled a void. A similar venture in Lalitpur's Thaiba failed, though the audio library opened in Baluwatar with the assistance of the Nepal Blind

Support Association is still in operation. But it's not just world literature that will be available to the visually impaired, in the form of over one thousand donated books soon to arrive from the US

Library of Congress, and donations from US-based Seedlings Braille Books for Children. Nepali classics such as *Naso*, *Munamadan*, *Basai*, *Rajeshwori*, *Junga*, *Khai-khai*, *Gauri* and *Sirish ko phool* are

amongst the additions to the Thapathali library. Braille encyclopaedias, too, will help visitors advance their learning.

Govinda Prasad Acharya, lecturer at Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, points out that the Thapathali library will go a long way towards addressing the needs of visually impaired Nepalis. But he stresses the need for government to take the lead, given the costs involved in translating books into Braille, as well as the thick paper that is used to imprint Braille on.

Meanwhile, Rajan Raut of the Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind and Rotary Kasthamandap promises that Braille books will be taken on a tour to major cities such as Pokhara and Dharan. The light of learning may soon be seen by those who cannot see the light of day.

Houses of suffering, not learning



KRISHNA ADHIKARI

KRISHNA ADHIKARI in NEPALGANJ

In the terrible heat of Nepalganj, sweat-soaked students study under tin roofs in narrow rooms. The fanless rooms are so hot and crowded that students faint on occasion. As soon as the teacher leaves the room the students go and take shelter under trees or cluster around

taps to cool off. Indeed, many schools simply teach under trees. Sarita Budathoki, teacher at Gyanodaya Upper Secondary School, explains: "Since the students refuse to stay in the rooms, we've had to conduct classes in the shade of trees." (see pic)

Last year, temperatures soared to nearly 43 Celsius, and this year has been no different. But the tin roofs of classrooms are not just unsuited to the hot days. They offer

Students in the Tarai are prey to the simplest of design blunders: classrooms with tin roofs

little insulation against the chilly winters, and it's well nigh impossible to hear teachers when it rains. Even so, three fourths of Banke District's 300 schools have tin roofs.

Ekdev Panthi, chairman of Nepal National Teacher's Association, explains this is a direct result of the Education Department's bad planning. Incredibly, the department has decreed that all school buildings in the Tarai should be roofed with tin. This is not simply for homogeneity but, as Madhu Bali of the District Education Office says, "It's because of budgetary and technical shortfalls, and also to mitigate the risk from earthquakes."

It's not as if the Education Department is unaware of the problem. But it continues to build schools with the same design: this year 22 four-room and 27 two-room buildings are under construction, all with tin roofs. The government contributes 60 per cent of the costs, while 40 per cent is raised from local sources. Says Chief Engineer of Banke's Building Construction Division Office, Suroj Paudel, "Thirty per cent more funding would allow the building of proper schools with proper roofs."

There are alternatives. The group, BASE in cooperation with the Danish charity MS, has built dozens of schools in Banke and Bardiya using insulating mud architecture that keeps the classrooms warm in winter and cool in summer. See: 'Better climate for schools', #425.

उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्कमा

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Tamakoshi bonanza



KIRAN PANDAY

Having taken over the Norwegian utility Statkraft's shares in Himal Power Ltd in 2006, SN Power is undertaking two hydropower projects in the Tamakoshi Basin: Kirne (67 MW) and Tamakoshi-3 (880 MW). SN Power's Vice-President and Country Director Sandip Shah spoke to *Nepali Times* about the challenges and rewards for investors in Nepal.

Nepali Times: People are surprised that SN Power is investing in a big new project in Nepal at a time when most others are pulling out because of political instability.

Sandip Shah: SN Power's majority shareholder Statkraft was in Nepal from the early 1990s as the majority shareholder of Himal Power Ltd (HPL), the company that developed and is operating the Khimti plant. We have been here through the peak of the insurgency and other periods of instability. We have braved the tough times. At SN Power, we have a long-term view of our investments in Nepal. Since the situation has improved, greater opportunities have opened up, so we have embarked on two projects, one of which is fairly large in Nepal's context.

What kind of contingencies did you have to take into account with a big project like Tamakoshi-3?

Nepal, like other emerging markets where SN Power operates, has various risks. Geological and hydrological risks, risks of glacial floods and earthquakes, political risk...but we have good systems in place for planning, risk assessment and risk management. We feel we are strategically well-positioned and well prepared in Nepal to develop large projects.

But Tamakoshi is an export project. Doesn't the delay at West Seti make you nervous?

The Indian market is a key driver for off-take of the energy from mega-sized hydroelectric projects. Of course we recognise the need for power supply in Nepal, and are discussing power sales to Nepal with the authorities while finalising our commercial strategy.

To develop such large projects, banks and financial institutions look for a robust commercial strategy that involves more than one creditworthy buyer. The best scenario for Nepal is a combination of large and small scale hydropower development driven by a mix of export and domestic sales.

By the time your Tamakoshi project comes on line we in Nepal will be needing that power.

Tamakoshi-3 is scheduled to come on line in 2016/17, after commissioning of the Upper Tamakoshi Project, which will go a long way to meeting domestic demand. However, we are in dialogue with the Government of Nepal for the best sharing of benefits between the developer and the host country for Tamakoshi-3.

A lot of private power projects have ground to a halt because of local threats and extortion. How have you dealt with this problem?

Local expectations are rising due to the political and security situation in the country. We have a robust corporate social responsibility program and a good and

long-term relationship with our host community in the Tamakoshi Valley. This has created an atmosphere of support for our projects. Security in Nepal is still a challenge of course, and safety for our people will always be our top priority.

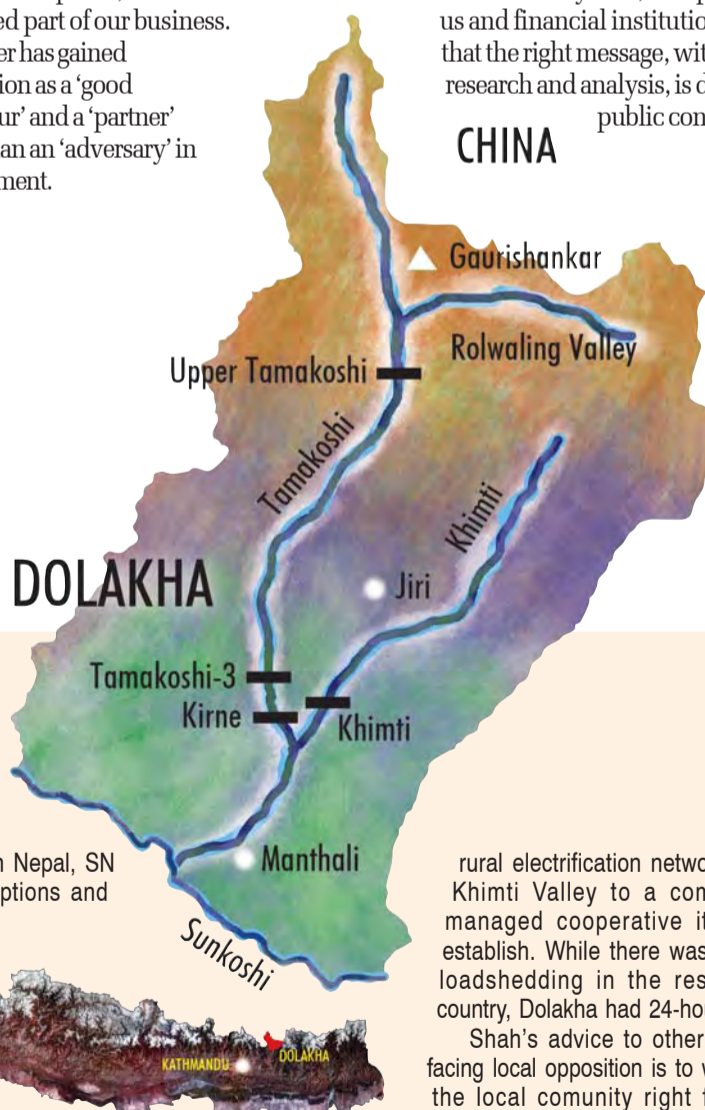
What is the response to the social development programs in Dolakha?

Since SN Power aims to make long-term profits in its operations, it is very important to support sustainable socio-economic activities in the vicinity of its area of operation to improve the standard of living of the local communities. We have a dedicated team that works solely with these issues right from the project development phase, and we see this as an integrated part of our business. SN Power has gained recognition as a 'good neighbour' and a 'partner' rather than an 'adversary' in development.

What is your message to other investors wishing to get into hydropower in Nepal?

My message is that they need to be patient and have a long-term view of their investments. Nepal offers great opportunities and the country's natural water resources are immense. We believe that Nepal's hydropower resources can be harnessed in an optimum manner for the benefit of the people of Nepal. Investing in hydropower development in a country like Nepal is still very high risk, and it requires proper support from the political and bureaucratic levels and from the people of the project areas. We have an open communication system, but sponsors like us and financial institutions require that the right message, with proper research and analysis, is delivered for public consumption.

CHINA



Mutually beneficial

With three major hydropower projects coming up with a cumulative capacity of nearly 1,500MW, the Tamakoshi basin in Dolakha is emerging as a major powerhouse for the domestic energy grid, export to India and local development.

While the Nepal Electricity Authority is moving ahead with Upper Tamakoshi (309MW), the Norwegian company SN Power is expanding to build Tamakoshi-3 (880MW) and Kirne (67MW) in addition to its existing Khimti power plant (60MW).

What makes the Norwegians unique is that they have not just stayed in Nepal through the war years, but are now expanding into a major new venture that is designed to export peak power to the Indian grid through a dedicated transmission line. Tamakoshi-3 could be the first project that will realise the long-term goal of reversing Nepal's balance of trade deficit with India, through energy export following completion in 2016.

Like other private power operators in Nepal, SN Power's Khimti went through the disruptions and delays of the war years when its mini-hydropower plant, needed for the construction phase, was blown up by the Maoists.

But the company persevered and is now ploughing profits from its existing Khimti plant into the larger Tamakoshi-3 and Kirne projects. SN Power's country director, Sandip Shah, says the key to his company's staying power has been its deep involvement in the socio-economic development of over 25 VDCs in Dolakha. The company has spent \$12 million on rural electrification of villages along the Tamakoshi basin, and building water supply systems and roads.

SN Power handed over a mini-hydropower plant and

rural electrification network in the Khimti Valley to a community-managed cooperative it helped establish. While there was 16-hour loadshedding in the rest of the country, Dolakha had 24-hour power.

Shah's advice to other projects facing local opposition is to work with the local community right from the implementation stage, not as an

afterthought. He adds: "You have to build up local support and acceptance for the mutual benefit of the project, the host community and the national economy."

See also:
Interview with SN Power's CEO, Nadia Sood, #444
'Electric transformation', # 464
'The power of a good example', # 464



KIRAN PANDAY

Hom Karki in *Kantipur*, 22 June

कान्तिपुर

The family of Ramesh Giri, who died in a motorcycle accident in Saudi Arabia, received his body 22 months after his death. His bereaved mother pleaded with political leaders, trade union leaders and the prime minister, all in vain. She

passed away before her son's body was brought back home. Similarly, Krishna Lal Sharma of Syangjha died in Saudi Arabia, but his body only arrived back in Nepal after 18 months. The bodies of Nepali migrant workers Shambhu Lal Shrestha, Harka Bahadur Magar, Dut Bahadur Budha, Harka Bahadur BK and Ganga Thapa are still in the morgues of various hospitals in Saudi Arabia.

Migrant plight

They have not been brought back to Nepal because their employers have refused to take responsibility, and their families cannot cover the expenses of repatriation. As per Saudi regulations, the bodies of deceased workers should be sent back to their respective countries within two months, or they have to be buried. But many of these corpses remain unattended because of the illegal entry of the workers, the ineffectiveness of the Nepali embassy, the poverty of workers' families and the irresponsibility of manpower agencies. "We won the case of Ramesh Giri," says Khadga Prasad Dahal, first secretary at the Nepali embassy in Saudi Arabia. "We traced the sponsor (the Saudi agency that recruits workers). There are thousands of workers whose sponsors are not known." As Giri's relatives were receiving his body at the airport, Krishna Bahadur Shrestha of

Dolakha, leaving for Saudi Arabia to work as a driver, was saying, "The manpower company has asked us to tear up our labour permits as soon as we board the plane. We are supposed to call the number our manpower company has given when we get off the plane, and we will be received at the airport." The deceased Giri had gone to Saudi through Sky Overseas, owned by Bal Bahadur Tamang. Giri left the company that had hired him and joined another as he did not get the salary and incentives he was promised. Shrestha will probably do the same, but if he runs into trouble without insurance or a company willing to take responsibility for him, he risks the same fate as Giri. "There are about 70,000 migrant workers who have fled their first company and are highly vulnerable to danger," says Dahal.



KIRAN PANDAY

Ostracised

Logshari Kunwar in *Rajdhani*, 22 June

राजधानी

The superstition that married women should not wear white clothes or plough the fields is still live and kicking in Nepali society. Recently, a woman in Kailali District was publicly humiliated and then forced to leave her village for flouting tradition. Locals of Chaumala VDC, Rajipur, took offence at Basudevi Sunar's white clothing and the fact that she ploughed her fields to plant paddy. Having mistreated her, they ostracised her. Sunar had little choice but to leave with

her two daughters. "I don't know where to go and what I am supposed to do," she was quoted as saying. On Monday, Sunar went to the fields with her daughters Saraswati and Sunita to prepare the land for paddy seedlings. As the soil was too hard to dig up with a spade, she resorted to the plough. A crowd was waiting for her when she got home. They painted her face black and forced her to wear a garland of shoes, then paraded her around the village's main thoroughfares from 9am to 2pm. Egged on by the crowd, Bir Bahadur Sunar shaved her head on four sides. The crowd also tore her

daughters' clothes and kicked them, and manhandled her 75-year-old mother. According to Basudevi Sunar, Kumari BK, Bhawati Pandey, Dilli Panday, Mahadev Dhungana and Tej Damali were among the 150 people who mistreated her. Sunar said that she was compelled to plough the fields as her husband does not stay at home or take care of his family. "We have no source of income other than farming. My husband does not work, so I have to work to run the household. And now I am punished for this." Sunar claims that the police simply stood and watched throughout the whole episode.

Where have all the flowers gone?

Kishor Budhathoki in *Annapurna Post*, 20 June

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

Khandbari: The deforestation of rhododendron forests in Tinjure, Milke and Jaljale is continuing unabated, threatening the existence of the rhododendron capital. Rhododendron forests sprawl over Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung and Tehrathum districts, and are a major attraction for tourists. These forests host 27 species of rhododendron. Today, one can see the nude hills of Dunda and Ratnyule that fall within the remit of Chaite Community Forest in Basantpur VDC. They were covered with dense forest 15 years ago, but deforestation began when a road reached the VDC. Tamaphok 9, Tutedeurali, has developed into a small town. There are more households in Panchapokhari now. Those who left the villages during the insurgency have returned since the CA elections. There are houses all along the road from Basantapur to Gupha Pokhari, and the forest has been cleared as far as 200 metres from the settlement. Krishna Devkota, acting chief of the District Forest Office, Sankhuwasabha, says deforestation has continued as people do not have an alternative to firewood for heating and cooking purposes. The only forests in the area are rhododendron, and locals estimate about 50 per cent of rhododendron forests have been destroyed so far. Shyam Bahadur Poudel of Tamaphok VDC sees the imminent extinction of rhododendron forests in the area. Deforestation has also increased the frequency of landslides. The Land Conservation Office has developed a nursery for rhododendrons in Sankhuwasabha. "The rhododendron forests will have already been cleared before the seedlings are ready to be transplanted from the nursery," says Heema Khanal, principal of Gupha Pokhari Primary School.



MIRKO MANCINELLI

Krishna Gyawali in *Kantipur*, 23 June

कान्तिपुर

Lalitpur: You had better be worried if you are enjoying a carefree World Cup night while forcing a child to work in your house. Like the players, you may well get a red card for your behaviour.

Red cards for child employers

Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City is starting a 'red card awareness' campaign to socially ostracise those homeowners who employ children. Gyani Bahadur Khadka, Community Development Chief, said that they thought of the idea to attract the attention of people. The city has already distributed 60,000 pamphlets and cards requesting households to desist from hiring children. "World Cup fever has caught everyone. We thought this would be the best way to raise awareness in the community," Sarita Maharjan of the Metropolitan Office said. According to Maharjan, families employing children will be identified and given red cards if they are found to be guilty of abuse. "The names of the abusers will be made public and they will be

socially ostracised," she said. The sub-metropolitan office has collaborated with Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) to run this campaign. Community study centres have been opened in Kusunti, Tikhedawal and Kupondole, and about 30 former child workers are studying here. There are plans to send these children to school after one year of study in the centres. The sub-metropolitan office will also set up child protection committees in all wards for monitoring purposes, and about half a dozen are already operational. Volunteers from the committees, the sub-metropolitan office's staff and CWIN will carry out monitoring, hand out red cards and rescue children if they are being abused.

Musahar homes

Shivahari Bhattarai in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 24 June

समाचारपत्र

Rajbiraj: Musahars, who have been living in thatched huts built on the land of others, will now be able to live in brick houses of their own.

The 22 Musahar households in Jamuwa tole of Ghoghanpur VDC, Saptari are thrilled at the prospect of living in tin-roofed homes. Seventy-five-year old Ramji Sada Musahar is happy that he will live to see his own tin-roofed house.

Since the government declared the implementation of Janata Awas (People's Home) Program in Kapilbastu, Siraha and Saptari in the last budget, Rs 130 million has been dispatched to Saptari to construct houses for 1000 Dalits, the Urban Development and Building Construction Office in Rajbiraj says.

Construction work has already started in six VDCs for Dalit and Muslim households. The area has one of the largest concentrations of Dalits in the country.

Division Engineer of the Urban Development Office, Shyam Kishor Singh, says that the houses will each cost Rs 159,280 and will be 22 by 15 feet wide, with a verandah and a small kitchen.

The local Dalit community has also been volunteering to help in construction. The houses will be ready at the end of this month, Site Engineer Rabindra Kumar Dev said.



Lumbini vice

Letter to the editor, *Nagarik*, 15 June

नागरिक

A rise in crimes in the birthplace of Gautam Buddha has locals as well as followers of Buddhism worried.

A donation box was stolen

two weeks ago. Disciples had offered this box to Lord Buddha and it had been placed next to the footmark of Buddha in stone, guarded within the premises of the Lumbini Development Trust. Group 4 security personnel stand guard at the gate and the Regional Police Post is about 400 metres

from the gate. Yet there was a security lapse that seems to have encouraged others. On 7 June, a planning officer was attacked by khukuri-wielding mercenaries following a quarrel over a contract bid.

A donation box was stolen two years ago as well, construction materials have been stolen, and Nilgai have been poached. Some years ago, the Japanese monk Nawatame was murdered in front of a shrine. These incidents indicate a gang of criminals are involved in these activities.

Lumbini, as the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, symbolises peace and non-violence to the world. The criminal activities here have become a matter of shame for Nepal and the local police administration should act before irreversible damage is done to Lumbini's image.

Mohan Chapagain



Food adulteration

Bishnu Pokharel in *Nagarik*, 23 June

नागरिक

Kathmandu: Sub-standard and adulterated beverages are being sold in the capital and in other cities, government studies have revealed.

Tests carried out by the Food Technology and Quality Control Department found adulteration in water, milk, clarified butter and cooking oil. Senior Food Officer Pramod Koirala said that harmful micro-organisms were found in most food items. "The problem is even worse in water," he said.

The department tested samples from across the country in the last few months.

The results revealed a higher degree of adulteration in liquid as compared to solid food. Koirala said that some branded milk and bottled water even contained micro-organisms found in stool.

Of the 302 samples of liquid and solid food collected in four months, 60 samples were found to be sub-standard. Most were bottled water samples.

Even bottled water manufacturers admit that there is adulteration in most brands. The secretary of the Nepal Bottled Water Industries Association said, "There are problems in many products. We are committed to improving them." He also said that the problem arises from the manufacturers' ignorance of government

standards. "Most don't even know they have to get permission to manufacture."

Bottled water manufacturers are required to obtain a quality validation letter from the Food Technology and Quality Control Department, but most have not done so.

The department has claimed that it will be taking action against manufacturers that do not meet government standards. According to the Food Act, industries failing to meet standards can be fined upto Rs 5000 and slapped with a jail term of two years. Punishment can increase depending on the harm to public health. But to date, no one has been punished for violating standards.

काम सानो ठूलो भन्ने हुँदैने । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैने । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैने । चोरेर, दाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र सम्पत्ति भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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Best of the worst

The donkey's buddies decided to watch Portugal-North Korea at one of several Korean restaurants in Kathmandu that are run by **diplomatic license (canine bulgogi)** was off the menu, but thanks for asking). It is probably the only North Korean establishment in the world that is sponsored by an American multinational, and at the end of the evening a waitress with a DPRK flag pinned to her hanbok delivered the bill, which added another touch of authenticity because it was all in Korean and we had no idea what we'd just eaten. The Revenue Dept will be glad to know, however, that 13% VAT was charged. No service charge, but this isn't the kind of establishment where krantikari waiters are going to go on strike anytime soon.

Despite the rented crowd of Chinese fans complete with a cheerleader in the stands to orchestrate vuvuzela blowing, the democratic socialist Koreans are out of the World Cup. Wonder if human rights organisations are tracking the fate of the North Korean World Cup team to see what happens to them on their return home after playing Cote

KUMGANGSAN RESTAURANT					
NO	종류	수량	단가	금액	
1	우육면	1	100	100	
2	김치찌개	1	250	250	
3	소고기찌개	1	350	350	
4	김치찌개	1	350	350	
5	김치찌개	1	350	350	
6	김치	1	50	50	
7					
8					
9					
10					
11	White M. O. S. S. S. S.	50	50		
12	김치	1	30	30	
13	Tubee	1	300	300	
14	김치	1	110	110	
15	김치	1	110	110	
16	VAT	13%		220	
합계				1,920RS	0/70

d'Ivoire on Friday. Before the games the North Korean captain told the media their sole aim was to "make the Dear Leader proud". Well, they've probably made **Dear Leader an Angry Leader**. Even if the North Korean national team have their sentence commuted to life imprisonment, it is certain that the striking strikers of Les Bleus will be executed on the tarmac when they fly back to Pari.

Moving right along to something completely different. Awesome

decided to skip an important Politburo meeting because he wanted to attend Manisha's wedding bash at the Soaltee. So BRB, Com Yummy, Janata Janardan and General Pasang decided to take the afternoon off to go to the movies. Once at Kumari, who do they see in the lobby but Com Kaji Naran, who was also in the mood for a flick. Mr Fotocopy looked a tad envious that his rival for No.2 in the party had his wife and two PLA commanders in tow while he just had a bodyguard, but decided to join the group anyway. The movie was Rajneeti, where **Realpolitik** and **Reelpolitik** collide head-on. Kaji Kamred was seen squirming as Ajay Devgan, Ranbir Kapoor and Katrina Kaif engaged in pretty realistic back-stabbing, double-crossing and intra-party conspiracies. Must have reminded him of the ongoing skullduggery within his own party.

Anyway, back at the Manisha wedding, PKD hobnobbed



with royalists and republicans and even managed to smile at a joke or two about how the real Samrat Dahal got the girl while the **wannabe-Samrat** not only didn't become emperor, he didn't even get the prime ministership. Interesting, though, that while Jackie Shroff donned the daura suruwal with topi, the Ex-Sri Punch and Ex-PM both came in western suits.

Who says the **Makunay Sarkar** is lameduck? It has



already notched up quite a few achievements. Foreign Policy magazine has ranked Nepal 26th from the bottom in its Failed States Rankings, pipping Sri Lanka (22nd), Pakistan (12th) and Afghanistan (10th). Also, we are now 127th in the development lineup and have only five hours of power cuts a day. The number of rhinos poached has been slashed from 12 last year to 11 this year, and govt-sponsored logging of Tarai forest has added 0.5% to our GDP growth.

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