

# MELTDOWN

Global warming has local consequences in the Himalaya.

**RAMYATA LIMBU**

• The Khumbu Glacier has retreated 5 km since the first ascent of Mt Everest 50 years ago.  
• 44 glacial lakes in Nepal and Bhutan are growing so fast, they are in danger of bursting their banks in the near future.

A few small ponds on the Imja Glacier have grown in the past decade into a huge lake 2 km long. All these are effects of global warming. Aside from the polar ice caps, it is in our mountains that the effects of atmospheric warming are most dramatic.

Temperatures records started being kept in Nepal only 40 years ago, but even in that time, there is already a discernible warming trend. "Our high altitude monitoring sites indicate that temperatures have been increasing in Nepal," says Anan B Shrestha, a government hydrologist with the Snow and Glacier Hydrology Unit, which is trying to siphon water off the Tibo Rolpa glacial lake in the Rolwaling. In some parts of the country, the average annual temperature has risen by 0.1 Celsius a year, and research shows

the warming trend is faster in the trans-Himalayan regions of north-western Nepal.

"It is clear that global warming is emerging as one of the biggest threat to mountain areas," says Roger Payne, a member of a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) sponsored expedition to Island Peak near Lhasa.

When temperatures rise even by a fraction of a degree, snow cover begins to melt and lakes start forming on glaciers. These expanding lakes eventually burst through and tumble down narrow Himalayan valleys.

Says Surendra Shrestha, the Nepal regional coordinator for UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment in Bangkok, "Our findings indicate that 20 glacial lakes in Nepal and 24 in Bhutan have become potentially dangerous as a result of climate change. We have evidence that any one of these could, unless urgent action is taken, burst its banks in five to 10 years time with potentially catastrophic results."

The only long-term solution is to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. But an international treaty on curbing emissions is bogged down because of

opposition mainly from the US, and disagreements over reduction quotas for developing countries like India and China.

Satellite images show that Bhutan has more glacial lakes that are in danger of bursting, mainly because of the higher precipitation there. In Nepal, the Tackling glacier which feeds Tibo Rolpa is retreating at 20 metres a year. In some years within the last decade, the retreat even reached 100 metres.

Shrestha stresses the need for more ground and on-site studies to analyse actual dangers. He cites the example of the Tulagi lake in Mustang, once considered an extreme danger, which has proved to be exaggerated. While the fields in the Everest region have seen rapid changes in the last 20 years, including the retreat of the Khumbu glacier, experts say the threat of Imja lake below Jhomsu bursting has been reduced.

Meanwhile, Nepal is carrying out an inventory of its own greenhouse emissions to identify measures to reduce them. But the real worry is about when richer and more populous countries will do the same.



The Tibo Rolpa glacial lake (60 km northeast of Kathmandu). The siphoning centre is visible on the moraine.

# "Nepal should not be allowed to be a failed state."

Last week's London International Conference on Nepal was a closed door meeting between senior officials from the US, India, China, Russia, Japan, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, Australia, the United Nations and the World Bank. Britain chaired the conference. The five-member Nepali delegation was led by Shankar Sharma from the National Planning Commission and also included the prime minister's wife, Arzu Deuba. **Nepali Times** asked **Charge d'Affaires Andrew Mitchell** of the British Embassy in Kathmandu, who attended the London meeting, to tell us what happened.



**Nepali Times:** It was originally designed as a small, high-level meeting. How did it become so big?

**Andrew Mitchell:** In essence, the initiative originated in an idea of the British Development Secretary, Clare Short, who identified, rightly I think, the need for a form of concerted international thinking around the challenges posed by the current crisis. She envisaged a small, private, international brainstorming meeting, which would develop creative thinking on responses to the crisis. But the crisis deteriorated very rapidly in the early part of the year, particularly as a result of the Maoist attacks on development and civilian infrastructure. We saw the impact on civilians, on the ordinary people of this country, becoming a real and direct issue. And so we saw the need to accelerate, and to widen

and deepen the initiative. We discussed this with our Nepali friends, and with our partners. And we ended up with the London meeting.

**Q: Which you attended. What was the overall atmosphere inside?**

**A:** Excellent. It was a positive, constructive encounter. Every delegation shared a very real, very direct concern for the welfare of the people of Nepal. There was a genuine willingness to explore new thinking, new ideas. The Nepali delegation, led by Dr Shankar Sharma, played a strong and constructive part. It really could not have been better.

see → 7

**Times** nepalipaper.com  
Weekly Internet Poll #40

**Q. How do you rate Sher Bahadur Deuba's performance in the current political crisis?**

Total votes: 2331

Weekly Internet Poll #40. To vote go to [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

**Q. Is it possible to hold general elections as scheduled in November?**

**EXCLUSIVE**

**Krishna Sen**

The Defence Ministry, Home Ministry, Army and Police have all denied any knowledge about the fate of pro-Maoist journalist Krishna Sen who was reportedly killed in police custody. Sen was arrested 20 June, and the weekly *Kaushal* on Wednesday gave details of his death after alleged torture. The influential Federation of Nepalese Journalists says it has tried to meet the Home Minister, but that the government is not saying anything. FNU General Secretary Bishnu Neethi, told us: "This silence is dangerous." The Paris-based Reporters sans Frontières wrote to the prime minister asking for a clarification. "The death of a journalist under torture, even if the latter supported the Maoist movement, can in no way be justified by antiterrorist war," Robert Ménard, General Secretary, says in a statement. Sen was also a member of the Maoist Central Committee.

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# Home among Muslims

The communalism virus from across the border is poisoning the tarai.

**SUGA (Mahottari District)**—When the destination is home, even a short journey is far too long. The day trip from Kathmandu to Suga is indeed long in time and space; it takes more than eight hours in a run-down bus that rocks and rolls through nine of Nepal's 75 districts.

Monsoon Nepal nuzzles past the window: in Naubise farmers dressed in colourful clothes are planting paddy; in Bhaurangi it is already harvest time for another variety of rice; in Dhanusha farmers in drab dhosis are busy irrigating their fields to transplant rice. Our buses were ramshackle, but it is still a beautiful country out there.

The first stop after the bus leaves Kathmandu is usually Dharke. The township owner there assures some half-hourly-type passengers that the food at their eatery is "pure" as he doesn't allow "Muslims" to

go anywhere near his kitchen. This comment exposes the ugly intolerance beneath the surface of this seemingly tolerant society. If you are Muslim, don't refuse the offer of an outrageously priced plate of meat at any Muslim eatery—you run the risk of being targeted that hall meat is tastier. The fate of the dalits is bad enough, but the lot of Nepali Muslims is even worse, as Dr. Kishor Bhattacharya rightly observed at a recent meeting. Even their existence is increasingly being questioned.

It was a long way, Nepal's Muslim population is not very large, just under a million, but up from 650,000 two years ago. There is controversy about the accuracy of census figures, but the fact remains that the number of Muslims is a very small percentage of over 23 million Nepalis. They are across the tarai, but can even be found in some hill districts like Kathmandu and Kaski.

In Suga, we know our Muslims more by their castes than their religion. On the western fringes of the village, the cluster of houses belongs to Jolaha—the weavers. Machine-made cotton put them out of business long ago, and our generation of Jolaha never got a chance to run the loom. They made a living share-cropping, but these days it is the remnants of the West Asia, Gujarat and Punjab that sustains most families. A pucca mosque has replaced the spidery cane thatched-bam that played around as a child, but there is no sign of the Old Money that the Indian media never tires of talking about.

At the northern fringe of the village, there is another mosque in the far Jolaha. This is now a pucca, but the madrasa is a ramshackle affair where half-naked children recite "Alif-Ba-Ca" at the top of their voices. No signs of "foreigners" here either, and the only reason the poor prefer to send their children to Madrasa is the fact that these schools have free time. Normal schools run according to a set routine and do not allow for the children who have to help their parents at work.

A few fetters from the Gulf have taken entrepreneurs and run a Public Call Office, a tailoring shop, and a grocery. Other than that, the poverty in Jolaha is as pervasive as the air. The children of Jolaha have been devolved as more people wash their clothes at home these days, but

they may as well have had to walk up shops at Dabhoi and Janakpur. On Saturdays, they sip bottled soft drinks at the neighbourhood shop while the others toil at the Dabhoi Pulahi.

During my childhood, we never thought that we were any different from our Jolaha or Dabhoi neighbours, except the fact that the better off among us wore more expensive clothes. Village festivals were almost all common. I remember going around the village with the Tazia procession every year shouting "Hu Hussan" to mark the martyrdom of the grandson of the Holy Prophet. Once I had to fake a Hindu name for my Muslim friend to enable him get the tazy prasad from a Hindu temple in Janakpur. But in our house, Muslims were always welcome for what they were.

The difference of religion rose with the emergency in India, and in effects spilled over to the outside of the border. It was in this period that the Muslims came to be looked down upon by the powerful people on both sides of the border and the difference between two communities started to surface. My participation in Tazia processions came to an end with the ritual sacrifice of a rooster and the presentation of a ceremonial tandoor to a long dead Sufi.

These days in Suga, the ritual mode of Muslim salutation, has been gentrified into the more religious *As-salam-wala-kum*. The benign Ram Kanti Grewal has now become a deity for the Sufi. There is a process of Arabisation that is turning Muslims into Islamists, while alienation is transforming Hindus into Hindutwas. The communal virus from across the border is slowly poisoning the social atmosphere of the tarai. This civilising Muslims has turned devolved into a set routine and do not allow for the children who have to help their parents at work.

In the absence of a functioning parliament, parliamentary committees, and other checks available in normal times these engagements, paradoxically, happened under a democratic constitution. The emergency camepact deal with the problem of terrorism, but the case is falling somewhat, but it is not.

The dissolution of the House came as a surprise to us. As a matter of fact, it was the dissolution of the House that was the real surprise. It was in government. We never foresaw such a situation, and could

never imagine holding elections in the present situation. Nor did we ever think that a mid-term election would offer a solution to the country's problems. I sensed that something was deeply wrong, and stepped down.

The country was headed on a serious and uncertain political trajectory, and there was no justification for dissolving the House and announcing elections. Local elections couldn't be held, and even the recent school exams were confined to district headquarters. Seeking a fresh mandate, therefore, just didn't make sense. Armed groups rule the countryside, no political party is able to hold public meetings outside the district headquarters. There is no free movement of people and civil rights have been curtailed.

Disarming the Maoists is the first precondition to holding free and fair elections. The economic burden of general elections is even more scarce. The direct cost of the election in 1999 was about Rs. 600 million, including security. This time, with the added cost of security and the Election Commission the November polls will cost the exchequer more than Rs. 3 billion. With the present state of the economy, we just cannot afford it.

There are iconic and difficult times. Here is a breakdown of the ruling party that held a political gathering that it called a "convention", declared the prime minister party president, and along the way violated every rule in the book. The official media was used to justify and defend this action, to mislead and misinform the public. The abuse of state machinery to cover those who did not agree may be an indication of what lies ahead.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has, for as long as I have known him, been a man with democratic credentials. How these things are happening under his leadership, I cannot explain.

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Nepal is a "Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom" but all in people irrespective of religion, race, caste, and tribe, collectively constitute the nation" are equal. ♦

are similar to India. This is pseudo-nationalism. A large section of pahalas have found it difficult to accept that the grounds for being a part of Nepal. This discrimination has made it difficult for madhesis to reach decision-making points in the higher echelons of the government. Just look at the figures: only two SPs and one SSP in the police belong to southern Nepal. Only one of the top police officers in the madhesis. While there is one school for every 100 households in the hills, the tarai belt has only 100 schools for every 100 households. Among 15 educationally disadvantaged groups, 11 are from the tarai.

Pahalas need to shed their anti-tarai attitude, and promote national integration and greater participation of tarai people in national affairs. This must be done with utmost care so that the pahalas do not lose their identity. A deeper and break Nepal's fragile socio-political stability. But the silence of the major political parties about this in Jyoti's VDC and being sold in Nandana and

people of all hues and walks of life to live in harmony, and accept each other as Nepalis. **Prashant Jha, Dharti University**

● I really wonder why people think the monarchy is Nepal's great saviour? What have we gained over the past centuries besides poverty, illiteracy and serious social problems? It is only the Nepal people who can save the country by developing it, educating themselves and make multiparty democracy work. **K Timsina, by email**

**SAGARMATHA NATIONAL PARK** Nature may be protected in Sagarmatha National Park (999), but the park must also draw attention to the massive timber poaching going on outside the park boundary. Last month, walking from Phedim to Lukla, I saw about 40 porters carrying long timber logs toward Upper Khumbu. The timber was about this size, in Jyoti's VDC and being sold in Nandana and

Khumjung. Members of the community forest user group say that they have already cut down 4,000 logs going towards Nandana. When they tried to stop the porters, they were threatened. But the women from the surrounding villages forced about 400 logs to be confiscated and stored with the community. It is apparent that the demand for timber for new construction in Nandana and Khumjung is driving this trade, and that the logs are coming from outside the park, because falling inside is illegal. This demand rises during the monsoon because it is the best time for the season, and that is when most of the renovation is done. As the community shod, local action can stop the smuggling. The timber buyers in Nandana must also realise that it is their demand that is destroying forests elsewhere. You can't ban logging, but timber resources can be managed responsibly and in a sustainable manner. **Pasang Gelzen Sherpa, Pema Chetser, Forest User Group, Solu-Khumbu**

**NOT AMUSED** General Purna Bhushal's columns are of high quality based on pragmatic reasoning and logic. However, his "Purna's letter to Sher Bahadur" (999). The crude sense of humour was missed by most people in Nepal who asked for confirmation from us if the President of Pakistan had actually written such a letter to the Nepali Prime Minister. It would have been much better if the contents of the letter had appeared in the form of an article on Pakistan-Nepal relations. This would have prevented the paper from drawing in the Head of another country in Nepal's domestic situation. You must give credit to your leaders for home grown actions and response to various internal compulsions and also by the same logic hold them accountable for the perceived failings rather than shifting responsibility for Nepal's current malaise to a country that does not even have geographical contiguity with Nepal.

However, it is the fact that General Musharraf has become a house-

hold name in Nepal because people of South Asia have appreciated his charismatic leadership qualities, his direct and forthright approach and the courage to face even the most difficult situations. By the way Mr. Purnushkar should understand the difference between a referendum and elections to avoid equating the two different political terminology. As Nepal's well wishes we

would like to see Nepal coming out of the current difficulties so that the country can march towards real progress, development, and prosperity. **Kamal Ahmad, First Secretary (Press and Culture) Embassy of Pakistan**

**PRESS FREEDOM** Jane Elizabeth Kirley's view ("Journalists reduced to being the mouthpieces of the government" 999) regarding the media in Nepal hit the bull's eye. However, the question of raising the standards of Right to Information Act is debatable. The consequences of media warfare without the platform of development can have both positive and negative results, generally more tilted towards the latter. As Kirley says, "Freedom of information laws can also have perverse effects." And more so if the recipient mass is swayed easily. The quest of the media to sell the story to the citizens of one of the poorest nations in the world can spark pessimism quite easily. It

should be the perpetual effort of the government to impart rays of hope and induce positive attitude to the people. This implies quite obviously that in order to guide the nation, considerable sacrifice by imposing a positive check on the media becomes very essential. Considering all the differences, one thing that should be borne in mind is that the line drawn is bound to be much lower in our country than that in the USA. **IA PI, by email**

**CORRECTIONS** In Lukesh Sherpa's Sagarmatha National Park (999), it was then Prince Gyendras who, in 1973, committed to the international community in Bonn to declare Sagarmatha a national park. ♦

● "Bhairav Arya" (Nepaliterature 999), was part of a two-part piece. The next instalment will appear in #101.

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, BREAK GLASS

In the current politically charged atmosphere, one reality is self-evident: almost no one is playing by the rules. Internal party rules are being bent by this or that faction, under Maoists operate as outlaws, even constitutional provisions are being challenged.

In this legal limbo of the state of emergency, there are actually very few rules. And those that exist pertain to what you can't do, rather than what you can. Most rights of individual citizens are on hold. This is when the truth becomes subversive to those who have a lot to hide. Yet, it isn't best.

War strategists have long held that information—believable and credible information—is a weapon to win the battle for public opinion. There is a whole subject they teach at war schools on information warfare. Propaganda, they tell you, is effective only when it doesn't sound like propaganda.

The biggest asset of the government in this time of emergency is its near-monopoly on information. However, it is very easy to make this monopoly futile—by a self-perpetuating perception that official information is not plausible. It is not incredible, therefore, that news today lacks credibility. You'd have thought that our info-maniacs would have learnt from the mistakes of the past, but no such luck. Going by the coverage of the current party-government feud, the official media is behaving like the mouthpiece of the party-in-power.

And then there is the Defence Ministry's daily faxed statements to the media. Most of its contents are probably true, but they lack the presentation that lends them credence. It is not what is said, but how it is said—either the sterile daily listing of war dead and captured material, or television pictures of piles of decomposed corpses so gruesome that the footage shocks even of the battle-hardened. The results that a sceptical public, conditioned by 30 years of unreform, focuses on what is not said rather than on what is said.

There could be nothing more wasteful than this squandering of the public trust when that trust is a vital heath and minds tool.

More than six months after the imposition of the state of emergency, it is becoming increasingly clear that the government (or what is left of it) needs to show greater media savvy. We don't expect it from the Maoists, since we know that they are for totalitarianism, all or nothing. They have proved time and again that the punishment for disagreeing with the party line is banishment to the gulag of the hereafter. It is logical, therefore, that anyone fighting the Maoists must be against totalitarianism and on the side of democracy and a free press. We cannot use their tactics.

Banning the truth doesn't make it disappear. Free speech is not true free if you are only allowed to say nice things. The government may not like what the media says, but it must protect our right to say it. Otherwise, what are we fighting for?



**NEPALI CONGRESS** "You ain't seen nothing yet." (999) was a flashback to the past three years of drama in the Nepali Congress. But you may need to look further back to the restoration of democracy 12 years ago for causes of today's events. Kishnuji almost flawlessly handled the first two years of interim government and managed to give us a fine constitution. But in the very first election, Grijababu once

campaigning against Kishnuji in the Kathmandu constituency, and defeated him. Immediately after he became Prime Minister, Grijababu dismissed six senior ministers of the "Kishnuji camp" on the advice of his stalwarts, who also managed to cripple the bureaucracy by sacking thousands of civil servants. In retaliation, Kishnuji's camp obtained from a crucial Nepali minister, who was expelled Grijababu to call for mid-term elections, boasting that he would get an absolute majority. The result in 1995 was a hung parliament and Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister. But Grijababu became restless and unsatisfied Deuba too.

In the last election, Grijababu announced publicly that Kishnuji would be prime minister if his party won. Voters believed him, and Kishnuji became prime minister. But Grijababu started trying to bring him down from the very next day. He became prime minister and the whole saga was repeated when he resigned and Deuba took over last year. So last week's drama was only the latest in this long story of back-stabbing. Whether the split in Congress was good or bad, only time will tell. But it is obvious to many neutrals like me that Grijababu is more responsible than Deuba for undermining the Nepali Congress. **Name withheld on request**

● At the all-party mass meeting in Kathmandu recently, the president of a national party was not allowed to speak in Hindi on the grounds of not being a nationalist. The incident throws up complex questions concerned with the core of Nepali nationalism and democracy. What is a nation? The essence of nationalism in these countries lies in "unity in diversity"—a common sentiment that binds people in spite of differences. This implies that speaking in Hindi in Nepal strengthens national loyalty by representing a common language into the mainstream and accepting the principle of diversity. Then there is the perception of nationalism among Nepalis. Is our unity and patriotism to fragile that it will be shattered if someone speaks in a language that might not be spoken by the majority? What is the real perception that is a good nationalist, one who is anti-tarai and alienate that section of the population because of their habits, language and way of life

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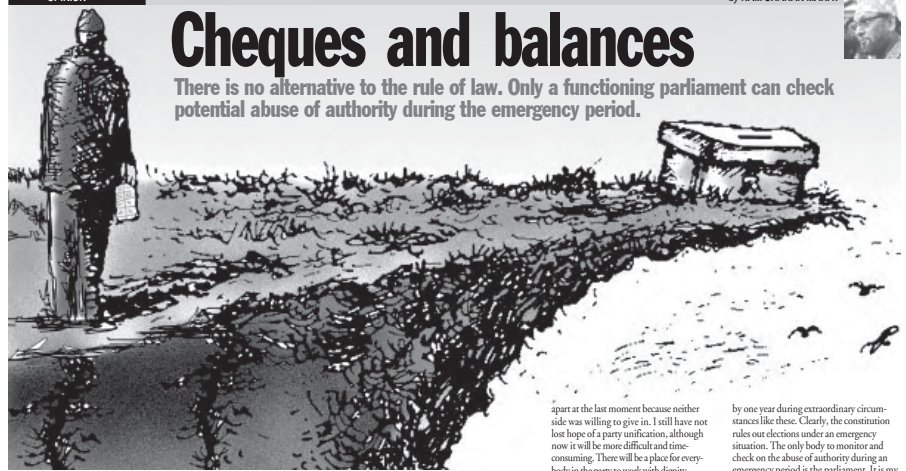
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## NATION

### OPINION



# Cheques and balances

There is no alternative to the rule of law. Only a functioning parliament can check potential abuse of authority during the emergency period.

By RAM SHARAN MAHAT



apart at the last moment because neither side was willing to give in. I still have not lost hope in party unification, although now it will be more difficult and time-consuming. There will be a place for everybody in the party to work with dignity, including Mr Deuba.

There is no doubt that the Election Commission will award the Congress decision to the party led by Gijita Prasad Koirala. Prime Minister Deuba just does not have the legitimacy to be party president. If this faction was to get the party president or even if the Election Commission decides to freeze the subject to favour him, it would be a mockery of justice and the rule of law. And that would indicate a serious threat to the democratic process.

This country now needs to create new space to allow democratic institutions to regenerate. The influence of wrong elements in politics at the party level has been the main factor leading to poor service delivery and high corruption. Party leaders have politicised institutions, and created feelings of power brokers in political parties. Only strong political will, enlightened leadership and transparency can deal with this.

There are several ways out of the present mess. There is a possibility that parliament will be restored and there are strong legal and constitutional arguments for it. The constitution provides that the life of the House of Representatives can be extended

by one year during extraordinary circumstances like these. Clearly, the constitution rules out elections under an emergency situation. The only body to monitor and check on the abuse of authority during an emergency period is the parliament. It is my hope and belief that the court will order the restoration of the House of Representatives. Only if this does not happen will elections be an option. And if it comes to that we have no choice but to go to the people. There are some who would not be averse to a benevolent authority figure to ensure development and better government. But the present trend continues things can get much worse unless there is proper accountability, necessary checks and balances, and parliamentary oversight.

Let us be clear: there is no alternative to the rule of law. There is no alternative to civil rights. There is no alternative to a functioning parliament. There is no alternative to the full respect for human and civil rights. All these institutions about a royal takeover are ridiculous. His Majesty the King is a very enlightened and well-meaning monarch committed to the present constitution. Democracy will prevail in the end, and for this our democratic institutions will have to be vibrant and effective once more. ♦

(Ram Sharan Mahat was Finance Minister in the Deuba cabinet and resigned on 23 May.)



# At home abroad

ANDREW NASH

A park overlooking San Francisco Bay last April, dozens of Nepalis rang in the New Year Bikram Sambat 2059 by sharing Nepali food and culture with their native-born American friends and neighbours. Such gatherings of old traditions and new friends are now a regular feature of life in the many American and Canadian cities Nepalis now call home.

The Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) community, until recently small and low-profile, is emerging as an organised and assertive force in the United States. And the biggest sign of this is probably the 20<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) that opens on 4 July, the biggest US holiday. Founded in 1983 as an umbrella organisation for the dozens of NRN groups in North America, the ANA has evolved into a diverse network that allows Nepalis to meet each other, teach children about Nepali traditions, network within the community and discuss their homeland with other NRNs.

This year the ANA is bringing

**Nepalis in the US are celebrating their accomplishments this week at their bigger, better 20<sup>th</sup> annual convention.**

six Making Our Mark (MOM) awards on NRNs who have made noteworthy accomplishments and helped establish Nepalis as an independent, successful and increasingly vibrant social group in the US. Ten NRNs have been nominated for the award, representing accomplishments in corporate business, information technology, performance art, literature, journalism, sports and diplomacy (see box).

One nominee, Ram Kharel, moved to the US in 1991 to explore business opportunities and received permanent resident status in 1996, although he is still a Nepali citizen and makes frequent trips home. In North America, the ANA has evolved into a diverse network that allows Nepalis to meet each other, teach children about Nepali traditions, network within the community and discuss their homeland with other NRNs.



The Westfield Marriott Conference Centre in Virginia is where the Nepalis will be this week.

dearer than heaven", now reaches tens of thousands of households in the Washington DC area with its weekly broadcasts.

Kal Chandra Gautam is another success story. A Nepali citizen, like Kharel, Gautam is a top official at the UN, where he serves as an Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. The growing population of Nepalis living in the US, he says, makes it natural that they will find new ways to make their mark. "Earlier the only Nepalis you found here were madmen. Now you find them in all walks of life."

Gautam says that organisations such as the ANA help Nepalis retain their cultural identity and pass on traditions and language to children. The result of such efforts has been increasing awareness among second- and third-generation NRNs about their homeland, and commitment towards it. "The ANA has played a very important role in helping expatriate Nepalis network with their fellow compatriots," he says. "It has helped instil a sense of pride and solidarity in the Nepali community."

One example of this growing cultural pride is the ongoing construction of the Nepal Educational and Cultural Centre (NECC) in Washington. The project started in March 1996 when the ANA put up \$250,000 to purchase land for the project. When completed, it will house temples to Padmaswati and the Buddha, and serve as a cultural hub for the NRN community. The ANA plans to open the NECC on 4 July 2005, but still needs to raise funds to cover the \$1 million required to complete the project.

While there are no official estimates of the Nepali population in the US, unofficial counts place the number at 25,000. And in the absence of energetic Nepali community news outlets, many Nepali-Americans have been concerned about the ability of NRNs to maintain their cultural and social traditions. With the emergence of strong NRN institutions like the ANA, the hope is that such fears will be alleviated.

Nepali immigration to the US has traditionally been modest. Of the more than 8.8 million recorded Asians who immigrated to the US between 1820 and 2000, only a few thousand were Nepali. In the 1989-2000 period, only 3,954 Nepalis received US immigration visas, compared with 445,000 Indians, although many more moved to the US at least temporarily through other channels—by overstaying tourist or student visas or, less commonly, through consular legal channels. In the past few years, the number of Nepalis who have annually received non-immigrant visas has hovered around 13,000.

However, recent changes in US immigration policy will now allow many more Nepalis to become American citizens. Under the terms of a diversity visa lottery, 55,000 immigrant visas are available each year to citizens of countries that have not traditionally served as sources of US immigrants, of which Nepal is one. In the upcoming year, 2,330 such diversity visas will be issued to Nepalis—three times the number issued this year, and the second highest in Asia after Bangladesh.

Unlike Indian and Pakistani immigrants, the small and scattered Nepali community in the US has



THE NEW YORK TIMES

by DANIEL LAK

## On a mission from God

Those of us who believe in tolerance need some missionary zeal of our own.



They justify their activities by pointing to the massive invasions that fundamentalist Protestant Christian churches are making among India's marginalised groups—dalits, indigenous tribals and others. "They were once Hindus," a soft-spoken monk told me a few years ago, "and we just have to reacquire them with their faith."

But the Ramakrishna Mission, the Tabligh-i-Jamiat and their counterparts in Sikhism and Sri Lanka's Buddhism are small fry compared to the Christians. So too are the traditional Christian churches—Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans—when compared to the hard-line Protestants and Evangelicals who are the driving force behind modern missionary work. The third largest amount of space on the

web, behind pornography and gambling, is taken up by religious information. Consider, for example, the Unreached Peoples' Prayer site ([www.bethany.com](http://www.bethany.com)) where among links to thousands of non-Christian churches I found a reference to the "Hindi" tribe of north India. It seems that these poor souls, according to the website, spend their days in mud huts, surrounded by stink and eating "Mulligatawny soup", their main staple. I didn't read much more but it's obvious that much spurious information is peddled as well, gospel about everyone else on the site, from the Aium of Japan to the Zoroastrians of Persia.

Also-called "universities" in South Carolina pump out graduates in Arabic and Korean studies whose sole purpose in life is to convert Muslims to Christianity. In a recent magazine article, the director of the school admitted that maybe, just maybe, this sort of activity could lead to misunderstandings between cultures. The Jehovah's Witnesses call in South Asia target existing Christians in India and Pakistan, seeking to lead them away from Catholicism or genteel Protestantism. The Jehovahs are extremely active in the Bhutanese refugee camps of Jhapa and Morang.

I'm not against people talking about their religion to those of other faiths, nor do I condemn missionaries as such. Without the Jesuits and many other Roman Catholic orders, a lot of South Asians might have missed out on a first class education. The United Mission to Nepal has long done sterling medical work. But the tone of the times is changing and the zealots are slowly asserting themselves. Those of us who believe in tolerance, religious freedom and multiculturalism need to acquire a little missionary zeal of our own. Not to mention a link on the Unreached peoples' prayer profile web site. ♦

## Making our Mark

At its annual convention this week, the Association of Nepalis in the Americas will give six awards to six of the following 10 Non-Resident Nepalis who have made notable accomplishments in the US.

- The "Making Our Mark" Award nominees:**
- Arun Banskota** Senior vice president of Fortune 15 company El Paso Energy International
- Debinth Thapa Magar** Professional super-bantam weight boxer with an 18-1 record
- Kiran Chetri** 26-year-old anchor of Fox Hourly News Update
- Kiran Bhakta Joshi** Head of Wal-Diner's Feature Animation Division
- Kul Chandra Gautam** Assistant Secretary-General of the UN and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF
- Raj Kapoor** The only professional Nepali dance and music artist practicing in the US
- Ram Kharel** Founder and president of Sagarmatha TV, which broadcasts 30 minutes of Nepali programming in the US every week
- Ravi Adhikari** Award-winning journalist who has covered South Asian immigrant affairs in the US for the past six years
- Samrat Upadhyay** Author of *Arresting God in Kathmandu* and the first Nepali to be published in the US
- Sudha Shah** Sales executive for German software giant SAP America

largely remained on the cultural and social sidelines. But now, with increasing numbers and confidence, that changing and stronger leadership is emerging from within the growing community. The sophistication of this year's ANA meeting is a far cry from modest beginnings, when, we are told, small groups of middle-aged Nepali immigrants assembled to share dal and bannan the state of affairs back home. The ANA is working to get a US Congressman address the convention, and former US

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**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**German Technical Cooperation Rural Development Programme**

The objective of the Rural Development Programme (RDP), implemented by MAGN and supported by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), is to enable the rural population to improve its socio-economic situation. RDP's main areas of activity are the promotion of self-help-groups, rural transport infrastructure development, strengthening NGOs and local government bodies as well as economic development and employment promotion.

RDP invites applications from qualified professionals for the following post:

**Social and Economic Development Specialist**

**Major responsibilities:**

- Support social and economic development activities, including income generation and employment promotion.
- Contribute to implement social mobilization, self-help promotion and resource mobilization activities in Sarankhuwasha District.
- Coordinate and support the staff in institutional/self-help development and accessibility planning.
- Facilitate to establish linkages and networking between self-help groups and external service providers, local bodies to access resources and technical know-how.

**Required qualification and experience:**

- Master's degree in development studies or social science or economics or equivalent degree.
- At least 5 years of field experience, having 3 years in the area of social and institutional organisational development and capacity building of local bodies, organisations and communities.
- Practical experience of working directly with communities and civil society including NGOs.
- Experience of working with DDCs, MAG line agencies and private sector/service providers.
- Bright in negotiating skills preferably with good knowledge of conflict prevention and management.
- Experience of project planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting with application of logical frame approach.
- Excellent knowledge of English and Nepali, both written and spoken.
- Excellent working knowledge in computer application (MS Word, Excel etc.)

**Preferable:**

- Knowledge about social mobilization, public participatory activities including PRA/RA methods, social training and rural poverty and poverty alleviation programmes.
- Skills and experience in the context of rural infrastructure development projects.
- Good working knowledge of software base data bases and processing in computer.
- Basic knowledge in German language.

**The post will be based in Khandbari, Sarankhuwasha.**

The salary and social fringe benefits will correspond to the GTZ rules applicable to the national staff.

Interested candidates should send their CV, two references and a passport size photograph in an envelope marked with the application for the post to the following address by **15 July 2002**. Only short listed candidates will be called for an interview. Telephone enquiries will not be entertained.

**Programme Coordinator**

**Dr. P. K. B. Karmachari** Sarankhuwasha Koshi Building Pulchowk, (Opposite United Nations House) P.O. Box 1467 Kathmandu

**Women are particularly encouraged to apply**

country. "In the long run, what we are able to achieve will be well influence how and what we are able to contribute to the uplift of Nepal and Nepalis, much like the success of NRIs has now begun to have an impact on the economic and social revival," states an ANA declaration. "The NRN community now has more incentive to do just that, after the recent government decision to issue 10-year visas to non-citizens NRNs. Until now, migrant Nepalis wishing to visit home had to apply for the same tourist visa issued to other foreigners, which allows a maximum stay of only five months in a calendar year. Now, say NRNs we spoke with, they will find it easier to return home, invest in Nepal and familiarise their children with their motherland."

The change in Nepal law came about through the efforts of Gandhi Pandit, Minendra Rijal and Paksh Sharan Mahar, three influential Nepalis in Kathmandu who lobbied the government. To thank them, the ANA will recognise the three at its summer convention, although only Pandit will be able to attend in person. He will be the first Nepali to be felicitated by the NRN community—in 2000, Sher Bahadur Deuba attended the ANA Millennium Convention in Atlanta, where he discussed Nepali affairs and agreed to help alter the visa regulation. ♦

## DOMESTIC BRIEFS

### Schools update

The Private and Boarding Schools Organisation Nepal (PABSON), the largest organisation of private schools, says it has decided to delay the recent government rule requiring private schools to either operate as either trusts or private companies. The Education Regulation enacted on 20 May requires all private schools to register as trusts or companies within six months. Earlier this week government issued a notice appealing to private schools to complete their registration before the start of the new fiscal year in mid-July. The other organisation of private schools, N-PABSON, has issued a circular to its members asking them to register under the Company Act. However, N-PABSON, like PABSON, is also against the new provision that requires all private schools to contribute 1.5 percent of their annual income to the Rural Education Development Fund, which is to be used to finance the development of public schools.

Several private school principals told us that they are undecided about what to do, because the fee scale laid down in the regulation would mean they cannot maintain the quality of education that they currently provide.

### Down with dogs

The Lalpur Sub-municipal Corporation is to begin a campaign to sterilise street dogs as an alternative to poisoning them—the preferred method of dog population control in neighbouring Kathmandu. Rotarians of Patan and Kirtipur, and their supporters, are to finance the vasectomy drive. There's a bounty for city residents too: anyone helping round up eligible street dogs for a vasectomy will be paid Rs 50 each.

### British aid

Following the donors meeting on Nepal in London on 20 June, Britain has just released \$8.7 million more to support development activities that produce quick results, and to reinforce the capacity of Nepal's military and police. The UK's development assistance to Nepal is £27 million this year, up from £20 million last year.

### Media policy

The Ministry of Information and Communication (MOIC) has approved a media policy that has some new provisions, but remains mostly unchanged on issues relating to ownership of both state-run and private media, especially cross ownership. Specific sections of the policy relate to plans to run and manage state-run newspapers, radio, and television, and hint at some changes. The MOIC is to start selling shares of the Gorkhapatra corporation. On broadcasting, the policy talks about the need for a National Broadcasting Authority, but does not say if this would be independent. The policy, which covers every field under the purview of the MOIC—advertising, telecommunications, postal services, film, etc.—does not go into too much detail, leaving officials plenty of room to interpret the specifics of the document.

### The people speak out

If the huge crowd that came out to a recent public hearing is any indication, general people want a quick end to the Maoist insurgency. They want the end to come through a dialogue between the government and the insurgents, and they want the Maoist to initiate that dialogue. On 24 June over 900 people gathered in the capital to voice their opinions about how to resolve the insurgency. They listened to five speakers—all leaders in their respective fields—neurosurgeon Upendra Devkota, advocate and women's rights activist Sapana Mallaprabha, water expert Dipak Prasad, call rights activist Durga Sub, and independent leftist activist and writer Hari Roka. Although all the panellists, except Roka, condemned that dialogue between the Maoists and the government is impossible unless the insurgents lay down their weapons, the majority of the public who spoke said that a sincere ceasefire should be a precondition for any talks. In a poll conducted at the end of the hearing, 56 percent of the general public voted that the Maoist should declare a ceasefire and initiate talks soon.

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# Cold War II

Internationally, Nepal is back where it was half-a-century ago, and a century before that.

"The Congress has degenerated into warring groups so much so that the name comes to no use unless it is referred to as Congress of so and so. Americans are fishing fat in the sea of cold waters and they are not pulling the waters more to do more fishing. Their idea is to reconquer the landlocked territory of Nepal into a streamlined military outpost and adjust against the People's Republic of China. Public opinion is extremely resentful of giving priority to military rehabilitation than to the amelioration of the wretched conditions of the people. Politically, the people are veering round to two polarised centres. In between these two powerful formations, Congress is being squeezed out, having lost all its prestige by inter-caste quarrel."

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The two parallel centres the foregoing paragraph refers to are not the Maoist left and the reactionary right. They were the banned Gorkha Dal and the United Front of communists, socialists and other progressives doing in the political centre half a century ago. If this excerpt from a 16 May, 1953 piece by Bombay-based Hiralal Shrestha's staff correspondent sounds like some of the rhetoric appearing in today's Indian press, it's probably because we've come full circle.

Not that we weren't warned about the shape of things to come. "The Cold War ended more than ten years ago, but we may be seeing the recurrence of a new Cold War in our region," then-foreign minister Chakra Bhatta said last year (Nepali Times, 4-10

in the world's newest nuclear-armed state, during his South Asian tour in 2000. By the evening of 11 September, 2001, Islamabad was back on Washington's strategic map, heightening anxiety levels in New Delhi.

Some Indian security analysts deem that Nepal's Maoist insurgency is a rare opportunity to foster cooperation with the United States without Pakistan coming in the picture. Others are alarmed by the impending realignment of India to junior-partner status in its own backyard. With the SAARC, Quinies—

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka—having expressed varying degrees of interest in forging a new partnership with the United States, India's "look west" policy has evidently entered the monitoring-and-evaluation phase.

Where does all this leave Nepal? "Inevitably, Nepal will become of greater and greater importance if we persist in our present policy of fostering British influence in India," observed London writer in his now-part 1928 tome on the kingdom. "It is not impossible that Nepal may even be called to control the destiny of India." (Nepal, Volume II, p. 363)

Many of us thought Nepal had already played its part two decades later when Maharaja Mohan Sumsher, responding to Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru's request,

despatched Nepal soldiers for garrison duty in India as part of Delhi's effort to persuade reluctant princely states to accede to the union. In fact, Nepal soldiers found themselves engaged in direct action in Hyderabad, which would culminate in the state's agreement to join the Indian union.

(Whether this fragment from Nepali history would do anything to mollify Indians ruffled by Jaing Bahadur's role in putting down the mutiny and by Nepali soldiers' fence-sitting of loyalty to the empire at Jallianwallah Bagh remains outside the purview of this piece.)



As India assessed the future of its relations with the United States and the rehabilitation of Pakistan in international corridors of power, London's prognosis has acquired new purport for Nepal. It looks like Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Millat figured that our before most of us did.

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## ECONOMY

### BIZ NEWS

#### Adulterated foods

The Department of Food Technology says its investigations show that 15 percent of all edible products in the market are adulterated. A 10-month study of 619 samples collected nationwide revealed that 89 were sub-standard. Over half of "unsafe/unfit" milk samples tested from Kathmandu, margarine and confectionery contained bacteria, including milk sold by the state-owned Dairy Development Corporation. Bottled water was another major culprit—more than half the samples tested revealed the presence of bacteria. The same goes for edible oils, which contained traces of argemone, a natural product that is said to be harmful to health. Despite this, the department says that the levels of the undesirable substances and life forms in food products has declined, compared with last year's findings.

#### Super savings

The Laxmi Bank has launched a new deposit-generating drive by offering what it calls a Super Savings Account. Interest under the scheme is calculated on the basis of the daily balance, and account holders maintaining a minimum balance under the scheme get "privileged" banking services, including lower bank fees, accidental insurance coverage, and assistance for all bank-related transactions. The money market bank, headquartered in Biratnagar, is the country's 16th commercial bank. Its says its focus will largely be on trade and retail banking.

#### Share sales

The Life Insurance Corporation (Nepal)—a joint venture of the Life Insurance Corporation of India and the Vishal Group—is issuing shares worth Rs 50 million to the general public next month. NDC Capital Markets will manage the issue. Vishal's Indian parent controls 55 percent of the stock in the venture whose authorized capital is Rs 250 million, and paid-up capital Rs 200 million. Likewise, the Everest Bank is issuing preference shares worth Rs 140 million starting today.

#### Self-check

Here's news for the diabetic. The CAS Trading House has begun marketing German-made gadgets that can help diabetics to keep track of their glucose count without having to visit a pathologist at every sign of discomfort. The two models currently offered are the Accu-Check Active and GlucoSensor. A self-test stick cannot take the place of thorough regular examinations by professionals, but can be an efficient way to keep track of your health in between visits.

## "Nepal needs focussed guidance of enlightened leadership."

from ➞ p1

Q: But were there differences in approach between Nepal's immediate neighbours and the western powers vis-à-vis the insurgency?

A: This, I think, was the most significant achievement of the meeting. Our first priority was to explore the thinking of partners on the core issues around the conflict. We were encouraged by the discussions, which delivered broad and unanimous agreement on the key priorities. These were reflected in the Chairman's Statement. We condemned terrorism and expressed support for the Government of Nepal's efforts to combat Maoist violence. We noted that the conflict posed a threat to regional stability, and the human rights of the people of Nepal. We discussed possible assistance to a future peace process. And we noted the need for an integrated approach to security, reform and development, stressing the urgent need to tackle poverty, exclusion, poor governance, discrimination, corruption, livelihoods and human rights.

Q: Your Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien said after the meeting last week that Nepal must not be allowed to become a failed state. Did the participants see signs of that happening?

A: That's right. We believe it is imperative that the international community should coordinate its efforts to assist the government of Nepal in its struggle against terrorism. Nepal should not be allowed to become a "failed state". I realise that this is strong language, and an honourable prospect. We may be a long way from this prospect today. But the dangers exist. We have all lived through the process of restoring peace and security to Afghanistan. And we recognise that it is better to choose to resolve difficulties than to be forced to address catastrophes.

Q: We hear that the British International Development Secretary Clare Short reiterated her concerns about Nepal's weak governance and corruption, and called for radical reforms. What kind of reforms are

we talking about, and do you think the message sank in?

A: Clare Short said that there was an urgent need to address the underlying issues of corruption, discrimination and weak governance. These are genuine weaknesses, and have provided the fertile ground in which the conflict has taken root and flourished. Clare Short's view is that radical reform is needed to prioritise delivery of services to poor people. And that issues of corruption, exclusion and poor governance need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. We believe that there must be a peaceful, political resolution to the crisis in the country. And we are confident that there is a resolution that is possible. But we believe that, even if there is such a resolution, unless the underlying issues of corruption, exclusion and poor governance are addressed, the problem of conflict will re-emerge in some form, in the future.

Q: And did the issue of human rights violations come up?

A: This was indeed discussed. The meeting expressed its solidarity with all the victims of the conflict, and recognised the needs in particular of those bereaved, dispossessed and displaced by the conflict. The meeting expressed the view that the conflict represented a threat to the rights and dignity of the citizens of Nepal, and recalled the obligations on both parties to the conflict to ensure respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the safety of civilian non-combatants. We also discussed the central role of civil society in monitoring and developing responses to the conflict.

Q: How about concerns of some delegates that the insurgency may be a broader threat to regional security?

A: Yes. The meeting expressed its concern at the possible impact of the conflict on wider regional stability. I think we all recognise that a deepening conflict is a very negative influence in regional terms.

Q: The UK chairman of the meeting called for the strongest possible political leadership in Nepal. What kind of leadership was he talking about?

A: We all recognised that strong leadership was a pre-requisite. This was not a coded reference to any particular political construct. That is a matter for Nepal and the Nepali people alone. But I think we all recognise that Nepal needs the focussed guidance of enlightened leadership if it is to plot a course out of crisis. This is in the interests of all of the people of Nepal. More than ever, is a time for stable governance.

## INTERVIEW

# "The solution is a good economy."

Harinder Singh is the new general manager of the Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. Singh comes to Nepal from the Hyatt Regency New Delhi. Nepal Times spoke with her about the prospects for tourism in Nepal, the need to market Nepal better abroad, and the challenges of working here in the present situation.



Nepali Times: How did you land up in Nepal, is it something you wanted?

Harinder Singh: South Asia is now a separate region for the Hyatt hotels worldwide, so we have more hotels coming up in the region. The idea is to have more local people running them. So when Martin's (Van Khan) term expired I was offered the position.

What did you expect to find here?

We were aware of what is happening here, and the challenges, so nothing was a surprise as far as the performance of the hotel is concerned.

So, what do you see?

It is a challenge. We need to improve what we are doing because, first, we stepped into the market when there was the unfortunate incident concerning the monarchy, and the escalation of the Maoist rebellion. These were followed by the Indian incidents, followed again by 11 September. We've been unlucky. More than anything else, it's the unfortunate that all this happened when we were just opening. I think we need to do better.

How do you plan to get there?

We need to get into the market and tell people about this hotel. Tell other parts of the world that we exist here. We need to educate people on what this property is. We need to market it differently, we need to let people know what we offer—not just the hotel, but the country and the city. I know where Nepal was, but I had lots of pleasant surprises in the seven days. There is so much to offer here—outdoor activities like paragliding, mountain flights, visits to China, and all the trekking areas that I was not aware of.

How can Hyatt's worldwide network help more tourists to your hotel and to Nepal?

The occupancy rate is not too bad, but there have been certain dates when we've done very well. There are also days when we haven't. On average, we need to pull up.

In terms of averages, how has your performance been since opening?

There are a lot of things the government can do. Making visa on arrival more efficient, other little things to make the tourists welcome, inviting people from other countries to come and see for themselves. I understand some travel agents to come and see the people there want to come. I think people are not coming only because of their perceptions of the security situation, otherwise everything else is positive. We need to build confidence in tourists that Nepal is a secure place. I don't see much insecurity here, honestly, as much as you hear about it as outsiders. We need to send out more positive feelers and that can only be done by inviting people over and sending people out to promote the country.

How has the monsoon tourist boom been?

We have special packages with a few travel agents because now is when schools in India are closed for the summer. That's got to be some business. The hotel has been doing very well for the past two months. May was very good and June is picking up. Every day we see the figures we had forecast.

How did you manage to get your recent large Australian groups?

Our sales team had been working on that, they were actually supposed to have come last year. It was a group of older people who wanted to see Mt Everest. They were thrilled. I'm sure that the world is full of people who want to see

Everest. We need to market harder to get them here.

Is that a sign of a general tourism revival?

I think so. Also, people come if you have packages; it just depends on how you market them. I've seen that the hotels here are full of holiday-makers, casinos full of people who are not local. The restaurants here have been doing very well. But again there was much more before—but now it can only improve. I think we need to build relationships with people, locals, expatriates, whoever has business. There are certain things in business that carry on irrespective of bad economy and poor security. We need to look at that market because business has to go on.

What should the government do right away to help a turnaround?

I think there are a few restrictions on travel to Nepal, such as the embassy advisories, which should be lifted. The most important thing the government can do is tell other governments that these advisories should not be given without consultations or proper information on the situation. The advisories were discussed at a recent PATA conference where it was agreed that governments should talk with their counterparts to ensure that such advisories should not be issued just for the sake of being issued.

We also need to build confidence about the security there in the country. It is not as insecure as it is perceived to be. Of course, once tourism comes in the economy will boom and once the economy begins to recover, it will benefit all. I think the solution to any rebellion is a good economy.

How does this property rate with other Hyatts in the region?

This is a Hyatt Regency, but my first impression was that of a Grand Hyatt, which is more luxurious. This hotel was almost branded as a Grand Hyatt but due to regional reasons we had to make it a Hyatt Regency. If I look around Kathmandu there is no property comparable to this. I don't just say that, I've seen all the other hotels, and nothing compares to the facilities we have.

You're the second woman general manager you've met in Nepal. Is this a growing trend?

I wish it were. I'm the first woman general manager at a Hyatt International in South Asia. In Hyatt worldwide, I do think there are more than five women general managers. You have to prove much more than your men colleagues. Your ability to do things may be confined, but you have to prove that all the time. But I never thought about myself as being a woman in a man's world, I've just done what I had to do.

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# The Philosophy of Football

ELEMER HANKISS



## Goooooal!!!

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The world of play is our permanent Garden of Eden. At any moment we may step from our real world into the freedom, innocence, and bliss of play. Football and the Garden of Eden? What do they have to do with each other?

Each celebrates a sacred sphere of freedom and order, innocence, spirituality and justice from our everyday world of chaos, bondage, injustice and guilt. The dashboard, the tennis court, the soccer field: within their boundaries we feel free because here it is we who make the rules and are not subjected to the iron laws of the outside world. We feel innocent too, because the Garden of Eden before the Fall. Here we can be childishly selfish, we can gratify our thirst for success, power and domination—all without guilt.

In the world of play freedom is generated, paradoxically, by restrictions. In soccer, the basic rule is simple: the ball is to be moved, from the central point, into one of the goals. If the ball would roll from the central point straight into one of the goals, its track would be, or would seem to be, strictly determined and the whole thing would be boring. To generate freedom, rules put obstacles in the way of the ball and complicate its movement.

First, two teams of 11 players are put on the field with the task of getting the ball into the goal. Second, they are told to get the ball into opposite goals. With 22 players with their own wills and skills, with various

movements of confrontation and cooperation, the number of possible combinations is increased almost ad infinitum. After this only one additional factor is needed to create a real world of happy surprises, freedom and bliss: the ball.

Balls are among the most important "freedom generators" in our lives. A ball is freedom embodied. It may bounce in any direction. It seems to have its "own will". It is an object and, nevertheless, it seems to be free. By introducing the factor of chance and unpredictability into the game, the ball transforms a bitter and down-to-earth human fight into an epiphany of spirituality and freedom.

In its brisk movements chance and human will interact, dance, and somewhat with each other. The ball flutters to and fro in happy irresponsibility—between human will and chance, freedom and limitation, success and failure, hope and the loss of hope—to bounce back into the world of hope in the next moment. It has its own universe. It moves in the sphere of the sacred.

But that sacred does not exist without the profane. The football field is marked off and opposed to the surrounding world. The experience and the sacred ceremony remain incomplete if tension between the field and the grassland is missing. The clean emerald field and freedom of the game must be opposed by the howling mob in the darkness of the stands, burning red torches and jerking between ecstatic joy and hellish misery.

In our everyday lives, reason and passions are mixed. Soccer (like some other games) separates, and opposes to each other, these two realms. All passions, emotions and instincts are pushed over to the side of the spectators. They rage and howl, and finally reach a catharsis (if their team wins) or to descend into hell (if their team loses). At the same time, they watch, perceive, and experience the freedom of Apollonian or Platonic

spirituality of the game going on in the field. Yes, players move in a world of spirituality. They act according to clear, sacred rules. While in play, they are supposed to act as pure rational beings who leave behind their everyday passions and emotions, personal wishes or fears. They move in the world of pure morality and justice. The player's world is one of justice and total impartiality; of perfect equality of opportunity, which is never achieved in our everyday lives. Even advantages deriving from the direction of the wind are balanced. The two teams change sides at the half. When and where do we, the privileged and the underprivileged, change sides in the real world?

Players, too, are not supposed to break the rules. If they do, they are punished and, if they relapse, excluded from play. They are expelled from the sphere of spirituality and we see them disappearing into the chilly Hades of the locker room. The real expulsion from Paradise comes only if the sanctity of play is profaned, if the spell is broken: by players falling out of their angelic roles and starting a fight in the field; by a cheating referee; by people realizing that a match is rigged; by spectators invading the field. Such events do lasting damage to people and to the community. It is a bitter shock to realize the fragility of our world of freedom, spirituality, and dignity and awaken again (as we will when the Cup winner is decided) in our less hospitable everyday world.

(Project Syndicate)

(Elemér Hankiss is a professor at the Institute of Sociology, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest)

## A ball is freedom embodied.

## Nepali Times Eleven

If it were up to us to choose from the World Cup 2002 performers, this would be our dream team.



**The Forwards**  
Written off by critics prior to the start of the tournament, Ronaldo has finally proven his worth at this world cup, an achievement that can only be improved upon if Brazil go on to win the tournament for an unprecedented fifth time. Ronaldo leads the top scorers so far along with team-mate Rivaldo and Germany's Miroslav Klose, but (still prestime) has had more shots on goal than any one else in the tournament.

Joining him is Turkey's shaven-headed and hugely impressive Hasan Saka who seems to have stolen Zidane's fire at this world cup, playing in a very similar role in an uncannily similar style to the French number ten, but with far more aggression. The third forward is Ronaldinho who lit up the World Cup with two magical moves that downed England, just before being controversially sent-off. The sheer audacity and genius of his chip over David Seaman was perhaps the goal of the tournament.

**The Midfield**  
The Japan's Junichi Inamoto, who bears an extraordinary resemblance to an Anime figure with his dyed blond hair leads the all star midfield. Inamoto's excellent attacking play, superb finishing and defensive work made him one of the most exciting players of the tournament in the first round despite Japan's early exit.

Germany's new star Michael Ballack gets a place for recording the most assists in the tournament so far. His contribution has been crucial to Germany's route to the final considering how important lone goals have been to their advancement in the knockout stages of the tournament.

The United States' Claudio Reyna and Korea's Yoo Sang-Chul were instrumental to both their countries' surprising run to the knockout stages of the World Cup.

**The Defence**  
England's Rio Ferdinand, Spanish captain Fernando Hierro and Senegal's Omar Daf have been among the most impressive defenders of the competition so far. Hierro has been like a human wall for Spain, and is one of the best in reading the game and being where the ball is when it counts. Rio Ferdinand has been there to score goals for England as well as defend, and Daf has always been an integral part of Senegal's devastating counterattacking moves as well as recording the highest number of tackles per game in the tournament.

**The Goalkeeper**  
Oliver Kahn has arguably been the best keeper in the World Cup. He literally took over the faltering German defence against the United States in the quarter-finals, stopping everything the Americans threw at him.

## SUCKER FOR SOCCER

by BILL BREWSTER



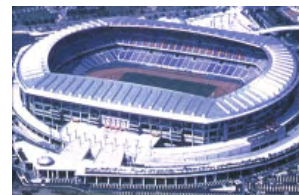
# 2-1

That would make the final truly exciting.

Before this World Cup began, many football experts predicted that there wouldn't be a new winner this year. They were right. But one month ago, the buzz was all about previous champs Argentina, France, Italy and England, plus elegant party-crashers Portugal. Almost nobody thought Brazil and Germany would be fighting it out in the final. Sure, the pundits said, you can never count either country out entirely. But this year's teams from the two countries are neither their best nor their most-loved, and both struggled just to qualify, and besides, shouldn't a more less successful nation get a turn as champions?

On paper, Sunday's final is a dream set-up. South America's most successful team ever versus Europe's most successful team ever, playing for football's biggest prize on a neutral continent.

Brazil will probably be the favourites. Deeply sorry for fans, Germany will be missing their offensive catalyst Michael Ballack through suspension, but the essence of the match remains the same: the tournament's most prolific and creative offence against its stingiest defence and best goalkeeper, captain Oliver Kahn. Don't expect the whole match to



be played in Germany's half of the field, though. The Germans will use their strength and size to break up plays in their defensive end, win the ball in the midfield, and get it up front quickly against a Brazilian back line that still probably spends a little too much time going forward.

Brazil, on the other hand, are... well, Brazil. This year again they have been the most consistently attractive team in the tournament with their creativity, ball control, ability to maintain possession, and threatening moves in front of goal. They're the only team to have won every game they've played in the tournament. Germany have been behind at any point in their previous six matches, so we don't know how they'll react if they go a goal down. Will they have the firepower and adventurous spirit to do anything forward?

My dream final—an attractive, entertaining match—would be Germany scoring the first goal, preferably in the first half. They'd then have to withstand an hour or so of desperate Brazilian attack, surely giving Kahn ample opportunity to shine. If Germany get the first goal, I think it's anybody's game, but if I had to predict, I see Brazil beating them by a goal or two. It'll be a golden goal in extra time.

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## Spot the Real Ball

### 2 fly to Mauritius!

There's only one real ball in the picture. Spot it and win a Realll Holiday !!\*

3 Steps to success!

- Fill in the entry form (free with every 1 to pack of Colibri Real Fruit Juice).
- Take the answer Real Ball (Cage) off the pack.
- Place the Real Ball and Real Seal into an envelope and drop it into the "SpotIt" at the nearest department store or send it directly to Colibri Nepal Pvt. Ltd. (P.O. Box 14373, Newmarket, Kathmandu).

Unlimited entries per person! 1 Go on holiday, get Real and spot, spot, spot away!! Contest ends August 15th. Hurry!

100% preservative free

No Artificial. Win for Real!

Winners and prizes:

- 1 Couple: Magnificent Mauritius (8 nights/7 days)
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\*TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1. This competition is open to all who purchase a pack of Real Ball. 2. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 3. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 4. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 5. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 6. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 7. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 8. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 9. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 10. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 11. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 12. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 13. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 14. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 15. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 16. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 17. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 18. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 19. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 20. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 21. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 22. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 23. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 24. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 25. The prize is a Real Ball Holiday. 26. 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# Neither public nor private

Public-private partnerships need to be democratised to work.



I began with collecting rubbish. Since the 1980s, local communities everywhere have discovered that they could guarantee the service without actually providing it themselves. Private companies removed household rubbish more reliably and efficiently than the public service had done before. Suddenly there were no delays, no strikes, no bad manners. Since then the principle has been applied to many services: traffic wardens and airport security, train railways and flight control systems, hospital buildings and even prisons all came to be run by public-private partnerships, or "PPPs" as they are known in the United Kingdom.

The principle is simple. Government guarantees certain services but private agents provide them. In this way citizens get what they need, but more efficiently and also cheaper. Originally, this was a project of the centre-right, part of the privatisation wave which swept the US and Europe in the Reagan-Thatcher years. And then, the political left has adopted it and added its own theory. Britain's thoughtful Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown regards PPP as part of a

sea change in Labour Party thinking. For a century (he argues) the left fought private privilege by strengthening the state. Now the state has given rise to its own vested, privileged interests—those of the public. Now the state has given rise to its own vested, privileged interests—those of the public. Now the state has given rise to its own vested, privileged interests—those of the public.

There is an element of magic about setting up public-private partnerships and suddenly everything is both cheaper and more efficient. How can this be? Two risks in particular have come to the fore. The first is that state "guarantees" of services may turn out to cost more than fine promises by ministers. What

if the partners, whether private or charitable, collapse and must be bailed out with taxpayers' money? What about the "fat cat" who made fortunes out of the PPP. What about their not-so-far-charitable-when-in-the-end—also clamour for compensation from a state that promised much but failed to deliver.

The other risk is most evident in PVPs. Such partnerships turn voluntary associations into effective agents of the state. Lured by tax concessions, third sector bodies hitch their destiny to governments and lose their independence. This destroys the liberty that defines civil society. It is centralisation by stealth. It could be argued that the same is true for PPPs—they create power without responsibility. The state becomes the sole repository of public purpose.

Any reversal of this trend seems too early. After all, there is much to be said for the principle of reducing the direct involvement of the state in the provision of services. Yet a few questions need answers if the principle is to command ongoing acceptance. One question is: where do the limits fine promises by ministers. What

purposes lie? Many people find private prisons unacceptable. There are also those who wonder whether there is not an important difference between the provision of an infrastructure for services and those services themselves: public tracks and private trains as it were. There may well be limits to the usefulness of both PPPs and PVPs. Above all, the matter of control, of checks and balances, has to be resolved. In the public sphere, democratic institutions exercise control. In the private sphere, corporate governance is increasingly developed into a fairly transparent system.

The voluntary sector admittedly raises more complicated issues. But PPPs fall between the stools. Governments can say that they did not have responsibility for the services, and the private providers can say that they merely did what government wanted. In the end, not just democracy but the taxpayer may be the victim. Democratising PPPs is therefore the next task. (Project Synthesis)

(Ralf Dahrendorf, a member of the British House of Lords and a former Director of the London School of Economics, is the author of numerous acclaimed books.)

## Australia immigration update

CANBERRA, June 20 (IPS) - Refugee support groups hailed the defeat in the Senate last week of Australian government regulations to excise 3,000 islands off the country's northern coast from legislation on refugees' rights. However, the day after the defeat the government promptly introduced legislation virtually identical to the defeated regulations, signalling that its hardline approach to asylum seekers was far from over. Although it expects the latest proposed legislation to be defeated as well, officials believe it would still enable another race-based election to be called, possibly as early as next year, and give the government of Prime Minister John Howard a new mandate. "We intend to give the opposition an opportunity to make it clear that they are sabotaging the border protection measures," Minister for Immigration Philip Ruddock told parliament about the new legislation. But the National Coordinator of Australians for Just Refugee Programmes, Howard Glenn, welcomed the Senate vote as one more stage in the unravelling of the government's hardline anti-refugee policy. "We are delighted that the opposition parties are not going to let the government get away with a policy based on rhetoric," he said. The original regulations exempted a swathe of 3,000 tiny islands in Australian territorial waters, spanning from the Coral Sea off the Queensland coast across to Western Australia, from the provisions of the Migration Act. The proposed excision of the islands would prevent refugees landing on Australian territory from the legal right to seek asylum. (IPS)

## Indigenous rights

BRUSSELS - Representatives of 40 indigenous peoples organisations from Africa, Latin America and Asia have asked for direct participation in development projects funded by the European Union. The delegates made the demand at a conference in Brussels last week. The meeting, organised by the Rainforest Foundation UK, the International Alliance of Indigenous Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, and the European Commission, was attended by representatives of 55 indigenous groups and 46 non-governmental organisations, and a large number of EU officials and government representatives. In Brazil indigenous people number less than 0.1 per cent of the population. In Peru they number 40 per cent. There are about 5,000 indigenous groups—some 250 million people—in about 70 countries. The rainforests alone are home to an estimated 50 million.

The conference asked the EU to recognise indigenous people as "political entities, as peoples and actors with authority over their own development." The recommendations note that since most EU external relations are one-way, indigenous initiatives are needed to build relations with indigenous peoples. Paul Nielson, EU commissioner for development policy, agreed that securing access to land and natural resources is crucial for indigenous peoples. (IPS)

## Canada's Indian Act

OTTAWA - Last week, the federal government announced changes to the 125-year-old Indian Act that will give more power to First Nations people in Canada's over 600 reserves over public health, traffic, roads, the environment, the protection of language and culture and other local affairs. But the changes were denounced by Indian chiefs as a continuation of the assimilationist and paternalistic interference into the lives of native peoples.

The problem is, many First Nations people have far more pressing problems in their lives than issues of democratic reform and financial accountability. Many reserves lack clean drinking water or adequate housing and are dealing with the scourge of alcohol abuse and teen suicides. (Guardian)

# "Once we get democracy, we have to work very, very hard."

Shortly after her release from nearly two years under house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi sat with Tony Broadmore for an exclusive interview for *The Irrawaddy* magazine at the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters in Rangoon. She discussed the challenges that lie ahead for Burma.



## What is the next step for the NLD?

Right now, to work hard to ensure we are in touch with the people so we can make their voice heard. This is why we started reorganising the party and reopening party offices—not for the simple joy of hanging up the party signboard, but because we want to be able to work and want to be able to get to the people. Just now I was at one of our townships reorganising the youth committee there. We want more young people to be involved because this is our future. And despite all the difficulties, young people are coming forward to take up responsibilities in the NLD's youth wing. Then we want to go right down to the village and ward level so that exactly the sort of people that you are talking about can make their voice heard through us. They can tell us what they want us to do, so that the lines of communication are open.

You have said since your release that your stance on sanctions, humanitarian aid and tourism are unchanged. The issue of humanitarian aid is obviously sensitive and needs to be addressed in the near term. We will keep looking into this issue in very practical way. We want to look into some of the humanitarian aid projects in Burma, and see whether they are getting aid to the right people in the right way. This is something that we keep reiterating—that it is not just a matter of giving aid, it has to be given to the right people in the right way, which is why it has to be given to those who really need it, in a way that will strengthen civil society, not in a way which will entrench the people in the mode of totalitarian rule.

Would you support increased humanitarian aid if it could be proven that it was being delivered to those in need, and not prolonging the regime's grip on power?

We have never said no to humanitarian aid as such. We have always said humanitarian aid must be given to the right people in the right way, which of course calls for accountability and transparency. We always say the minimum necessary requirement is independent monitoring. If people thought that we simply said no to humanitarian aid, was a misunderstanding of our position, we have never said that.

## Do you see Burma as a federalist nation in the future?

We think that to be a true and lasting union it would have to be of a federalist nature. It is important that the people of Burma understand what federal means. The word has unhappy connotations because for some reason during the early days of independence the perception of people in Burma and in general—that is to say, those who are interested in such matters and understood federalism—they understood federal to mean a system under which each state could opt to secede from the union. This was the unfortunate misunderstanding that has made 'federal' such a dangerous concept in Burma. But as you probably know, the ethnic nationalities are not asking for secession. They are just asking for their rights within a true federal union.

We have been trying to explain over the years that federal simply means the division of powers between the central government and the state governments, and that the constitution makes it clear what powers the central government has and what powers the state government has, and who is responsible for anything that could be termed residual powers. If there is a conflict of interest, there should be a constitutional method, usually through the judiciary, whereby it can be resolved. (The Irrawaddy, April 2002)

## More talk than money

LONDON - Afghanistan is getting only a small fraction of the billions of dollars of aid figures announced for its reconstruction, Hafiz Pasha, assistant secretary-general of the UNDP told IPS last week. More than \$5 billion of aid for Afghanistan was pledged over a five-year period at a meeting of donors in Tokyo in January. Pasha explained that the \$1.7 billion pledged for this year was followed up by firm commitments of only \$1.1 billion. A total of \$900 million has come in by way of actual disbursements, about 70 per cent to humanitarian relief such as providing food and to facilitate the return of refugees. That leaves about \$250 million for actual reconstruction aid this year. Of this relatively small amount, a substantial portion is going towards paying salaries for government staff. Another large component of this is for providing security services around the country. That leaves only about \$150 million for educational and vocational development, health and nutrition, and for social programmes. The UNDP believes that Afghanistan needs a minimum of \$1 billion a year. (IPS)

## Dam promises

BANGKOK - A long-time conflict over big dam and irrigation schemes are far from being flushed out, despite the latest pledge by Thailand's irrigation department to "shelve all dam projects opposed by the local people and green groups," activists say. At a speech marking the department's 100th anniversary last week, irrigation chief Kijja Polphairat proposed a shift of the department's massive \$7.14 billion annual budget away from the construction of new dams, and to concentrate on the maintenance of old ones. Media reports say four dam projects are likely to be shelved, but the real test of whether the irrigation chief's statement represents a rethinking by the government of what "development" is for the countryside goes far beyond this. (IPS)

## Female Salman Rushdie

KABUL - A former women's affairs minister in Afghanistan fears for her safety because she is opposed by the country's powerful religious establishment. Since her appointment in December to the interim administration, Sima Samar, a member of the Hazara minority, has become one of the most visible women in the country and has travelled abroad to promote the interests of Afghan women. Back home, however, she has been threatened. Men in police uniforms have pounded on the gates of her home at night, telling her to leave. An Afghan newspaper owned by the Jamiat-e-Islami party published this month what it said was an interview she gave to a Persian-language magazine in Canada in which she allegedly said, "I don't believe in Sharia [Islamic law]." Samar denied saying this but the report was circulated among *loya jirga* delegates meeting to choose a new government. The chief justice, Abdul Hadi Shinwari, said her reported words were "against the Islamic nation of Afghanistan". Earlier this week, however, the Supreme Court threw out a blasphemy charge against her. (The Independent)

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## FOOTBALL

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- World Cup Finals on a 25 ft screen, 4.45PM, 30 June. Rs 699 with snacks and complimentary drinks. Radisson Hotel, 411818
- Bookie's Bar Watch World Cup games, win free buffets and other prizes with every match. Free entrance, Hotel Yak & Yeti everyday, 248999
- Word Cup Football Show All the World Cup matches on the Summit big screen. Free Entry, 521810
- Catch of the match Every World Cup match, everyday, with food and drink at The Jazz Bar, Shangri-La Hotel, 412599
- Best steaks and ESPN World Cup games at K-tool Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. Buy two beers, get a can free, daily specials, 433043.

## EVENTS

- Friends of the Bagmati Membership open to all. Email friends@thebagmatinepal@yahoo.com for details.

## MUSIC

- Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalite Cafe, Thamel, 262526
- Down Memory Lane Friday nights with Teesta. The Rox Bar at the Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234
- Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000+ ft Bar, Run Doodle Restaurant, Thamel, 414336

## DRINK

- Uncork the good times at Dwarika's Hotel, 30 percent discount on snacks and beverages in the new Fusion Bar, 43' screen for football viewing, Swimming pool and non-football fans, 479488
- Metro of Mats Single malt exhibition and tasting. Twelve single malts for Rs 999. Evenings, Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti, 248999

## FOOD

- New Continental BBQ Fridays by the poolside, Rs 500 per person, Dwarika's Hotel, 479488
- Plat du jour Buy one, get one free. Complimentary use of Sundhara Pool, Hotel Shangri La, 412999
- Thai Food Festival 1-8 July at the Clubhouse Restaurant, Le Meridien Kathmandu, Gokarna Golf Resort, 451212, 224359
- The best of Punjab Punjab thali dinners at The Fun Cafe, Radisson Hotel, 21-27 June, 411818
- Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Cafe. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel.
- Fine dining or table-top cooking Dinner at The Chimney, Hotel Yak & Yeti, starting 6.30 PM everyday, 248999
- Vegetarian Specialties and day-evening pizzas at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha, 480262
- Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant, 425510
- Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights, 416096
- BBQ and momo evenings 5PM onwards at Nanglo Cafe and Pub, Darbar Marg, 222636
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- Bardiya National Park Getaway Full board, luxury on stilts' cottage and pickup, \$10 a day (park activities at Jungle Base Camp Lodge, junglebasecamp@yahoo.com, 061-25954.
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For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com

**NEPALI WEATHER**  
03:30 PM 30/06/2002

It is now official: the monsoon is delayed. It has yet to gather full strength over Nepal, and June rainfall has been 30 percent below average. The short bursts of localised rain are more characteristic of post-monsoon showers, and the heavy sustained rains are yet to come. But hope may be on the horizon because in the satellite picture taken on Wednesday at noon we see the approach of a low pressure area from the southeast which will be in Kathmandu Valley by next week.

**KATHMANDU VALLEY**

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by GANMINDRA DAHAL

**YAK YETI YAK**  
by MIKU

**BOOKWORM**

Studies in Nepali History and Society Vol 5, No 2 Prayash Onta, Mary Des Chene, Seira Tamang, Mark Lachy, eds  
Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu, 2000  
Rs 250

This volume of SINHAS includes articles entitled: State Interventions in Chitwan: On the Historical Development of a Region in Southern Nepal; Community Mobilisation in Primary Education: Claiming the Frontier: A Note on the Incorporation of Nubis within the Borders of Nepal; Pura-patankha Janajati; Virozatanak Samiksha; Radiona Janajati; Mountaineer at the Foot of Sagarmatha; and

**Studies in Nepali History and Society Vol 6, No 1** Prayash Onta, Mary Des Chene, Seira Tamang, Mark Lachy, eds  
Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu, 2001  
Rs 250

This volume of SINHAS includes articles entitled: An Ethnohistory of the Temple's Trust of Manakman: Land as a Redistributive Process in Nepal; Educated Mothers, Extended Households and Child Health: Evidence from a Semi-Rural Community; Consumer Transgressions: Notes on the History of Restaurants and Prostitution in Kathmandu; Sandhyakalan Parika: Ke Paskirachchan, Kasari Chulirachchan; and The Decisive, the Unresolved.

Population Polarization at Kathmandu Metropolitan City: An Investigation based on Ward 13 and Ward 34 Merigunda Lal Singh  
Professor Singh of the Central Department of Statistics at Tribhuvan University recently led a research and survey team that sought to identify the characteristics of the population of two Kathmandu wards to see how the demographics have changed over the years, and what the migration patterns are. A limited number of copies of this volume are available free of cost from the author. Contact Mandala Book Point for more information.

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the newspaper that the country's business and political elite, upwardly-mobile Nepali professionals, and the Nepali diaspora rely on every week for reliable and authoritative information, analysis and commentary.

This has also made *Nepali Times* a powerful platform for advertisers who seek to position their corporate image, services, or products for the most effective impact.

*Nepali Times* is a Himalmedia publication and complements the group's other periodicals: *Himal Khabarpatrika*, *Himal South Asian* and *Wave*.

Himalmedia recently conducted a survey of *Nepali Times* readers in Kathmandu, 80 percent of whom are upper-middle class Nepalis. The non-Nepali readership included almost the entire expatriate population in Nepal. Here are some of the findings:







## Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

# Life after football

We are getting reliable reports that, public perception to the contrary notwithstanding, there is indeed the possibility of life after the World Cup. Readers are cautioned, however, that these are still unconfirmed news reports, and we shouldn't raise our hopes too high. Even so, since there is a chance that the world can get back to a semblance of normalcy after the World Cup, we must be alert and prepared to continue doing whatever it was we were doing a month ago which is working towards total nuclear annihilation of the subcontinent. Hahahaha. Just joking.

Here in Nepal it means we can now safely go back to implementing the Second Phase of the Kathmandu Valley Synchronised Photovoltaic Traffic Light Installation Project, resume digging the Melancholi tunnel, and carry on where we left off to create political mayhem.

But even though the World Cup may have winded down, we know for a fact that the world will never be the same again. Already we are seeing Kathmandu boys coming out of their kurraman ceremonies sporting not *nappis*, but Umit Durala hair-dos, which make them look like a large mutant leech are most of their hair and died. Others prefer Ronaldo's semi-Mohican half-moon hair patch, and barber shops are reporting brisk business turning an entire cross-section of Nepali youth into Hasan Sai clones.

Over at the FIFA headquarters, football experts are already doing a lessons-learned analysis for the next World Cup. Here are some of the proposals being discussed:



1. The referee can henceforth declare fouls against linesmen who suffer from eye disease. Referees can punish linesmen who disallow goals with 45 tie-ups while clutching their earlobes in full view of television cameras.

2. All referees who award penalties to teams diving in the D-area will be reported to God, who will take appropriate action at the Pearly Gates.

3. Since jersey-pulling has become so much fun, a special high-tensile elastic fabric will henceforth be used for all World Cup jerseys that allows them to be stretched right up to the corner flag when pulled by an opponent at the centre-line. Not only will this inject added fun and excitement to the game, but it will also make jersey-pulling a good way to stop a tackle from long range.

4. But FIFA has decided to draw the line at shorts-pulling. Spoil sports.

5. Besides the "FIFA Fair Play" moment, FIFA will henceforth highlight "FIFA Wildest Celebration" after every match in order to encourage players to carry out elaborate displays of joy after every goal. In future, Nigerians who score goals will be allowed to do two laps around the stadium with back-flips and somersaults.

6. Why only punish players with Yellow Cards and Red Cards? FIFA must introduce positive reinforcement with Gold Card for Fair Play and the Platinum Card for Funniest Player of the Match. This year's Platinum Card is jointly awarded to the two

Camererians who had a mid-air collision above an Irish defender. That was so funny! We laughed so hard, we nearly had fits.

7. Football can be very emotional, and this year's Muesliest Team Award goes to the Argentinians (and especially Burensa who cried so much after failing to qualify that he had to be treated for dehydration).

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# Tell a Tale

The British Council Short Story Competition

Topic: **Contemporary Nepal**

Age Categories

15 - 18 (1000 - 1500 words)

18 - 35 (1500 - 3000 words)

Dates

Closing date of entry: 15 August

Winners Announced: 15 October

Language

All entries must be in English

Prizes

Awarded to the top 3 entries in each category

1st Prize: Rs. 25,000

2nd Prize: Rs. 15,000

3rd Prize: Rs. 10,000

Judging Criteria

- Original and creative thought
- Imaginative plot, characters and descriptions
- Use of language
- Related to the topic

Entry Conditions

- Nepalese citizens only.
- Stories must not have been published or used in another competition before and must have been written in English not translated from another language.
- Winners must agree to the publication of their work but copyright will remain with the writers.
- Entries must be typewritten, double-spaced on A4 paper using no smaller than 11 ppt. font size and 4 copies must be submitted.

Short Story Competition  
The British Council  
PO Box 640 Lalchaur, Kathmandu



**Times**

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