

www.nepaltimes.com

NEPALI Times

#149 13 - 19 June 2003 18 pages Rs 25

Travelling *abroad?*

Business or pleasure, now you can travel with a free mind...
TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE:
Covers

- Personal accident
- Medical + Emergency expenses
- Hospital benefits
- Loss of checked baggage
- Delay of checked baggage
- Loss of passport
- Personal liability

EVEREST INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.
Hattisar, Kathmandu Tel: 4425758, 4444717, 4444718



Colloseum, Rome

MANJUSHREE THAPA

Till last week the Thapas merely headed only the Royal Nepal Army (Pyar Jung Thapa), the Nepal Police (Shyam Bhakta Thapa) and the Armed Police Force (Sahabir Thapa, who is of Magar origin unlike the others, all Chettri Thapas).

Now Surya Bahadur Thapa has become the prime minister for the fifth time in his life—not counting his chairmanship of King Mahendra's advisory council in 1958.

The last time there were so many Thapas in government the Panchayat regime collapsed under their weight. Ever since the Shahs have

THAPADOM

The day of the Thapa has returned.

ruled Nepal, the Thapas have been fighting off the Pandeys, Basnyats, Kunwars and sundry Chettris to claim control of the court.

It was thought those days were gone forever when democracy came to Nepal in 1950, and especially when it returned in 1990, bringing so many Bahuns to power in a way that left the Chettris muttering against the Bahuns at family gatherings. But luckily for the Chettris little can stop the elite from reasserting themselves. Karl Marx wrote something like that in thick books that the Chettris have not read because reading is not what the Chettris do. The Chettris do statecraft.

The Thapas have distinguished themselves as tenacious courtiers. Mukhtiyar Bhimsen Thapa is the first Thapa to come to mind: He controlled the Shah court for 31 years, in part by killing 90 of Regent Queen Tripurasundari's rivals so that he could rule under her sovereignty. He did not succeed in the 1814-1816 war with the British, but the Thapas love him nonetheless because he tried so hard to control those pesky imperialists, overseeing military battles and negotiating treaties himself while trying to beat down Hodgson. He was eventually done in by the Pandeys, whose treachery the Thapas still mutter about at family gatherings.

Not from the same line of Thapas but an

important Thapa nevertheless was Kazi Amarsingh Thapa, who led Nepal's capture of Kumaon in 1790 and of Garhwal in 1803. He finally lost to the British at Devathal in 1815, and at family gatherings the Thapas still mutter against the British for this.

Prime Minister Mathbar Singh Thapa—Bhimsen's nephew—despite or because of his considerable charisma was shot to death in 1845 at the order of King Rajendra and Queen Rajyalaksmi, by none other than Jung Bahadur Kunwar (later to rename himself Rana). This has the Thapas muttering against the Ranas in family gatherings.

The Thapas also held lower posts in the Shah court, and when the Shahs were eclipsed, in the Rana court. Sardar Bhakti Thapa led 2,000 troops against the British and died defending Devathal in 1815. Subedar Dalamardan Thapa served as Jung Bahadur's personal assistant during his 1850 visit to Britain and France. Harka Jung Thapa was one of two officers in charge of Lord Curzon's 1901 hunting trip to Chitwan.

Now the Thapas will argue,

sometimes with khukuri in hand, that all they have done is try to serve the nation. The Panchayat years saw many Thapas trying to do this many times: Surya Bahadur, Biswabandhu, Chiran Sumshere, Sushila, Bhekh Bahadur, Niranjana, Kamal Thapa (the last has returned as information minister in the present cabinet). Captain Yagya Bahadur broke the Thapa mould by leading armed Nepali Congress guerillas till his capture in 1974. For reasons too obvious to belabour, there have been few Thapas in democratic politics. (There is Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal', but Maoism is hardly democratic, and anyway Badal is a Magar Thapa). Now that democracy has got massively

shipwrecked on the rock of bad governance, the Chettri Thapas are back at the helm.

What do non-Thapas make of this? Mostly they are too tactful to say anything, not wanting to engender caste disharmony, though the republicanists among them do secretly wonder if the weight of Thapas will now lead to another regime change. The Bahuns, who are sick of being blamed for everything that has gone wrong in the past 12 years, breathe easier now that they can point out the Chettris, who did after all govern Nepal for the entire period preceding 1990.

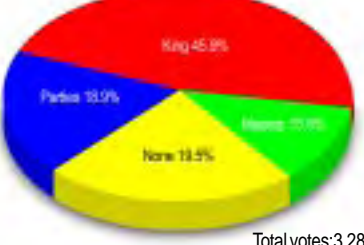
The Thapas themselves are quietly exhilarated, discussing at family gatherings the infinite kinship lines that ultimately—by marriage, over generations, many times removed—connect them all to each other. In the end a Thapa is a Thapa unless he is a Magar Thapa, in which case he should consider changing his name or at least tacking on a nom de guerre.

So: The Nepali state has dismally failed to be inclusive. What, other than this, is there to say? The Chettri Thapas are back in control of the court. Break out the Khukuri Rum. ♦

Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll #89

Q. Who do you think currently best represents the general welfare of the Nepal and Nepalis?



Total votes: 3,280

Weekly Internet Poll #90. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Who do you think is primarily responsible for the current state of the nation?

Absolutely FREE

More Details on PAGE 17.

McQuerry

Patan Museum Café

We are pleased to announce that we have extended the opening hours of the Patan Museum Cafe. From 1030 – 1930 hrs

For reservations and more information please call 55 26271/ 55 24694

Summit Hotel

Garden Glory Flower Bulbs



SPRING SHOW

Complete Summer range of Flower Bulbs on display.

EVERY FRIDAY & WEDNESDAY AT SUMMIT HOTEL "ORGANIC MARKET"

For Details: 4256244

Weekend Summer Package

Park Village Hotel & Resort

Swimming & Lavish Buffet Lunch - Rs. 600/-

Full board, swimming, cinema, billiard & other Recreational activities for couple with one child below 10 years

Rate - Rs. 4000 /-

Tel: 4 375 280. pvh@wlink.com.np

Wooing Congress

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

At face value, Surya Bahadur Thapa's government appears to be in deeper soup than his predecessor Lokendra Bahadur Chand's. The NC and the UML not only spurned the offer to join his cabinet, but say they will continue their street agitation.

Within the RPP itself, Pashupati SJB Rana is angry because Thapa has not included his men in the new cabinet. Thapa also faces potential threats from the Maoists and a conglomerate of smaller leftist parties. If Thapa is surrounded, how come he exudes so much confidence?

The seasoned politician is playing it cool, confident that kangresis will join his cabinet after an incubation period. The bait: a temporary reinstatement of parliament or elections. That is why Thapa has kept key portfolios to himself. "He knows the kangresis will come to him soon enough, and he'll need to dangle those posts," said one Thapa loyalist.

What gives Thapa flexibility vis-à-vis the NC is the disenchantment of second-generation kangresis with the leadership. Shailaja Acharya has been against the agitation led by her uncle, Girija Koirala, and other relatively-young turks seem to be siding with her. Even Koirala (undergoing a routine health check in Dharan) has privately hinted that the party will join Thapa if the parliament is reinstated.

If that happens, the UML will have been left in a lurch since a NC-RPP combine will muster a majority in a reconvened house. Ideally, there could then be a new all-party negotiating team with the Maoists and a government to oversee future elections.

From the point of view of some kangresis, this will then roll back the king's October Fourth move, and the king will have a face-saving way to break this six-month deadlock. Meanwhile, the politicians from the five-party alliance remain deeply suspicious of Thapa and doubt his intention of reinstating parliament.

Editorial
Winner takes nothing

p2



Chief of Army Staff, Pyar Jung Thapa, the Armed Police Force chief Sahabir Thapa, and Nepal Police chief, Shyam Bhakta Thapa.



Nepali Times is published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd.
Chief Editor: Kunda Dixit
Desk Editor: Trishna Gurung, Design: Kiran Maharjan
Webmaster: Bhushan Shilpakar
editors@nepalitimes.com, www.nepalitimes.com
Advertising: Sunaina Shah, advertising@himalmedia.com
Subscription: Anil Karki, subscription@himalmedia.com
Sales: Sudan Bista, sales@himalmedia.com
Sanchaya Kosh Building, Block A-4th Floor, Lalitpur
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 01-5543333/5523845 Fax: 01-5521013
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hattiban: 01-5547018/17



STATE OF THE STATE

by CK LAL



Fox in the chicken-coop

If he is really smart, Surya Bahadur Thapa will reinstate parliament.

Surya Bahadur Thapa is the second prime minister of the post-Fourth October order. If Girija Prasad Koirala and Madhab Kumar Nepal look worried, they have every reason to be. With Thapa comfortably ensconced in Singha Darbar, their virtual parliament will probably have to sit on the pavement for some more time.

The Koirala-Nepal clique didn't risk much by allowing Lokendra Bahadur Chand to stay in Baluwater for a while. Chand was too genteel to be a challenge in the take-no-prisoners world of Nepali politics. But the sly old fox from Muga is of a different breed altogether. Thapa is a competent-pancha, and everyone familiar with the 1980 referendum and its aftermath knows what that implies.

When chosen by King Birendra to bestow retroactive legitimacy on the hybrid democracy introduced by his father, Thapa ensured the victory of Panchayat system in a national referendum against seemingly insurmountable odds. The deck against multiparty democracy in the plebiscite was so cleverly stacked that even a leader of BP Koirala's stature failed to smell a rat.

Thapa's close links with an influential embassy is well known, but the fact that he maintains cordial ties with other missions too is not sufficiently appreciated by his critics. It's a tribute to his acolytes in the intelligentsia that he is often seen as a liberal pancha. On the contrary, he once demanded BP Koirala be hanged for treason.

Politicians with strong party loyalties seldom get along well with people who do not subscribe to their views. Here again, Thapa is an exception: he seems to have well-wishers in every political party. He has never revealed how he got leftist extremists to boycott the plebiscite and demolish the reformers, but there must have been more to it than mere Marxist-Leninist-Maoist expediency.

For a leader of his age and standing, Thapa is an extraordinary networker with functional links in every sphere of society. Never shy of bestowing favours when in power, he takes care to nurture a patron-client relationship. In receiving visitors to his Maligau residence, Thapa is courteous to everyone irrespective of status. His influence in the Royal Nepali Army, the Armed Police and the Nepal Police is much deeper than the present heads of all these forces with Thapa surnames. Higher echelons of the civil service are even more beholden to him—many owe their

position personally to the fifth-time premier.

With the media, Thapa has such a comfortable relationship that even Nepali Congress and UML mouthpieces have been muted in criticism of a man who out-manoeuvred their own political masters. Many old hacks now sporting the colours of different political parties know that at Dasain time Thapa will be generous with the envelopes as usual.

Now that a castling move by the king has put the rook to face the regional pawns of global geopolitics, the Maoists are likely to find that their movement across the international border has been curtailed, if not stopped. The Maoist leadership's repeated threats to go back to the jungles is ringing hollow. The 'jungle' seems to be a metaphor for the political wilderness. That may be why Baburam Bhattarai was spotted filling up forms for Frequent Fliers aboard a Buddha Air flight last week, and then taking a cable-car ride with his parents soon after.

With everything going for him, Thapa's foreign mentors can be forgiven for thinking that Thapa is the man for the moment. There is only one problem: the septuagenarian Thapa is an anachronism in this day and age. His 6 June message to the nation had all the buzz of a 78-rpm record being played on an antique gramophone that needed cranking. His politics is from another era. Yet, he seems completely oblivious to it all.

Hridayesh Tripathi's epithet of "date-expired medicine" suits Thapa even more than it did Lokendra Bahadur Chand. The Maoists have been too kind in calling Thapa "old wine in a new bottle". His cabinet may smell like wine, but it may soon turn into vinegar.

If Thapa is the pragmatic politician he pretends to be, he should recommend the restoration of the lower house of the parliament and then vacate Baluwater to its rightful occupant. Sometimes the best way to make history is to know when to make your exit. ♦



WINNER TAKES NOTHING

The political tragedy of our time is that history keeps repeating itself as farce. This raises the question: do we need a cabinet at all? It seems to be so difficult to cobble together a team, that people are saying we may be better off just letting the king and prime minister run things for a bit. The biggest objection to Surya Bahadur Thapa's appointment of seven trusted colleagues as cabinet members comes from his own party. "Since you didn't include us, we're going to make life hell for you," seems to be the political credo of those left out.

And as long as we are at it, in half jest we suggest scrapping the bureaucracy as well. The terms for ten top HMG secretaries lapsed two months ago, and the Chand administration found itself incapable of replacing them because of rival pressures. So, for the past few months we have been doing without a civil service. Not that anyone noticed.

The VDCs and DDCs were dissolved nearly a year ago, citizens don't have grassroot representation, but Kathmandu hasn't seen any reason for undue alarm. Police posts, schools and health posts in large parts of the country have been abandoned, closed or bombed out and the district headquarters and the capital carry on with business as usual.

Business as usual means fighting tooth and nail over who gets to be prime minister, or who is appointed home minister. If this is what democracy is, and what we are going back to, then the Nepali people have a right to be worried. This country's citizens have now come to expect so little from the political forces in Kathmandu that they have tuned out, and are just trying to survive from day to day and taking it as it comes.

This three-way tug-of-war in Kathmandu is taking us nowhere. Not that it is anything new, our polity has been completely stuck. Every sordid crisis has the stench of political decay, and it reeks once more of ineptitude, selfishness and greed. And because we can't get around blaming ourselves, we blame the Foreign Hand.

It took Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa one full week to name his cabinet. There is no sign that the political parties see any need to unite despite the dire state we are in, and this includes Thapa's own RPP where the Pashupati faction is on the warpath. There they are, duelling once more in one of the suites on the Titanic.

Meanwhile, the Maoists leaders are busy taking their aging parents on media-accompanied cable-car pilgrimages, filling out frequent flier miles on Buddha Air, or flying off on donor-paid junkets to Sri Lanka. At least they keep themselves busy.

No one in Nepal is satisfied with being Top Dog anymore. Everyone wants to be Only Dog. Compromise, give-and-take, trade-off, middle-ground, reconciliation, reform, national interest, common good: none of those words exist in our political lexicon.

If you want to be the sole winner, it means everyone else is going to be a loser. But if you are the only winner, you may not remain for very long.

SUBHAS RAI

LETTERS

REGIME CHANGE

After reading your editorial 'The Kathmandu Shuffle' (#148) of the regime change in Nepal on your online edition, I get the impression that there is a lot of suspicion about foreign influence in the appointment of Surya Bahadur Thapa. But as you argue, it is mostly our own action (and inaction) that has brought us all to this state of affairs. It is easy to blame a foreign hand when we have made such a mess of things. In fact, it is probably why we like to blame outsiders. The leadership we do need is within the parties. The ossified heads should be replaced by committed politicians who are not allowed to rise up: Subhas Nemwang, Shailaja Acharya, CP Mainali, Narhari Acharya and others like them. This second-generation of leaders are smarter, have more integrity and could lead the country into a new direction.

J Vaidya, by email

- Kunda Dixit in 'The king

castles' (#148) says that Surya Bahadur Thapa has been bestowed with full executive powers by King Gyanendra and that he is the most powerful prime minister he has ever been four times previously. It may be true, but how can he be powerful if, right after his swearing in, he is dragged to a ceremony where the Crown Prince is the chief guest and he sits for hours watching a prize-giving ceremony? At a time when he should be the busiest person in Nepal, the prime minister is already following the mindless rituals of his predecessors.

If protocol requires the prime minister to be wherever the heir to the throne is present, then he needs to change the rules. The head of a government of 23 million people should not be made a showpiece at a time of national crisis. Not only is it a complete waste of time, but it also sends the message that nothing has changed, it is business as usual and we have rulers who only

care about form not substance.

This feudal mentality is perpetuated by a servile and subservient bureaucracy. It is also reflected in the sycophantic coverage of royal events on national radio, television and every irrelevant pronouncement that makes it to the evening news. Let's see some genuine concern from the royal patrons and political head who grace these functions. A moratorium should be called on all members of the new Thapa cabinet from

attending ribbon-cutting ceremonies, book and CD launches, and empty speeches.

The journalists in our state-owned media boycott events that have no news value. Where Nepal wants to move in the next couple of decades, and how it is going to get there has to be planned. Otherwise it will not happen.

Sarita Khatri, Sanepa

MAOIST FEE

I have trekked and climbed in your



MIN BAURACHARYA

country four times in the last two years. As a foreigner, I do not believe I have the right to comment on the governance of your country, as this is for you to decide. However, I do believe that the criminal action of the Maoists against tourists cannot be forgotten or condoned. In a recent trip to the Rolwaling valley, my group was demanded Rs 4,000 per person by Maoists. My subsequent enquiries lead me to believe this was not an isolated incident. These actions in no way enhance the political claims of the Maoists that they represent the repressed and underprivileged sections of the community. Rather, they are illegitimate actions of criminals that will directly impact the already depressed tourism industry. Actions like these will galvanise international opinion against their claims, regardless of their merit.

Trevor Bennett, Australia

VAIDYA

I am a great admirer of Manjushree Thapa, so I can only

assume that she has been the victim of sloppy sub-editing when I read her say, of Purna Bahadur Vaidya's Nepal-bhasa poems that she has translated from Nepali into English, "It is impossible to tell how close they are to the original." Has Nepal-bhasa already gone the way of the Harappan civilization's language—lost beyond recovery? Or does she—or Nepali Times—think that none of Kathmandu's trilingual intellectuals is capable of discussing the issue with her?

David Gellner, Oxford

CORRECTION

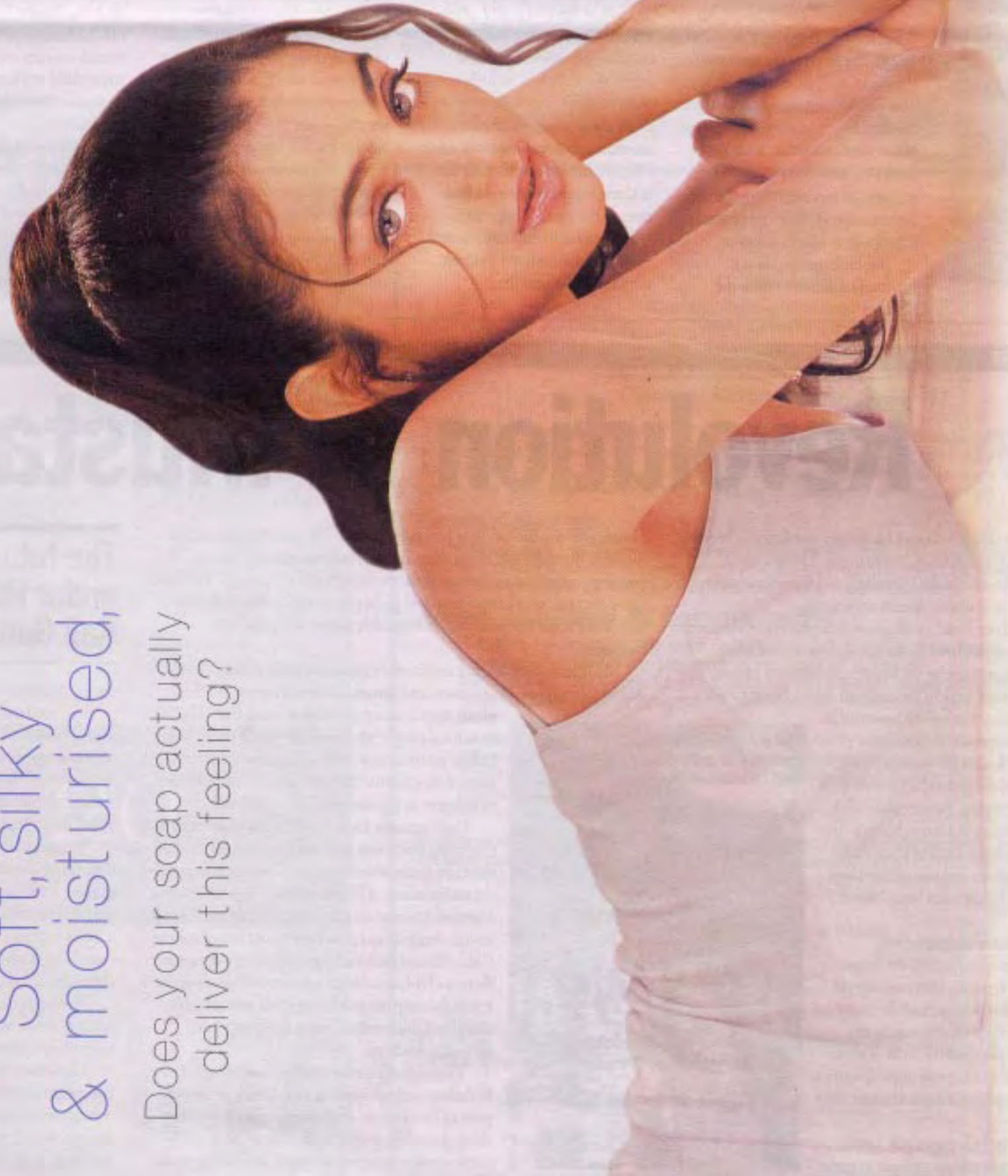
WEPCO ('Rubbish awards', #148) does charge for garbage collection.

In BP Koirala's diary 'The king needs to balance' (#147) the Bollywood song BP quotes should have read "dil dhundhata hai.." and not "dil chahata hai".

It's not just soap, it's skincare!

Soft, silky
& moisturised,

Does your soap actually
deliver this feeling?



In the shadows

Paedophilia is hidden, elusive and it is spreading.

THOMAS BELL and
MAARTEN POST

Standing on a Thamel rooftop Sudhir, a 19-year-old street sleeper, points to a middle-aged white man walking with a child on the road below.

"He used to take me to his room and ask me to shower and he would say if you do nice things I will give you clothes, food and money. I needed those things," Sudhir says. He counts on his fingers, and says he personally knows seven men who pick up boys in Thamel.

Until recently there was no law in Nepal against child sexual abuse. In September 2002, an amendment to the Country Code created a new offence of "unnatural sexual relations with a minor". Depending on the age of the victim, either a boy or a girl, an offender can be sentenced up to 16 years in jail. Nobody has been convicted.

Paedophilia everywhere is hidden and elusive. It is even more so in Nepal. Neither the perpetrator nor the victim want to talk about it. Usually, the children

don't dare speak out. The police say it is not aware of paedophiles currently active in Nepal. NGOs working with street children have stopped filing cases. The result is that the issue doesn't get coverage in the Nepali press. But that does not mean it doesn't exist, and our investigation shows paedophilia is out there and it is growing.

In the late 1990s the issue briefly flared up in the media. Five men and a woman, all from Europe, were arrested between 1996 and 1999. Some were expatriates, others tourists. All were accused of running unregistered children's homes, where street children were allegedly exploited for sex. Others were accused of bringing children back to Thamel hotel rooms. A 1999 UN report stated, "Sex tourism is on the rise in Nepal, including increasing incidences of paedophilia, as the business appears to be shifting to Nepal from other countries in South and Southeast Asia." Countries such as Thailand had been adopting harsher legislation, and several high-profile cases on Sri Lanka's west coast resorts involving European sex tourists had increased vigilance there.

Nepal is still a safe haven, but things may be changing. Krishna Thapa, the director of the charity Voice of Children, estimates that nine out of every ten Thamel street children have had sexual encounters of one kind or another with a foreigner. Sunil Sainju, mission manager of another group, Planète Enfants, agrees. "It is not isolated, it happens to a lot of children."

But both groups say it is extremely difficult to track the



paedophiles down. "It's hard work. The children are very afraid the abusers will hurt them and there is also a lot of social pressure amongst the children," Thapa told us.

Voice of Children is currently collecting testimonies against a German national running a childcare centre, but in the last three years this group and others have not been as active as they could be in investigating child sexual abuse. In fact, none of the child protection groups we spoke to knew about the September amendment of the Country Code. "We are fed up with the fact that nothing happened after we filed cases in the past," Thapa says. "Almost all suspects were released soon after their arrest. Children sometimes changed their

testimonies." In fact, some of the children even accused the charities themselves of forcing them to testify, and that has disheartened the activists.

The driving force behind the earlier prosecutions was Olivier Bertin, a French national living in Nepal. He told us: "I was appalled by the stories I heard from the street children, but it was difficult to do anything against it. It took a long time to win their confidence. I quit because the pressure became very big—lots of people were against me and I received threats. It is very difficult here in Nepal to target a foreigner. They can afford the best lawyers, pay lots of baksheesh, and the Minister of Justice in 1996 told me in one case there was a lot of pressure from an

embassy. They have very good networks."

Jean-Jacques Haye, a French suspect who was released twice in Nepal, is presently in jail in France with his paedophile-case pending. He is being prosecuted under a French law that allows prosecution for crimes committed outside the country. Planète Enfants and Voice of Children cooperated with the French enquiry, even sending a street child to France to testify. It is understood that the Nepali police have never attempted to share information with foreign prosecutors. Twenty-three countries now have laws that allow the prosecution of their citizens for sex offences committed abroad.

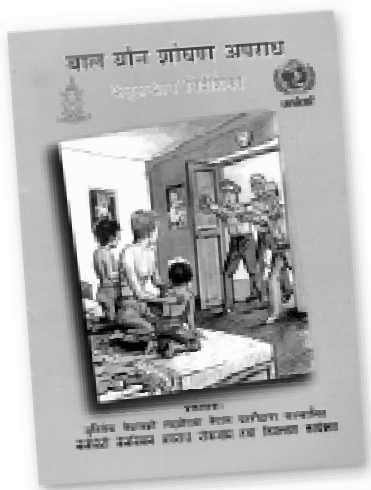
Most other released suspects are still free to visit or live in Nepal.

"Some former street children came to my house two weeks ago," Bertin says. "They told me this English guy who some street children testified against, is back in town." Some street children who gather at night between Thamel and Durbar Square talk about foreigners who let them play computer games, give them clothes and shelter. The children are not eager to talk about sexual abuse.

Often, they will say that their friends have experienced it, but deny that they have been involved themselves. Ganesh, now in his early 20s, has been living on the streets of Kathmandu for more than a decade. He works as a tourist guide in Kathmandu Darbar Square. If even a part of what he says is accurate, sex tourism is rife in Kathmandu.

When he was 16, Ganesh says he was induced to give oral sex to a foreigner. He didn't like it and never went back, but he says many other street children are tempted by gifts and money. "Everybody knows who they are," he says. "You can recognise them on the streets." Children who were willing to talk gave us several names and identified four houses that they say are used by foreigners to house children whom they use for sex.

At the Darbar Square police station the officer in charge, KS Rana, says he hasn't received reports of any recent paedophile activity in Kathmandu. If any reports came to him, he would be willing to investigate. "But basically we are not very interested in looking into what expats are doing unless they are involved in some heinous crimes," he added.



HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK



Revolution in Mustang

Marpha: High above this village in Lower Mustang a revolution is brewing. And for once, it doesn't involve guns and utopianism. This is a revolt against tradition that could change the Himalaya, and it is a concept so simple that I'm amazed that it wasn't dreamt up years ago.

In an apple orchard one hour's walk above Marpha's cobbled streets, small buds of fruit are being nurtured by the sun and occasional rain. Porters and farm labourers straggle by the five hectare summer pasture where hundreds of apple trees sway in the constant wind. But it's what's happening between the trees that has the potential to shake things up here and around the country.

Look closely and you'll see a few strange sights. Instead of grass for fodder, the ground is covered with small leafy shrubs and a creeping, flowery plant with waxy leaves. There are patches of a large rhubarb-like plants with bushy, red growths. Each of these plants produce extracts that save lives and was planted here as part of a daring project by the joint Indo-Nepali company, Dabur Nepal.

Harvested plant products are turned into medicines at Dabur's factory in Birganj, the largest employer in that part of the tarai. There are several revolutionary aspects to this project, and the many others like it, that the company is starting up in remote and rural areas of the country. First of all, at least in Marpha, land that is otherwise unproductive is being used to produce employment and a beneficial product.

James Hirachan, whose father owns the land above Marpha, says it is increasingly difficult to make

a living growing the excellent Mustang apples. "The government used to subsidise the air freight to get them (apples) to Kathmandu," he says, "but now they spend that money on the armed forces and the police." The local fear is that this year's apple crop will go largely to waste. Not so for the fronds of Pacific Yew and Padamchand that Dabur will make into medicines.

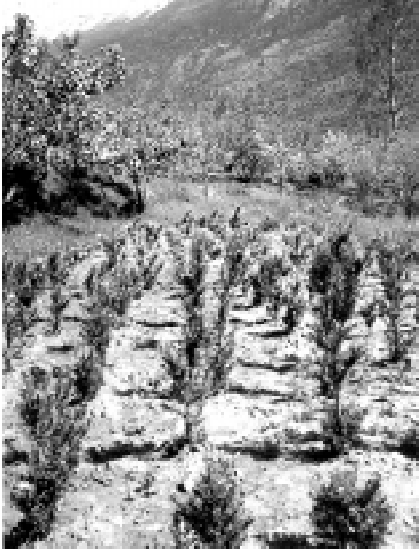
Medicinal plants are not traditional export crops like coffee or cocoa that require exclusive cultivation and harmful chemical inputs. All these

plants need is water and tender loving care. The 50 or so local people who work this patch of land for Dabur are more than willing to provide that. In other parts of the country, the company is giving saplings to villagers on a guaranteed buy-back basis.

Until recently, Dabur and the many other firms that make medicines from plants, obtained most of their raw material from wild harvesting. This is still the case in much of Nepal and the Indian Himalaya. Many of the most sought-after plants are increasingly scarce, thanks to over-harvesting and loss of habitat. Cultivation of such endangered species will preserve them and enhance Nepal's threatened bio-diversity. It will also stop inroads being made into valuable traditional knowledge systems by Western and allopathic medicine.

Traditional Tibetan medicine and village herbalism are both making a comeback in various parts of the country. Perhaps the most important thing about this project is that it's helping build a viable market economy in Nepal, and adding to the

The anti-cancer plant, *Taxus baccata*, growing in an apple orchard at a Dabur plantation in Marpha.



The future is a tiny shrub thriving under the apple trees above the Kali Gandaki.

dignity of labour.

You need training and awareness to cultivate *taxus baccata*—the plant that eventually becomes the anti-cancer drug, Tamoxifen. It's not brute labour like portage or domestic work. More than half of the Dabur employees in Marpha are female. The women who put the seedlings in the ground are proud that they're contributing—in their small way—to the health care system.

What struck me as I wandered around Marpha was that this simple idea is worth more than all the development esoterica that has been heaped upon this country over the years. It's sustainable, the potential is huge and participants do not form an exclusive clique based on money and patronage, as often happens in development projects. On the outskirts of Marpha, the crumbling skeleton of a German-funded fruit-drying factory is testimony to the frequent folly of outside aid.

Further up the valley, the Americans built a wind-powered electricity generator that was soon blown over. The village now gets its power from a micro-hydro plant that is locally funded and run.

I have seen the future and it's not to be found on some foreign consultant's expensively produced report on gender awareness in a time of conflict resolution and capacity building across a broad spectrum of civil society. No, it's a tiny shrub thriving under the apple trees, bending but not breaking, in the Kali Gandaki wind. ♦

Their nightmarish reality

Thirty-seven percent of street children interviewed in an International Labour Organisation (ILO) survey last year said they were sexually abused and exploited. Older over younger, girls over boys, and the children living longer on the streets are more exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation. Frequently reported sexual abusers were tourists (67 percent), leader of street children packs (24 percent), locals (and disturbingly) even those posing as social activists.

The average age of street children initiated into sex exploitation was 11, according to the survey, and though most were promised money, 30 percent say they were coerced. Eleven street children also said foreigners took nude photographs of them once they created a dependency relationship through provision of money, food, medicine and clothes. The most common forms of abuse were requests for masturbation, oral and anal sex. Hotels and lodges were identified as primes locales for abuse, followed by the client's home, temples, riverbanks and the street.

Trafficking and Sexual Abuse among Street Children in Kathmandu, ILO, March 2002. Thursday, 12 June was World Day Against Child Labour.

The main problem seems to be that even though paedophilia is now a crime, there are still legal loopholes. "We still need a definition of paedophilia and the various forms that sexual abuse can take...what is 'unnatural' is yet to be subject to interpretation," says lawyer, Sapna Pradhan Malla. For instance, paedophilia is attached to the Country Code chapter on rape, and as with rape, an allegation must be made within 35 days of the incident.

There is also a danger that this will only be seen as a crime perpetrated by foreigners. Malla says many cases of child rape and incest perpetrated by Nepalis, often within families or in schools, go unreported. "These crimes exist in our society, and we should create an environment to address them not only by legal mechanisms, but by enabling weak people to take action and by informing children what sexual abuse is," she says.

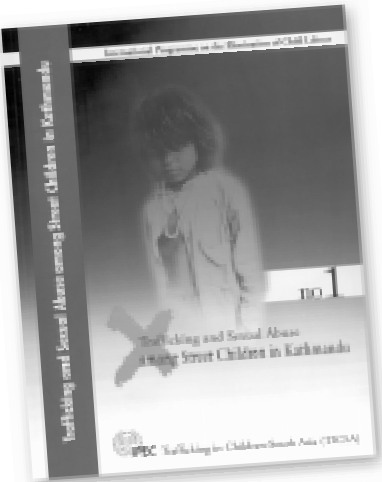
Activist groups and the police trade accusations about not being serious in controlling the problem. Gita Upreti, who heads the Nepal Police's Women and Children's Cell says, "According to the law, the victim should come to us to file a complaint, but we can also go out and investigate." However, she admits that this is very difficult when there is no hard information. "We don't have a mechanism to investigate," she told us, "and children are hesitant to go through the police's normal procedures." The Women's Cell is now starting out by first making its own officers understand what child abuse is, and the prevalence of the crime.

Better regulation of childcare centres is also needed. Inge Bracke runs a registered orphanage near Boudha, but says no one has come to inspect her centre in its seven years of operation. Krishna Thapa agrees, and says that a regular German visitor, who many children

have implicated in abuse, has recently been given a licence to run a child welfare centre. Hari says he is a victim of this person and has recently given a video testimony to Voice of Children. He is now 23, but like many victims of child sexual abuse, is still traumatised by his experience. "When I was a child it felt normal, but nowadays I feel bad, ashamed and uneasy. I still have nightmares about it," he says.

Hari is convinced the man is still abusing children, but he is torn between reporting the case or letting it go. "He could do bad things to me again," Hari says, "and I think because of him at least some children are getting food, and maybe if I report him maybe they will be deprived of even that support." ♦

(The names of the street children and former street children quoted in this article have been changed to protect their identities.)



DOMESTIC BRIEFS

India-Pakistan Roadmap

In a sign of gathering thaw between India and Pakistan, or maybe just the searing heat in the Indus-Ganga plains this summer, an Indo-Pakistan peace meet begins in the cooler climes of Kathmandu on Friday.

On hand are ex-military brass, retired diplomats, media and peaceniks from both countries who will try to boost "confidence-building measures" between the two countries.

The Indian delegation, led by Gen Ashok K Mehta, told media in New Delhi: "The Kathmandu meeting will try to deconstruct and demystify reasons (for tensions)...and will recommend a roadmap for peace." Also attending are former Pakistani foreign ministers Inam ul Haq, Sartaj Aziz and ex-foreign secretary Niaz Naik. Indian ex-foreign secretary MK Rasgotra, and former Indian envoy to Pakistan Satinder Lamba will also be in the Indian delegation. The Indian and Pakistani ambassadors in Kathmandu will also attend.

A Nepali foreign ministry source told us the government is watching the meeting closely, and look forward to an immediate positive outcome like the resumption of Pakistani airlines flights to Kathmandu.

South Asian AIDS epicentre

South Asia is already the second epicentre of HIV/AIDS after Sub-Saharan Africa. The virus is spreading rapidly across the subcontinent and already afflicts 4.2 million South Asians.

Given the population in the region, some countries may emerge as new epicentres in the second wave of HIV infections, warns UNDP in a new regional report. "The region cannot afford to be complacent over the low levels of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS," states the report, released this week. With 90 percent of the South Asian HIV/AIDS patients belonging to the 15-49 age group, the region's national productivity is the first casualty, the report states. It adds the epidemic will take a further toll "in the

form of lost services, lower national productivity and output, loss in skills and experience, depletion of workforce in specific sectors, increased demands on health and social sectors and loss of human capital". Researchers are worried that social stigma against HIV carriers will spread the virus more rapidly.

Who goes back to Bhutan?

More than a year after it began verification of Bhutanese refugees in one of the seven camps in eastern Nepal, the categorisation procedures for those who were left out of the process was reassumed by the Nepal-Bhutan joint team.

The 14th round of Nepal-Bhutan talks last month had decided to process close to 600 refugees who were missing during verification at Khudunabari camp when more than 12,000 were interviewed a year ago. The two nations had agreed to use the Khudunabari camp as a blueprint for the six other camps in Jhapa and Morang districts. The results from their first batch have not yet been made public.

Last month, Nepal acceded to the Bhutanese proposal that Thimphu would take back some refugees while the remaining would be granted Nepali citizenship. This move drew criticism from many quarters, including from the refugees themselves.

Before agreeing to the verification process, the two Himalayan kingdoms had locked horns for two years before deciding on four categories for the 100,000 refugees: bonafide Bhutanese, Bhutanese who have emigrated, Bhutanese who have committed crimes and non-Bhutanese. The negotiations now centre around how to treat these categories.

PM Chapa

Can't really blame *Time* magazine for getting confused between the prime ministers that keep coming and going in Nepal (*left*). Will the real Lokendra Bahadur Chapa please stand up?



Mandala House
APARTMENT HOTEL

Luxury Apartments
at Comfortable Rates

Baluwatar, Kathmandu
Tel: 412412, 429019 (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)
9810-35322 (after 5:00 pm & Saturdays)
E-mail: mandala@vlink.com.np
Web site: www.mandala.com.np



- Silks
- Raw Silks
- Linens
- Sarees
- Cashmere Knit Wear
- Chiffon
- Pure Cotton
- Silk crepe
- Pashmina

SHOWROOM: Babar Mahal Revisited Opening Hours 9:30 to 7:30
Tel: 4230369, Fax: 977-1-4495973 E-mail: divine@mos.com.np

NEW BOOKS

- The Sun of Wisdom
- Khengo Tsultrim Rs 1575
- Indo-Tibetan Buddhism
- David Shellgrove Rs 3740
- Penetrating Wisdom
- Ponlop Rinpoche Rs 1600
and many more...

Vajra Book Shop
Jyatha, Thamel (off road Kirtling)
PO: Bsc: 21779, Kathmandu
Tel/Fax: 4230562
email: bidar_lasmos.com.np

EASY TIMES

It's never been easier
to subscribe to
Nepali Times
Just dial this number
and leave your address.

5543333


One world...
...One Link

Your link to the world
Get Connected.....

Summer discount up to
20%
available on Internet accounts
for a limited period

For more details
WORLD LINK
Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, Phone: 5523050

Nationwide offices:
Pakharu: 061-528412, 522668 Janakpur - 041 - 521087
Narayanghat: 056-524437 Birgunj: 051-523381
Butwal: 071-540805 Bhadrapur: 023-520343
Bhairahawa - 071 - 521387 Nepalgunj: 081-520619
Biratnagar: 021-522634, 530020



**United Nations Children's Fund
Nepal Country Office**

Nutrition Specialist Required
(Vacancy Reference No. 2003-03)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Nepal seeks applicants from Nepalese nationals for consideration of the **national professional** post of **Project Officer, Nutrition, (NOC level)** based in Kathmandu. This is a middle-level management post under the guidance and direct supervision of the Chief of the Section.

Purpose of the Post:

Responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient projects within the UNICEF programme in Nepal, under the guidance of the Chief of the Nutrition & Care Section.

Minimum Qualifications and Experience Required

- Advanced university degree in nutrition or related technical field
- Knowledge of latest development in the area of nutrition
- Minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience at national and/or international level in programme management, monitoring and evaluation in related field.
- Demonstrated negotiation, communication, analytical and training/facilitation skills
- Advanced user level knowledge of computer management and applications
- Ability to work in an international and multi-cultural environment
- Fluency in English and Nepali.
- Willingness to travel frequently, sometimes under difficult circumstances

Please send in your application indicating vacancy reference number. Application should include, cover letter, CV, references, copy of academic certificates, and full address along with contact telephone number/e-mail, with a recent photograph **by 27 June 2003** to the following address:

Chief of Operations
VN 2003- 03
P. O. Box 1187
UNICEF-Nepal CO
Kathmandu, Nepal

PLEASE NOTE: Applications received without the complete documentation listed above will not be considered.

*** QUALIFIED FEMALE CANDIDATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY ***
**** UNICEF IS A SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT ****

***** ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED *****



Ex-prime ministers speak out

Anguished by the debasement of the prime minister's post, we, as former occupants, appeal to the incumbent and aspirants to work forthwith to revive its dignity. Despite our serious differences on almost everything during our mortal existence, we were united in our commitment to empower the people. The fact that only two of us were democratically elected premiers does not diminish our belief that the other five signatories have equally valuable thoughts to offer.

True, most of us betrayed one another in our eagerness to befriend the palace. At first, we thought this could be a good way of institutionalising democracy, but the habit somehow stuck. There was no way of knowing that the constitution and elections were so many years away, especially at a time when we suspected that Mohandai was still plotting a comeback from Bangalore.

Once the people had spoken, the majority party should have been allowed to work. The palace, which expected Nepal's first parliament to be as severely splintered as its political leadership, was obviously alarmed by the outcome. Instead of reassuring the king, the opposition went after the



MIN BAJRACHARYA

premier. Deep down, those of us who hailed the royal intervention were humiliated by the last laugh Mohandai was having. By the time we reconciled with the imperative of working with the monarchy, it was too late. While one of us went on to enrich the genre of prison diaries, the rest remained endlessly embittered.

Since no pre-Satra Sal ex-premier had the opportunity to serve in the restored multiparty polity, the quest to co-exist with a humbled palace lacked the

discretion only experience could bring. The closest link to the 50s was Kishunji, but he was still annoyed that he was jailed despite being a theoretically non-partisan speaker. Without his banter backed by bold threats to resign, however, we doubt Nepalis could have had both a new constitution and elections within a year of the Jana Andolan.

Girijababu acted as if the majority the Nepali Congress won was a mandate to sideline Ganeshmanji and Kishunji.

Manmohanji tried persuading his younger comrades not to pretend the country had been painted in red. All of his successors are still in the mortal world and can vouch for the agony the premier feels in having to brief the king each week with an ever-growing list of national problems.

If you wonder, as we did, why the palace can't seem to get along with assertive prime ministers, consider this: four consecutive kings were virtual captives of the Ranas. It doesn't really matter

The palace has never been able to get along with assertive PMs.

whether the prime minister comes with a democratic mandate or from a highly ambitious clan. (The Koiralas are in double jeopardy here.) From a purely human perspective, when you count the king as a political force when you need him, isn't it rather implausible to expect him to play a purely ceremonial role when you don't?

Admittedly, the Supreme Court spoiled things by systematically restricting the prime minister's prerogative to dissolve parliament. The chief whip has more power than the premier to discipline party MPs.

The party leadership should be more prudent. Matrikababu underscored the perils of a ruling party by trying to restrain an errant prime minister when Sher Bahadurji was about seven years old. The opposition, too, should quit behaving as if the Jana Andolan gave them the right to name every prime minister from the street. Madhab Kumar Nepal could have avoided that misguided boycott of the entire winter session of parliament two

years ago simply by imagining himself on the premier's seat. To see him send in a petition to be appointed to that job while still leading street protests broke our hearts. (An unencumbered parliament might have warded off the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority sleuths all the living ex-premiers are dreading today.)

Matrika Prasad Koirala
Nagendra Prasad Rijal
Bisweswar Prasad Koirala
Tanka Prasad Acharya
Manmohan Adhikary
Mohan Sumshere Rana
Kunwar Indrajit Singh

PS: Despite our otherworldly existence, we were too human not to squabble over the order of the signatories. Since the purpose of this joint statement is to help restore the dignity of the premiership, we decided to list ourselves according to our term in office. Despite their valuable input, Subarnaji, Gen Keshar Sumshere and Sardar Gunjaman chose not to sign because they did not carry the formal designation of premier.

A SOCIAL APPROACH



Hospice Nepal is a center that takes care of terminally ill cancer patients with love and compassion. It is a non-profit organization that runs with the help of volunteers and contributions from various donors. TNT Nepal has been one of the answers for this desperate need to give relief from pain. TNT Nepal has decided to support this noble mission with your generous act. We have already contributed a generous amount since the year 2000.

With our policy of "penny and penny laid up will be many", TNT believes that it can further help Hospice Nepal without much burden to any specific party. Our valuable clients, at the same time, can be proud of the fact that whenever they use the services of TNT, they are actually participating for the greater social cause. So, TNT has promised to donate NRs. 5 from each courier sent out by TNT International Express, from Jan 1st 2003.

*Adding life to days
Not days to life*

TNT International Express
Teenkune, Kathmandu
Ph. No. 4474594, 4243237

Hearts, minds and haircuts



MIN BAJRACHARYA

MIN BAJRACHARYA
in BAGLUNG

The locals don't know what to make of it. Till a few months ago when the soldiers came on patrols the villagers covered because the army would punish them if they were sheltering Maoists. And the Maoists would target them if they were suspected of being informers.

When the army operation began here last week with helicopters landing in the corn fields the locals were stunned. But this time, the soldiers came to win their hearts and minds with medical care, food, clothing, education and even free hair cuts. The locals say the security personnel are applying themselves to this end with as much, if not more dedication as they took in flushing out the Maoists.

The Royal Nepali Army swooped down on 7 June to distribute clothes, stationery to students, biscuits and sweets. "It's like Dasain," said one

astonished Baglung villager. Even the Chief District Officer glowed with goodwill. An office was opened to help locals get their citizenship immediately. There even was help at hand to apply for passports.

In Palpa's Rampur, residents received medical attention not only for humans, but livestock too. Some villagers had staked their spot in both lines leading to two different clinics. The camps also offered minor surgery by both army and civil doctors. Dhana Maya Ghale, 84, was delighted. "The army is doing everything for us now," she says. "Life has become much better."

Army officials said they have been helping out for quite sometime. "Before, our focus was on providing immediate relief during natural calamities like flood and landslides. Now we are trying to look at all aspects," said one army officer. They have joined hands with local clubs and business communities to



help the people in these districts.

The Maoists are conducting their own hearts-and-minds operations, helping farmers plant paddy, re-roof their houses and build roads to make it easier for villagers to travel to the district headquarters. ♦

Lincoln Summer Program

JUNE 23 - JULY 25, 2003
5 WEEKS FROM 9AM - 2 PM
FOR ALL KIDS GOING INTO PRE-SCHOOL TO GRADE 6
Location: Lincoln School & Phora Durbar

*Come and join a wonderful program
with lots of fun play and sports activities.*

Activities include: Language, Math & Science, Computer/Library, Art & Crafts, Music, Swimming, Court games, and Field trips

Price: \$50 per week (payable both in Rupees or USD). Sign-up for a week at the time. Transportation included

Please contact: **Lincoln School, Rabi Bhawan, Kathmandu.**
Tel: 4 270 482, 4 270 603 Fax: 4 272 685
Email: info@lsnepal.com.np Website: www.lsnepal.com

BIZ NEWS

Sliding away

The onset of monsoon may be good tidings for farmers, but along the Prithbi Highway, the massive Krishna Bhir landslide threatens to block this artery again for weeks this year. This major mud and rock slide (*see pic*) started three years ago, and has been disrupting traffic ever since. The highway is the only other surface link to the south, west and east of the country from Kathmandu besides the serpentine Tribhuban Highway.



KUNDA DIXIT

This year, the Roads Department says it is prepared to deal with anything Krishna Bhir throws at them. Others are doubtful. The whole mountainside is unstable and threatens to tumble down with the first downpour. “We are not interfering with the nature here,” explains Naresh Shakya, the department’s senior engineer responsible for managing Krishna Bhir. “All we are doing is keeping the slides from hampering traffic movement on the highway.”

Embankments have been put into place to stop the debris from reaching the road, but not everyone is convinced it will do the trick. Some engineers complain privately there isn’t enough money from the road toll being invested in a long-term solution.

“Controlling the rock overhang at the top of the mountain is going to be very costly,” admits Shakya. “Right now, we are trying to manage it within the budget we have.” Of the Rs 7 million allocated for the job, and Rs 2 million spent so far, workers are racing against the monsoon to finish the work before the rains. Some donor agencies have proposed a tunnel and other expensive diversions, but the Roads Department is confident it can handle the problem itself.

Ram Krishna Pokhrel, deputy director general at the road department told us: “We have some ideas that we think will be cheap to implement and will work. We are trying them out.” Cross fingers.

Running fit

Fed up of running along Kathmandu streets and breathing the fumes? You can exercise indoors now with the new Intertrack 6100 treadmill from Korea. This is definitely not run of the mill. It features a long-wearing waxed deck for nearly silent operation, an emergency stop button, expanded running area and an impact reducing system. Importers, Spectrum Merchandise Nepal, say the machine is ideally suited to physical rehabilitation programs especially at hospitals and physiotherapy centres.

Brand event

Events are becoming the new byword for brand building in Nepal. The annual Surya Grind presented by Surya Lights cigarettes is scheduled for 14 June at the Hyatt Regency. The poolside party will showcase five international DJs, including Alps, India’s first female professional spinner. With no expenses spared, the Surya Grind is bound to attract Kathmandu’s hip, young segment.

Digitally yours

FOSA, an American branded laptop described by PC World as ‘Top Pick Notebook’ in 2001 is now available in Nepal. Digitek.com.np in Durbar Marg is selling two models: the Flex CL00 comes with an Intel Pentium III Processor 1 GHz, 256 MB RAM that is upgradeable to 512 MB, 30 GB hard disk, 56K modem and a DVD ROM.

Debut

Chinese pick-ups are making their debut into the Nepali market. Changhe flatbed trucks licensed by Suzuki and imported by Prime Global, have a 797cc petrol engine and a big cargo deck. Prime Global has also set up a workshop facility to service Changhe vehicles and a special outlet in Kuleshwor stocks spare parts.

ECONOMIC SENSE

by ARTHA BEED

Curtain call



The business of death



Faced with the loss of a loved one, whether expected or abrupt is not the issue. Most of us give into the familiar comfort offered by religion, culture and grief. We suspend planning and logic for the emotional cushion of the Grand Send Off. The notion of our mortality comes as a jolt. Rarely, if ever, are we considerate enough to pre-plan our own exit. This realisation set the Beed’s mental cogs into a whirl, resulting in what some may label a rather morbid and tasteless column on the business of death.

Death is a perfectly respectable and well-conducted business in the United States. Many people have funeral plans. They put away a little something towards the ceremony, a burial spot or the increasingly popular route of ash to ash. The manager of a funeral home let on that funerals can cost \$15,000-20,000—almost as much as most weddings.

Funeral homes have plenty of brochures that give detailed steps on how to plan your own funeral. It’s a pragmatic approach that accepts all our bits and parts on the stage of life ends with curtains. It’s all there, from how to write wills and structure accounts to reminders that the funeral home must be notified if there is a change in address. Unlike the esoteric rituals that surround funeral processes in Nepal, the Beed was pleasantly surprised by this method of soliciting customers—especially as every person is a future customer!

Following the tenets of good business practice, funeral homes have adapted to a changing American

cultural landscape. Death has become a boom sector for private enterprises that work hard at personalising a business that ironically, requires detachment. They can and do cater to diverse religious communities. Many offer immigrants an informal rate inclusive of arrangements that allows them to incorporate elements of their own beliefs.

The Beed recently attended one of these funerals. The American-Hindu family was comfortable performing the last rites of the deceased from a funeral home. After all, adaptation is a two-way street. There was a sense of solace and peace to the proceedings as family members thanked those who came to pay their respects. There even was a small funeral procession to the crematorium behind the premises. The eldest placed an incense stick in lieu of the *daag batti* on the body as the large electric furnace was switched on. The ashes were placed in an urn and handed back to the family.

Altogether, very different from proceedings in Nepal. Besides the

degradation of the environment, far too many people find no comfort in the rites. A lot of them are milked into spending vast amounts on logs of sandalwood, gold, the gift of a cow... the list is endless and continuously embroidered upon. A complex web of socio-economic reasons bolster the attitude that “this is the way it’s always been done”. It keeps us from looking at our funeral rites with fresh eyes.

Kathmandu is bursting at the seams. While there have been talks about opening crematoriums, it needs more thought and planning. This initiative must come from religious groups. It is their duty to help Nepalis separate the rituals of death from the duties of the living.

We have embraced modern methods of birth. It’s time to re-examine death. ♦

Readers can post their comments or suggestions to arthabeed@yahoo.com

Flying for Nepal

It has been said that if you want to know how Nepal is doing, just look at how Royal Nepal Airlines is doing. Our flag carrier is an indicator of our country’s wellbeing.

There were those glory days when Royal Nepal Airlines was a well-regarded carrier, and every Nepali took pride in its performance, punctuality, its vital services to remote area airfields. Passengers preferred the airline’s in flight service to many other companies in the region. And Nepal’s own image had not been tarnished by mass tourism, violence and political instability.

In the past 12 years, the country’s political slide downwards is matched by the airline’s descent into mismanagement due to overt politicisation. Since the restoration of democracy, party leaders and corrupt politicians made the airline their cash cows, ruining its brand name and making it synonymous with corruption.

There was a time when Royal Nepal Airlines had a fleet of 21 aircraft, today it is down to nine out of which only four are in operation at any given time. If anyone wanted a lesson in how to run a perfectly good airline to the ground, this is it. It is time now to go beyond the blame-game and trying to state the obvious about the political interference that ruined the airline, we must look forward and try to chart a strategy for recovery.

The staff’s lack of motivation, half-hearted attitude, and absence of professionalism have been the result of political appointments at the top.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the flight deck: Will politicians please stop interfering in Royal Nepal Airlines?



KUNDA DIXIT

A politically-appointed board with directors who had no aviation knowledge was probably the biggest setback the airline faced, and is still facing. The first order of business is to get a board that knows the business.

Royal Nepal Airlines runs on taxpayers’ money. It doesn’t just belong to the employees or the government. It’s interest is the national interest. At a time of crisis for the country and the airline, we must not let outsiders come in between us. Nepal’s tourism industry can be saved if we save our national flag carrier. But if we sell our interests to foreign airlines like Qatar Airlines, we will slowly lose the only thing

we have: our national integrity.

Besides, the policy of forcing Royal Nepal Airlines to become a service-oriented operator must be abandoned for a management strategy that stresses revenue-generation for long-term viability. There is a limit to how much the airline can be milked for populist services to non-profit sectors, why should it be the only one operating in loss-making sectors? This should be in the government’s own interest, because it would allow the airline to be self-sufficient and less dependent on government largesse.

The present Managing Director, Mohan Khanal, is a person with 40 years of

experience in the airline and has risen up the ranks. If he is given the freedom to manage the airline professionally without political interference and hassles, he is capable of pulling the airline out of its dive. It’s as simple as that. Making Royal Nepal Airlines viable is not such a difficult task: all it needs is integrity and professionalism at the top. It can be done.

To make that happen, we the employees can start putting in quality time and working in a dedicated fashion to restore the airline’s reputation for quality and service. At the moment, staff morale has sunk so low that the airline’s employees are its own biggest critics. No company can survive like that. Negative thoughts and vibes will only bring negative results.

Perhaps what we need at present is an attitude and willingness to start off on a positive note, and the airline’s staff is recognising that the company’s image reflects on their image. A poor reputation of the airline will reflect poorly on them. And a shoddy airline is a blot on the country’s own image.

First, we have to start working on a situation of trust among employees, which is at its lowest ebb for many of the reasons cited above. The only way to do this is to be united against interference from above or outside to professional decisions that the airline has to take. Too many times in the past the airline and its staff have paid dearly for the short-sighted political expediency of the government in power. The airline suffered, and the country suffered even more.

Our slogan should be: Royal Nepal Airlines is one family, and we will remain one no matter who is trying to divide us for personal benefit should be our slogan. Time is running out. Too much time has been squandered. We don’t want to be a footnote in Nepal’s aviation history, we will not allow our sacrifices and commitment to be wasted like this. ♦



(Capt Vijay Lama is Chief Pilot of the Domestic Division of Royal Nepal Airlines and has been with the company for 15 years.)

SRADDHA BASNYAT

Bakeries in the Valley have come a long way since the humble *pauroti*—named after the rather unappetising fact that the bread was kneaded by assistants who hopped feet first into large vats of dough. Another, more plausible theory, is that the word comes from the Portuguese word for bread, *pão*, that came to Nepal from India.

Today, equipped with spatulas, state-of-the-art ovens, a lot more experience and a high appreciation for hygiene, Kathmandu's bakers are turning out an array of goodies that could tempt the patron saint of dieters. Why resist when giving in is such a pleasure? *Nepali Times* lines up a baker's dozen—twelve plus one, just in case—of the best bakeries in town.

When Krishna Bahadur Rajkarnikar began baking 55

years ago, Nepalis were rolling out hearty rotis but had no baked alternatives. His story began with disappointment. He never received the land that was promised him by Indu Shamshere Rana in return for years of loyal service, so destiny took him to Calcutta to learn a skill that would bring in some money. A prominent baker befriended him

and got Krishna working at an English bakery. He returned home and in 1947 established Krishna Pauroti. As with all new things, there were sceptics, and true-blue Brahmins suspected pauroti contained alcohol. Actually, Krishna Bahadur used boiled hops as a leavener. Then there was the name: many thought bakers used their feet to

Give us our daily bread

To resist may be virtuous, but to surrender is divine.



The Cake Shop

The most Sought after name in Bakeries

Hotel de l'Annapurna

Ph: 4221711 Ext. 4114

TAJ Restaurants & Bars

mix the batter although Krishna says it was always a handmade affair. Ghana Shyam Rajkarnikar, Krishna's son, now runs the show. He recalls when asking 50 paisa for a loaf of bread was considered exorbitant as he deftly wraps up another box of the popular fruit cakes.

While tradition is all very well, consumer tastes do change. Realising they needed to put out a bigger selection, in 1986 Krishna Bahadur's grandsons opened Mabacos—a clever acronym for Master Bakers and Confectioners. It has gained a loyal clientele for products that don't stint on quality but are easy on the pocket. Rabi Rajkarnikar, the general manager, knows competition is stiff and image is essential in a brand-conscious economy. They are now looking into opening Mabaco's Cakes and Bakes that won't use preservatives and artificial colours.

A street away on the posh Durbar Marg is The Cake Shop at Hotel de l'Annapurna. Since 1978 they've turned out breads, cakes, pastries and savorys that set standards for others in the business. The White Forest, recently renamed the Everest Cake, is a triumph. Thanks to a half-price scheme between 9-10PM, The Cake Shop never has anything but the freshest temptations on display.

There are few better ways to begin your day than with the Yak & Yeti's fruit danish washed down with a double shot of espresso. It's a sugar and caffeine rush that nutritionists may frown on but indulgence is rarely fat-free or healthy. Ram Lal Shrestha, the pastry chef has been going about his business at the hotel since 1979. The Centre Point specialty is the custom made animation cakes topped with 3D planes, trains and cartoon characters no child (or adult) can resist. If you're just too busy to



pop over, place an online order at www.thamel.com.

The favourite venue for chocoholics is probably the Radisson Pastry Shop. In air-conditioned splendour they can be spotted with rapture on their faces as they reverently bite into the Chocolate Nemesis—77 percent of pure chocolate that seeps into the blood, releasing a flood of endorphins 'happiness hormones' on their way.

Many a hostess has tried to pass off the Success Cake from the Shangri-la Bakery Shop at Lazimpat as her own creation. Not that anyone is fooled. The signature French specialty that involves layers of merengue, almonds and a rich but light cream filling, is a Shangri-la hallmark that the discerning know and love. Unfortunately it only makes rare appearances

but they do take orders, which is how it appears as dessert at dinner parties.

A place that is always stocked is Hot Breads Bakers and Confectioners, an international chain with five outlets in the Valley, including one in Durbar Marg. They offer variety at affordable prices, luring in students, executives and families. "We maintain international standards and only offer the freshest products because Hot Breads has become synonymous with quality," proprietor Shridar P Sharma says with pride. Don't fret if your favourite cheese croissant is all sold out. Before you know it, a fresh batch will emerge from the kitchen. Good things do come to those who wait.

Shyam Kakshapati's Nanglo's Bakery Café that opened its first



Pumpernickel Bakery

Your Favourite Croissant & Italian Ice Cream Stop

Thamel

Tel: 4259185



the Pastry Shop

15%
discount coupon
valid till 30 June, 2003

Radisson

KALINTA picture framing
classic & modern frames: Imported and manufactured by Kalinta

10am-6pm
East side of Royal Palace
Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu
Tel: 4442437



ROYAL PALACE
KALINTA



Mounting
Over Lamination
Canvas Bonding
HOT PRESS



**Hot Bakes,
Cakes
& more...**





**WEIZEN BAKERY
& Restaurant**
Thamel, Kathmandu,
Tel: 4265130

**MOUTHWATERING
CAKES, BISCUITS,
FRUIT CAKES,
BREADS & LOAVES**





HERMANN HELMERS
Bäckerei und Konditorei
Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur, Nepal
Ph: 5524900
Email: h_helmers_bakery@hotmail.com

**favourite haunt for a
delicious spread**



Hot Breads
Bakers & Confectioners
Now also at Old Baneswor



Durbarmarg • New Road • Thamel • Maharaigunj • Jawalakhel

restaurant at Teendhara, is perhaps Nepal’s best-known eatery chain. Say “I’ll see you at the bakery” and most Kathmandu residents will only ask which of the numerous Nanglo cafe’s you are referring to. Since 1991, Nanglo’s has become a favorite hang out for the young. The website, www.nanglo’s.com, lets students vote or comment on current issues. Those who join Club Bakery Café get discounts at various shops, recreation centres, clubs and resorts.

Twenty years ago Norbu Sherpa started carting his pies to Thamel after baking them at his father’s restaurant in Boudha. Looking around his bustling Pumpernickel Bakery he remembers when it used to be all dirt roads lined by a handful of houses. Sherpa got his experience the hard way—working in bakeries across the United States, Germany and Switzerland. Each time he brought home new techniques and recipes, which explains why you can get authentic German bread in the heart of Thamel. He uses only local ingredients, and flour from Manang and Mustang for special orders. Pumpernickel Bakery has a wide selection of bread: wholewheat, multigrain and oatmeal to name just a few. This was the place that introduced the “proper” croissant and bagel to Kathmandu. And just by the way, this bakery also excels at homemade Italian icecream.



Around the corner, Weizen Bakery tempts the casual passerby with a street side display of goodies: cheesecake, scones, very sizeable apple muffins, brownies...the list is

endless. The pretzel and chocolate spice cake got my thumbs up. One stop over, the cake selection at Helena’s is quickly gaining respect.

Patan may not have rows of bakeries, but who needs quantity when Hermann Helmer’s offers the finest quality in German bakery products? The Nepali venture has been in operation for 25 years, passing from father to sons and all three bake with the nurturing assistance of their mother, Ram Maya. Ashok KC, father and founder of the enterprise, trained in Germany and was deeply impressed by the emphasis on quality, something these bakers do not compromise on. Sons Nirmal, Kamal and Bimal now run the show. Nirmal’s true passion is white bread and the perfect little cupcakes younger Hermann’s customer’s love. Kamal handles the pastry department, while Bimal, the youngest, makes the puffs. The bakery has proven to be a menacing temptation to many who work out at the gym next door. Since there is so much whole grain goodness going around, the disciplined can find a snack to compliment their workout. The bakery opens its doors at 7AM, and by mid-morning the first lot is already gone.

Those willing to go the extra mile won’t be disappointed if they make a pilgrimage to the Hyatt Regency, Boudha. Chef Pratap Dhaubhadel’s stunningly elaborate creations look almost too good too eat. Almost. The happiest hour at the Hyatt is between 7-8PM when you can go home with everything at almost half the price. ♦

Combating child pornography

BRUSSELS – A group of international NGOs say that the EU needs to enforce stricter guidelines to curb the access to and practice of internet-related sexual exploitation of children. Interest groups from all sectors of the computer industry, including on-line child

protection experts and representatives of children's organisations, expressed their concerns at the public hearing 'Child safety on the Internet - Identifying best practice: how has

industry risen to the challenge?' before the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Participants welcomed the European Commission's recent extension of its Safer Internet Action Plan (SIAP), which aims at tackling the controversial issue of illegal, harmful and racist content on the internet. But they insisted that the plan was not enough and that a definite framework needs to be introduced. They recommended that greater prominence should be given to issues of child protection and child pornography in Central and Eastern European countries. They also proposed increased cooperation between these countries and the Europol, the European Police Office. The framework includes a series of measures to be adopted by the EU's member states to ensure that offenders are severely punished in their countries. (IPS)

Burmese sanctions

WASHINGTON – A growing number of Congress members support sanctions against the authoritarian regime after repeated serious attacks on Suu Kyi and her political party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), last week. Last week, Senate Majority Whip Mitch McConnell introduced the "Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003" that imposes a US import ban on goods manufactured in Burma.

The new bill will further isolate the military junta economically. The Clinton administration had imposed a ban on new investment by US companies doing business in Burma in 1997, and activists have urged a comprehensive ban on trade with the country. The proposed ban on goods made in Burma would be in place until certain conditions are met and certified by President Bush, including measurable progress to end human rights abuses, the release of all political prisoners and the achievement of an agreement between ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the NLD and ethnic minorities to transfer power to a popularly elected civilian government. The legislation would also freeze the SPDC's assets in the US, and expand a visa ban to former and present SPDC leaders. (IPS)

ANALYSIS

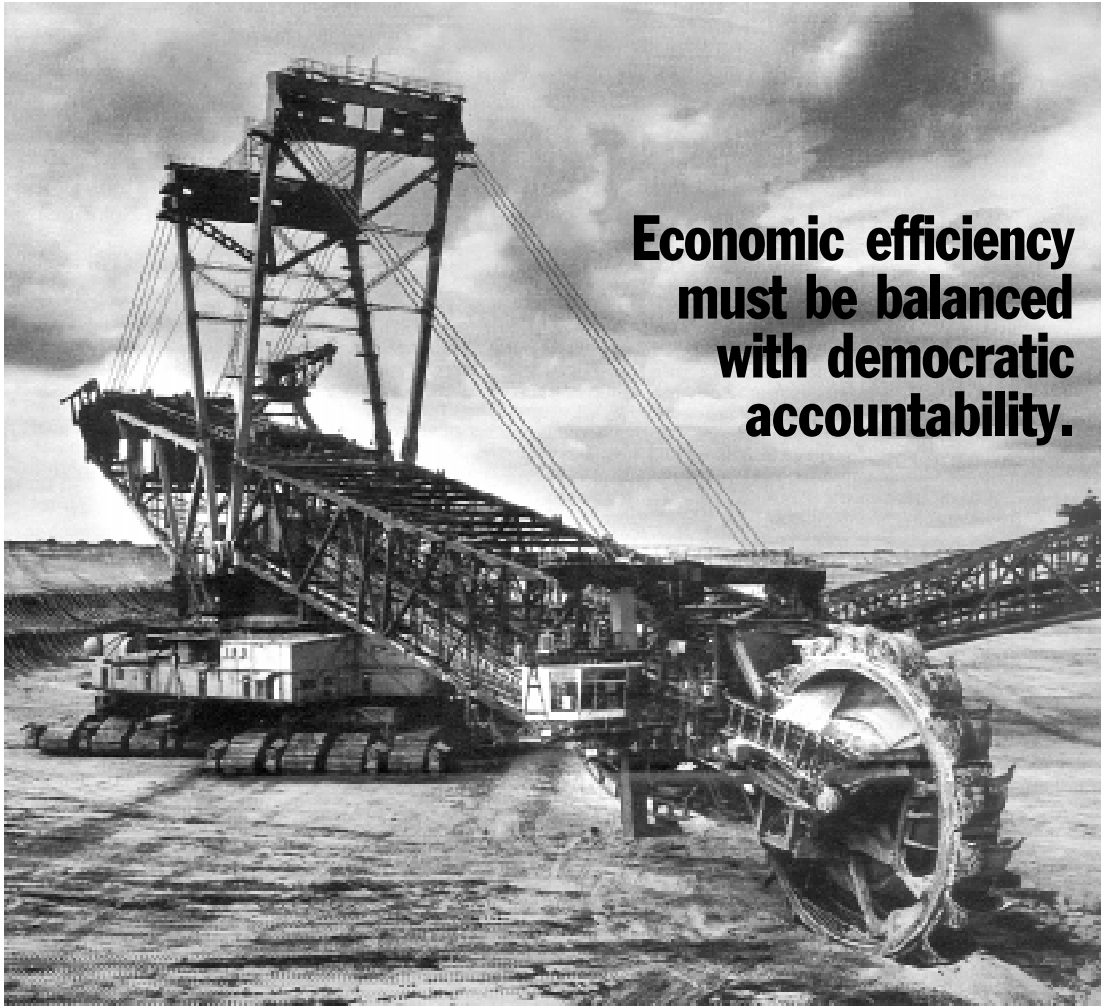
Big lies about central

An independent central bank focused exclusively on price stability has become a central part of the mantra of "economic reform". Like so many other policy maxims, it has been repeated often enough that it has come to be believed. But bold assertions, even from central bankers, are no substitute for research and analysis.

Research suggests that if central banks focus on inflation, they do a better job at controlling inflation. But controlling inflation is not an end in itself: it is merely a means of achieving faster, more stable growth with lower unemployment.

These are the real variables that matter, and there is little evidence that independent central banks focusing exclusively on price stability do better in these crucial respects. George Akerlof, who shared the Nobel Prize with me in 2001, and his colleagues have argued forcefully that there is an optimal rate of inflation, greater than zero. So ruthless pursuit of price stability actually harms economic growth and wellbeing. Recent research even questions whether targeting price stability reduces the trade off between inflation and unemployment.

A focus on inflation may make sense for countries with long histories of inflation, but not for others, like Japan. America's central bank, the Federal Reserve, is mandated not only to ensure price stability, but also to promote growth and full employment. There is broad consensus in the US against a narrow mandate, such as that of the European Central Bank (ECB). Today, Europe's growth



Economic efficiency must be balanced with democratic accountability.

languishes, because the ECB is constrained by its single-minded focus on inflation from promoting economic recovery.

Technocrats and financial market players who benefit from this institutional arrangement have done an impressive job of convincing many countries of its virtues, and of the need to treat monetary policy as a technical matter that should be put above politics.

That might be the case if all that central bankers did was, say, choose computer software for clearing payments.

But central banks make decisions that affect every aspect of society, including rates of economic growth and unemployment. Because there are trade offs, these decisions can only be made as part of a political process. Some argue that in the long run there are no trade offs.

During America's growth boom in the 1990s, the Clinton Administration believed that pushing the unemployment rate lower was worth risking, especially when the social gains—declining welfare roles, reduced violence—were added to the direct economic benefits. By contrast, the IMF urged tighter monetary policy, because it put far less weight on the cost of unemployment, seemingly no

OPINION

by MAI YAMANI



A Saudi survival strategy
The old regime has procrastinated so long that every choice it now faces is risky.

Did the bombings that rocked Riyadh shock the al-Saud royal family from its complacency at long last? This rude interruption to their majesties' indolence by their subjects incited rage, fury and something else—fear. Of course, alarm bells have rung before in Saudi Arabia, but the ruling family remained in denial—deniability and repression being the political arts at which the al-Saud excel. If the regime is to forge a survival strategy, it must now re-examine its foundations.

As ruling families go, the al-Saud are spectacularly numerous—there are perhaps as many as 22,000 of them. But vast bloodlines have not prevented hardening of the arteries. Indeed, the men now struggling to hold things together are the incapacitated King Fahd, 84 (pic, right), his half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah, 79, and his full brothers, Defence Minister Sultan, 78, and Interior Minister Naif, 75.

Old men, unsurprisingly, find it hard to cope with the breakdown of the assumptions that have governed their entire lives. Perhaps the most shattering lost illusion is the fact that the bombings occurred in the heart of the al-Saud's homebase in the Najdi region, which indicates that the enemy within resides nearer to the throne than anyone suspected. This recognition is particularly unsettling because the al-Saud have alienated every group except their own. If some Najdi may now be mistrusted, where can the al-Saud turn?

Saudi Arabia's population is divided into distinctive regional, tribal and sectarian groups. To the east, in the oil-rich province, are the Shia. Politically emboldened since the fall of Saddam's regime and the resurgence of their brethren in Iraq, the Shia wasted no time in petitioning Crown Prince Abdullah to end both their exclusion from Saudi politics and their demonisation as heretics by the Wahhabi religious establishment. Their message to the rulers is that it will no longer suffice to identify being Saudi exclusively with being Wahhabi Najdi.

Meanwhile, the Hijazis, who originate in Mecca and Medina, hold long-repressed resentments due to their humiliating partial inclusion in Saudi politics. Although the Hijazis, who are Sunnis but not Wahhabis, are not viewed as heretics, they are marginalised because the Islam they practice has Sufi leanings—and tolerant Sufism is anathema to the austere dogmatic Wahhabis. Educated Hijazis ask only for modest reforms. Yet even moderation is dismissed by the al-Saud.

The tribes of the Asir region, which have a mixed sense of identity due to their close ties to Yemeni tribes, feel alienated from both the political and the economic centre. The population of al-Jawf in the north has a similar sense of political and economic alienation. Despite long simmering feelings of resentment and dispossession, these 'minorities' remain moderate in their demands for reform. Their

leaders want to rescue the state, not raze it. They form the vast majority of people in Saudi Arabia, and have not yet embraced the uncompromising rage of Osama bin Laden's clones.

The challenge facing the al-Saud is to include at the heart of the political system the peoples they have shunned for decades. Unless they begin to do so, these peoples will drift into the camp of the fanatics—if not as active terrorists than as passive supporters, much as the Catholic community in Northern Ireland passively embraced IRA terrorism as a way to end their exclusion from political life in the province. The danger in Saudi Arabia is that the IRA are no match for Muslim fundamentalists in their fanaticism.

For the regime to embrace peoples it has excluded, it must agree on inclusiveness—and the tolerance of non-Wahhabi forms of Islam—as a survival strategy and stick to it. This is difficult because the ruling al-Saud are themselves divided. Crown Prince Abdullah is far more disposed to reform than Prince Naif, the powerful Interior Minister, who clings to the old narrow system of repression.

The al-Saud will undoubtedly be ruthless in seeking out the individuals directly implicated in the terrorist bombings. Those captured face beheading in the traditional way. The problem for the regime is that the springs that nourish fanaticism will not be dammed by such exemplary punishment.

Some royals recognise this and know that a more thorough housecleaning is needed. They realise that the al-Saud must choose: continue on the narrow path of repression, ethnic and religious intolerance, or adopt a more open and inclusive policy.

Both choices are fraught with danger. Open up, and they include people in Saudi public life hitherto considered unworthy for being either heretics (the Shia), of impure blood (the Hejazis) or too primitive (the border tribes). Remain closed, and they will find themselves hostage to the forces of intolerance that threaten the regime. The al-Saud religious alliance with the Wahhabis and the latter's control of a rigid religious educational system must change. "Moderate" elements among the population will support this change (and the manhunt for terrorist fanatics) if they secure inclusion in Saudi life.

Alexis de Tocqueville warned that the most dangerous time for any authoritarian regime is when it reforms. The al-Saud have procrastinated so long that every choice they now face is risky. Inclusion is the less dangerous path. It puts at risk only the ethnically narrow and religiously intolerant structure of the regime. By contrast, the regime itself will be imperiled if it clings to its narrow base. ♦ (© Project Syndicate)

(Mai Yamani is a research scholar at the Royal Institute for International Affairs.)

by JOSEPH STIGLITZ



banking

weight on the ancillary social benefits of reducing it, and much greater weight on the costs of potential inflation.

The economic analysis of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers turned out to be right; the models of the IMF (and the Fed) were wrong. America secured a much lower rate of unemployment without inflation—eventually unemployment fell to below 4 percent. But that is not the point: the point is that no one could be sure. A calculated risk is always unavoidable. Who bears it varies with different policies, and that is a decision that cannot—or at least should not—be left to central bank technocrats. While there is a legitimate debate about the degree of independence accorded to central banks and other decision-making bodies, within a democracy, the perspectives of those whose well-being is affected by the decisions taken should be represented in the process.

Workers, for instance, who have much to lose if the central bank pursues an excessively tight policy, do not have a seat at the table. Financial markets that do not have much to lose from unemployment but are affected by inflation, are typically well represented. And yet financial markets hardly have a monopoly on technical competency.

Indeed, many in the financial community have little understanding of the intricate

workings of the macroeconomic system—as evidenced by their frequent mistakes in managing it. For example, most US recessions since 1945 were caused by the Fed stepping on the brakes too hard. Similarly, central banks adopted monetarism with a fervour in the late 1970's and early 1980's, just as empirical evidence discrediting the underlying theories was mounting.

Whatever the merits of a common currency, those in Europe deliberating about adopting the Euro should consider whether to tie their fortunes to an institutional arrangement whose flaws are increasingly apparent. Likewise, developing countries need to consider not only the central bank's independence, but also its mandate and representativeness. They need to balance concerns about economic efficiency with those of democratic accountability.

In many new democracies, citizens are bewildered. The virtues of the new regime are first praised, but then they are told that the macroeconomic policy decisions about which they care most are too important to be left to democratic processes. Citizens are warned against the risks of populism (meaning the will of the people?).

There are no easy answers. But in too many countries, nor is there democratic debate about the alternatives. ♦ (*© Project Syndicate*)

(Joseph E Stiglitz is the 2001 Nobel laureate in Economics.)

End game in Burma?

SATYA SIVARAMAN in CHIANG MAI – The recent attack on Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Asia's most well-known campaigner for democracy, marks a turning point in Burma's otherwise painfully slow and unchanging politics. Three possible scenarios of a global response are now emerging.

One is that the military junta manages to ride out, for the time being, the growing fury both in and outside Burma, over their attack on Suu Kyi. In the second scenario, the attack could become the spark for a nationwide movement of civil disobedience against the junta. The third possibility is that if the true extent of injuries sustained by Suu Kyi come out, there might be growing calls by Burmese groups in exile for UN intervention in Burma to effect a change of regime, a la Iraq.

"Will Burma be next?" read the title of the Friday editorial of *Irrawaddy* magazine, which is based in this northern Thai city and watches Burma affairs. "It is doubtful Washington will squander its political ammunition on Burma," it said. An invasion could be justified as yet another case of 'humanitarian intervention' similar to the one in Kosovo by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1998. For the United States, entering Burma militarily could also be a strategic move to gain a foothold right at the doorstep of its only global economic and military rival—China.

If the first scenario materialises, it will show how the Rangoon regime has managed to survive crises since the late eighties. It clung to power even after losing to Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) in the 1990 general elections it organised. In recent years, the opposition and Burma's military rulers have been able to rope in the NLD into a long drawn-out process of so called 'dialogue'. The regular visits to the country by Razali Ismail, the UN special envoy who arrived in Rangoon on Friday, has given rise to the belief that the military was serious about negotiating a transition to some kind of democracy.

The attack on Suu Kyi and her supporters came after she criticised the military for not initiating direct talks with her since her

release from house arrest in May 2002. In the past six months there has been no real contact between the two sides. The junta was extremely unhappy about the political meetings that Suu Kyi had around the country.

The second scenario of a popular uprising breaking out depends on how much opposition activists within Burma have been able to maintain their strength. "There is a fire burning within each one of us and it will take just one bold show of public defiance against the regime for many of us to come out onto the streets," said Suthin, a resident of Rangoon.

The third scenario of foreign intervention in Burma, or at least much greater external pressure on the regime, depends on the extent of physical harm sustained in the Friday attack by Aung San Suu Kyi, who reportedly has broken an arm and suffered head injuries.

Already, the United States and the European Union have called on the Burmese military regime to release Suu Kyi from detention and allow her to appear in public. US lawmakers are reported to be weighing a number of actions to express their displeasure with Rangoon, from freezing assets belonging to the country's leaders to prohibiting Burmese exports from entering the US. Given the precedent of the US and Britain forcing regime change in Iraq without even a UN Security Council mandate, there has been some debate among Burma groups about the idea of a similar intervention in Burma.

While the Chinese government is considered close to Rangoon, nobody expects it to actively enter into a war with the United States to save its ally, unlike in the case of North Korea which is strategically far more important to China.

These are still early days for such speculation and Burmese pro-democracy groups in exile would prefer that the Burmese throw out their dictators on their own. However, they would not mind a strong reaction from the international community to tell them they are not entirely alone in their struggle. ♦ (*IPS*)



Billions in aid

TOKYO – Donors pledged \$4.5 billion for rebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka on Tuesday at the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and with the United States, Norway and the European Union. While the meeting was a success in terms of drawing loans and grants, it may fail to prod the Tamil Tiger rebels back into the peace process. Despite last-minute appeals by international donors to the Tiger rebels, the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE) leaders boycotted the two-day donors meeting. They want an interim administration that would have autonomy in the north and east, a move that would put reconstruction of the country's Tamil-majority areas under the hands of the LTTE.

The conference listed 10 guidelines that link progress in the peace process to the new aid pledges. At the forefront is full compliance with the ceasefire, assistance in the north and east, the participation of a Muslim delegation, and ending the underage recruitment of rebels. Japan pledged \$1 billion and the US followed with \$54 million. The Norwegian government pledged \$3 million, mostly for the north and east. The Asian Development Bank promised \$1 billion and the World Bank, \$200 million per year. Among others, the European Union committed \$293 million over a three-year period. (*IPS*)

Summer thaw

NEW DELHI – India and Pakistan continue to move slowly but steadily toward dialogue, say analysts who point to recent trends that reflect an effort not to let the usual irritants undercut the new, if cautious, warmth in their ties. This peace initiative was announced by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 18 April this year and Pakistan has since responded with a willingness to pursue it. A sign of the thaw in relations is India's announcement of the resumption in July of the bus service between New Delhi and the

Pakistani city of Lahore. But Vajpayee, who made another attempt at peace by inviting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf for a summit in the north Indian city of Agra in July 2001, appears to be playing it slow this time.

The Indian prime minister said another Indo-Pakistan summit would be possible, "only after cross-border terrorism ends". Attempts at peace were widened after US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited Islamabad and New Delhi in May. He was reported to have taken up cross-border militancy as a priority issue. Following his visit, Islamabad ordered the arrest of several leaders of the Hizbul Mujahideen militant group and ordered 'restrictions' on it. (*IPS*)

Illegal timber

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia is implementing a ban on the importation of timber from Indonesia, but this remains some way off from dismantling the entire system that allow Indonesian timber to reach this country illegally. Malaysia announced this ban last month to address widespread criticism that its timber industry has been part of the illegal system that adds to the destruction of forest cover in its neighbouring country.

Starting June, the Malaysian government said, it will issue import licences only to those importers who can show proof that the origin of incoming logs is not Indonesia. Ecologists are worried that these well-intentioned measures will not halt this illegal trade that irreparably damages the environment. Indonesia's ecologically rich forests includes 11 percent of the world's plant species, 10 percent of its mammal species and 16 percent of its bird species. Environmental groups estimate that in the last decade, timber smuggling from Indonesia's Kalimantan alone has cost the Indonesian government a minimum of \$580 million. Indonesia's Forestry Ministry said in 2001 between 80,000 -100,000 cubic metres of illegal timber were moved every month. (*IPS*)

United Nations Development Programme South and West Asia Sub Regional Resource Facility



Invitation to Apply for Young Professional Programme (YPP)

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

The Kathmandu SURF is the UNDP's Sub Regional Resource Facility for South and West Asia. We provide UNDP Country Offices in the sub region (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) with timely, high quality substantive support for the effective design and implementation of country programmes and projects. In keeping with UNDP's corporate vision of a knowledge-based advisory service organization, our objectives are: (a) to meet the policy advisory needs of Country Offices and (b) to enable Country Offices to more effectively develop and access knowledge and expertise.

We offer an opportunity to exceptionally qualified young professionals, **age - below 30 years**, to work at the Kathmandu SURF for a period of **11 months**. This will be an opportunity for young professionals from the sub region to work closely with SURF Policy Advisors, gain experience in developmental research and advisory services, and be exposed to UNDP's operations and policies.

The applicants must have a **Masters degree in an area relevant to UNDP's practice areas** (democratic governance, poverty eradication, energy and environment, hiv/aids, crisis prevention and recovery and gender) and a **maximum of 1 year of professional experience after the Masters degree**.

We are compiling a pool of qualified and interested young people for possible participation in our Young Professional Programme (YPP) in the coming months. If you are suitably qualified and interested in working with us, please send us your CV with a cover note and brief statement why you are interested in working with the SURF.

Interested candidates should submit their applications along with up-to-date CVs, by **30 June 2003**, to:

Chief, South and West Asia Sub Regional Resource Facility
U.N. House, P.O. Box 107, Kathmandu
Fax No. 977-1-5548597

We especially encourage qualified women to apply for these positions.

Political playground

Editorial in Kantipur, 9 June



The student wings of seven major political parties have declared indefinite strikes in all educational institutions across the kingdom beginning 15 June. This at a time when the student body of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) suspended their lockout of private schools and agreed to hold talks with school operators. Things had barely begun to get back to normal before this new development sowed fresh seeds of chaos and uncertainty.

The student unions are progressing on to what they call a “decisive” movement, but the people don’t understand their motivation behind strikes that close schools. Judging by what has happened in the last few months, schools and colleges have become playgrounds for student unions affiliated to political parties.

Temporarily closing schools and colleges have become a handy tool for student wings to spring their friends from police custody and secure free medical attention at hospitals. It is the easiest way for them to express their political dissent despite the obvious lack of logic in their actions. After all, the Ministry of Education and Tribhuban University are currently holding talks with them on their 68-point demand list.

Students bear the brunt of abuse, and we know who prompts their actions. They must understand that political loyalty and blind faith are not one and the same. What can we expect of the future when the present generation has nothing to look forward to? The students unions should ask themselves what they stand to gain by calling for schools like Notre Dame in Bandipur or St Mary’s in Lalitpur to permanently shut their doors.

This Taliban-style path was embraced by Maoist student wings and we all felt the disruption caused by the insurgency in both urban and rural education. It doesn’t seem to be at an end. Now, we have yet another series of extreme anti-school measures under the explicit encouragement of parties that call themselves democratic. The student unions are egging each to outdo the other, as if closing educational institutions was a game. If it gains enough momentum, their “decisive” movement could result in a domino effect that closes schools down all over the country.

National political power play should not infect the school system. Why have the student unions let themselves become pawns for the political agendas of their mentors? In the end we all pay the price for their actions.

कान्तिपुर

Expense account

Bikas Bhattarai in

Nepal Samacharpatra, 6 June

अनिल बस्नेत

An ordinance for the royal family’s expenses was recently passed in secret, a move that major political parties and some intellectuals have been opposing vehemently. It was created by an amendment to the Royal Expenses Management Act 1972 that allows the king to increase the royal palace’s expenditures to any amount he desires. Payments were made till six months after the provision had expired. This controversial ordinance was pushed through the interim government just days before Lokendra Bahadur Chand resigned from his post. If the constitution is considered valid, the previous law’s tenure has ended. The fact that the news was kept under wraps has raised suspicions. “It is a blow to the people’s right to knowledge,” says lawyer Bhimarjun Acharya. The people are owed an explanation.

Panda vs NEA

Lekhnath Adhikari in

Nepal Samacharpatra, 8 June

अनिल बस्नेत

American investors of Bhote Kosi Power Company (BKPC) are pulling all kinds of strings in the US senate to make the Nepal government cough up the \$1.5 million they claim is owed them by Nepal Electricity Authority. Texas-based Panda Energy International reportedly threatened retaliatory pressure through US senators on duty-free Nepali garment imports. The American operator of the 36MW hydropower plant has also taken the matter of payment up with the Nepali embassy in the US, and the Foreign and Water Resources Ministries in Kathmandu.

NEA says the company is trying to make it pay for what was not included in the Power Purchase Agreement. Under

pressure from powerful Bhote Kosi backers, the water resources ministry has lobbied the hot potato at the Department of Electricity Development. Talks were scheduled this week. “We are trying to perform the role of a facilitator, but the two sides have yet to agree to meet halfway,” said the department’s director general Lekhman Singh Bhandari.

Department officials are worried the row between Panda and NEA will send a negative message to potential investors. A recent study revealed the American investors evaded paying royalty by understating the plant’s capacity, which changed from the planned 36MW to the current output of 45MW. In total, the investors themselves owe the government Rs 2.7 million in royalty, pending for the last three years. While the issue of capacity can be amicably settled, the same may not be possible between Panda and NEA. And the situation has only been aggravated by talk of punitive measures on Nepal’s garment exports.

Bhutanese Maoists

Nepal Samacharpatra, 11 June

अनिल बस्नेत

The Bhutanese government has been alerted to a radical communist outfit, similar to the Maoist rebels in Nepal, that recently announced an armed struggle in the Druk kingdom. After its formation in the Bhutanese refugee camps in eastern Nepal, the Bhutanese Communist Party (BPC) announced it already has strengthened bases inside Bhutan. They have youth, peasant and student wings that



Headline: Schools closed due to viral influenza. Schools are rapidly closing down! Is ‘viral influenza’ a new student organisation?

गोरखापत्र Gorkhapatra, June 12

have begun distributing pamphlets and posters even in urban centre like Thimphu, Paro and Ha. The king is not ignorant of these developments. There are reports that he began to chart out strategies to counter the newly formed party and several raids on villages took place recently.

BPC insiders don’t believe the Nepal-Bhutan talks will lead to a solution. “We have already declared our armed struggle and this is what will bring the

refugee issue to a decisive end,” a party member said. The people that the Bhutanese government resettled on their lands are already fleeing in fear, he added.

With headquarters at Siliguri in India, the party members are able to move easily across three international borders. The Bhutanese government has sought help from Indian paramilitary forces to fight these freshly-minted Maoists.

Oli on troubled waters

Drishiti, 10 June

Interview with KP Oli, Central Working Committee member of the UML. Extracts:

दृष्टि

What created an environment that let the king instate Thapa?

Madhab Kumar Nepal was backed by six parties including Deuba’s breakaway Nepali Congress (Democratic). The Mandal faction of the Sadbhabana Party and the RPP came up with their own candidates. It is paradoxical that the king passed over the recommendation made by major political parties to act on one made by a minor player.

Is the new premiership unconstitutional?

Naming Thapa as prime minister was not another regressive step. It was a continuation of the king’s October Fourth agenda.

The constitution allows for three ways of instating a prime minister—the leader of a party with the majority vote, a leader unanimously selected by all political parties and lastly, the leader of the largest party. All three options require the person to be a member of parliament. In our situation the premiership would be unconstitutional no matter who is in the prime ministerial seat.

However, I suggest that a solution can be found based on the present scenario instead of wasting time and energy on discussing constitutional legalities.

Will the difference of opinion between the king continue after Thapa’s cabinet is formed?

By circumventing the political parties the king eliminated an opportunity to work together and make his peace. We are waiting to see if the cabinet that is formed will have executive powers. Thapa’s cabinet will be defunct if it doesn’t receive what it was promised.



MIN BAJRACHARYA



Refugees.

हिमाल

Robin Sayami in Himal Khabarpatrika, 15-30 May

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

When Sher Bahadur Deuba said his government should be reinstated, Crown Prince Paras intervened saying his claim was unjustified.

- Amik Sherchan of the People’s Front Nepal on the meeting between the king and political parties last month. *Jana Aastha*, 11 June.

Back at Sundarijal >37

“Solitary confinement is softening my mind...”



BP Koirala fears that incarceration is making him lose touch with objective reality. For the first time, he admits in this diary written in English, that the horror of indefinite detention grips him with terror. Anything would be a distraction, and he yearns for the legal proceedings against him to start, even though he has no illusions of a fair trial.

5 April, 1977

Sundarijal
When GM was here I used to discuss all kinds of political thoughts that occurred to my mind—mostly about the political situation of Nepal as we see it from prison in total ignorance. My conjecture was as good as his, but since it was a question of measuring in darkness, two measurements are double as good as one. Now my ideas or measurements are bottled up inside me. Sometimes I am assailed with doubts about the correctness of our present line—GM used to be never in doubt that it was the only line we could take. Today, I am again assailed with doubt, there is no reason why I should have doubts like this about a line which had been considered thoroughly from all sides. The psychological softening, which the present solitary confinement provided, is obviously responsible for recurrence of doubts in my mind. Any mental conclusion or reaction reached or produced in the present extremely unnatural condition is bound to suffer from subjectivism. No objective assessment is possible in this state of mind. Moreover, I have no news of any kind—don't know what developments are taking place or what our people are thinking or doing. This total lack of information tells against any attempt at objective assessment. This solitary confinement is affecting my mind—softening it most likely. Sometimes the horror of indefinite detention grips me with terror. I know such fear, again is a psychological reaction of the present state of incarceration. I also know that they won't keep us like this for long. Still, I am sometimes gripped with horror. But in my case I have to live in solitary confinement for a few months more. There is no indication that the severe restriction imposed on us would be relaxed. I don't even hope that GM would be brought back to my camp now. How to manage to spend the time in this distressful condition? If I had books, they would have perhaps helped—perhaps. I remembered Madalasa who told me last time that I should take such opportunity of solitude to contemplate Infinity. Loneliness and solitude are perhaps two things or the same thing looked at from two psychological divergent points. What I am suffering from is loneliness—utter loneliness—loneliness which is horrifying. I should have practiced some yoga which would have perhaps helped me, quickening my mind. I took ½ tablet of valium as a chemical substitute for yoga—to calm my agitated mind.

6 April

Sundarijal
When on 25 March Asst Anchaladhish with a team of officers and clerks had come to take our statement, I had expected that after all the train had moved and that legal process had started. They made their appearance after 3 months, and now again they seem to have gone to sleep. It is already 12 days and nothing happens. Granted that the king was away for a month on a visit of India and nothing happens without his personal order, but it is already five days that he is back here. If only they take us to the court or do something about us, decide one way or other, there would be some psychological relief from this boredom, this loneliness, this stagnant existence, this total preoccupation with one's own psychological moments alone—all this will be lifted even if the legal process is started. I say legal process for the convenience of expression. The directive whatever it is likely to be has to be taken by the king, hence the legal process is only a formal show—but still there will be goings on, our movement from the prison to the court (which I expect would sit here in the prison...) some new faces seen, some arguments and counter-arguments etc, etc—all this will be at least a small pebble thrown into the still scum-covered water of my present existence. There will be an element of fight also, for which I am itching—a legal fight before a bogus court, but I will give it in my own way—state my case, knowing fully well that I would be addressing a deaf judge, and therefore knowing that my pleadings wouldn't make any difference in the judgement he has to give in any case. Therefore when 14 days ago, the officers came, I brightened up. The Asst Anchaladhish has even assured me GM wouldn't be kept separate from me for long, a day or week or so, no more. Perhaps the Anchaladhish himself doesn't know anything about us or what orders he will have to execute next. In his judgement he thought that we won't be kept separated beyond a week.

The pages of my diary are full of my mental agonies, even torture; and I give the impression of having been considerably weakened. The psychological condition is exactly so, but I haven't weakened in the practical sense in the least. When my politics arises, or my political conviction and ideals are affected, I bristle up, ready for a fight.

Saw Madalasa in the early morning dream, soft, loving and exceedingly charming.

Inscribed under Sushila's photo the immortal line of Keats: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." This picture of hers gives me joy and morale whenever I look at it. It is a great pity that I didn't bring a bigger picture of hers to paste it prominently on the wall of my room.

BOOK REVIEW

by MARK TURIN



The mad Carew

Disseminating deranged ideas in the volatile political climate of the present is simply irresponsible.

Hui, a Chinese Professor of Microbiology and Chemistry who has perfected the airborne dispersal of germ anthrax and is eager to unleash a few canisters over the United States. Aim: to sow death, misery and probably the seeds of WW III. Enough already? No, the final battle takes place in Mustang and involves a CIA operative, the American Himalayan Foundation, Tibetan Khampas and a clutch of automatic weapons. Thankfully, the bad guys are all destroyed, a requisite number of good guys die with them (to make it realistic) and the world is saved by the ingenuity and resilience of a band of Americans. Oh dear.

Anyone with a predilection towards paranoia, conspiracy theories or weapons of mass destruction should definitely neither purchase nor read this book. There are enough half-baked, specious and entirely maniacal speculations to keep the present US administration in foreign policy for a good five years. All the more reason, then, that this treatise should not enter the public discourse. Better to denounce it now, outright, than to let someone pick it up by mistake and believe even a single word of it. I also don't believe that the writer can claim any protection by branding his book as 'a novel'. Disseminating

deranged ideas in the volatile political climate of the present is simply irresponsible.

Aside from the fantastical plot, the book is peppered with mistakes and misrepresentations: 'Nemaste', says Gail Tenzing Carew (the daughter of 'Norgay Tenzing', of course). One would have thought that Paul Ryder Ryan might have been able to check the spelling of this now almost international greeting. Proper names are so frequently misspelled that we may have to put them down to Ryan's failed attempt at preserving a pretence of the unreal (or protecting his sources): a town outside Kathmandu called 'Braktapur', a lake in Dolpo called 'Proksumdo', three-day general strikes called 'bundhs' and a US Ambassador to Nepal named 'Ralph Drank'. In a discussion on why the 'peasants' of Nepal have been effectively galvanised by Maoist ideology, we learn that 'Mao is just another god in Nepal' (page 8).

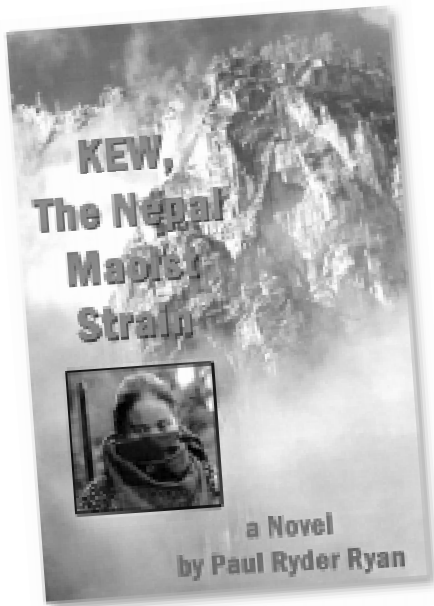
From the back cover, it appears that the author has spent 'more than ten years travelling and working in Asia, most recently in troubled South Asia', although what troubled him about the region remains unsaid. According to a disclaimer

preceding Chapter One, 'while all the characters are fictional, the fabric of the bloody historical events depicted in this book...are a tapestry woven from known facts, the author's imagination, and public statements'. The known facts, I should add, are almost twenty pages of the 1999 interview between *Revolutionary Worker* and Prachanda, reproduced in their entirety as Chapter 3 of the novel, and five pages of the special report on the 1 June massacre of 2001. The rest can indeed be put down to the author's *considerable* imagination.

KEW, The Nepal Maoist Strain is

published by 1st Books Library, an outfit which specialises in 'publishing on demand'. This should have warned me away in the first place, since no reputable book house would go near such inflammatory and jingoistic drivel, but fascination with the title overwhelmed me and I purchased a copy anyway. Save yourself the trouble. ♦

(Mark Turin is is currently with the Department of Social Anthropology at University of Cambridge.) See also: 'The peoples' peace' by Puskar Bhushal, *Nepali Times*, #123.



KEW, The Nepal Maoist Strain
by Paul Ryder Ryan
Pages: 148
1st Books Library

Mary Carew, *nom de guerre* 'Kew' after the famous gardens in London, is an American guerilla fighter with a leadership role in the Maoists of Nepal. She is also blinded in one eye, a Buddhist spiritualist, conversant in Nepali, the mistress of Comrade Prachanda and living in 'the forbidden Kingdom of Lo', or was it Dolpo. Her father and brother, ex-army and trekking types, are commissioned by the US secret services to track her down before she gets more deeply embedded with the insurgents than she already is. At the behest of Prachanda, she meets with Chen

TYALON
SAUNA BATH • STEAM BATH

Two Years Warranty and Free Servicing

All kinds of health and fitness equipments available

THE SPECTRUM INTERNATIONAL
Pulchowk (Opp Everest Bank Ltd)
Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 977-1-5551501.

TAEHA (Heavy Duty) Motorised Treadmill

Green Bar of the month

Log on to www.carlsberg.com.np and get a chance to win chilled carlsberg.

Lhasa Restaurant & Bar
Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal, Tel.: 4-425185

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Orchids and Jewels of Nature** Botanical art exhibit by Neera J Pradhan from 1-15 June at Park Gallery, Lazimpat. 981055263
- ❖ **Pictures from Modern Life in Nepal** photographs by William Mebane till 4 July at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 4411122
- ❖ **Walking** photographs by Ashok R Shakya from 17-22 June at Park Gallery, Lazimpat. 981055263.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Imaging Everest** photographic exhibition from the Royal Geographical Society, London, in association with The British Council, Kathmandu. 8.30 AM-4.45 PM till 31 July at the British Council, Lainchour.
- ❖ **Hyatt Open Tennis Tournament** 19-21 June. For registrations: Hyatt Regency Kathmandu 4491234 ext 5165
- ❖ **The British Film Festival** 16-20 June. 16: Once Upon a Time in the Midlands, 17: The Emperors's New Clothes, 18: This is Not a Love Song, 19: Happy Now, 20: Bridget Jones's Diary. Daily screenings at 6.30 PM at Gopi Krishna Cinema Hall, Chabahil. Tickets available at the British Council and from 6PM at the venue.

MUSIC

- ❖ **Live Music** Friday at 5.30 PM, Saturday movie at 4.30 PM. Jivin' Joe's Restaurant, Kupondole.
- ❖ **Live Acoustic Jam** 7PM on Saturdays at Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 4256738
- ❖ **Full Circle** acoustic jam every Friday at New Orleans Café, Thamel. 4427311
- ❖ **International music day** at the Alliance Française. Free concert, non-stop music 12PM till late on 21 June.

DRINKS

- ❖ **Fusion** offers over 100 cocktails. Happy hour from 6-7PM. Dwarika's Hotel.
- ❖ **K-tool! Special** Tropical Khukri drinks Rs 125 or Rs 750 for every 1.5 litre. Free Irish Coffee with every main course. K-tool! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4433043.
- ❖ **The Piano Lounge & Bar** features the Trio Givone for Gypsy music, cocktails and snacks. Yak & Yeti Hotel.
- ❖ **Friday the 13th** with the Cobwebs, 6PM onwards on 13 June. Gents Rs 600, ladies Rs 400 (complimentary drinks). Rox Bar at Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. 4491234
- ❖ **Thunderbolt** with Ram Shrestha and Sabu Lama. 8PM onwards Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Red Onion Bar, Lazimpat. 4416071
- ❖ **The Jazz Bar** presents Abhaya and The Steam Injuns. 7PM onwards, 13 June. 50 percent discount on food and drinks. Shangri-la Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999

FOOD

- ❖ **Friday BBQ** with 10 different delicious salads. 6.30 PM onwards at the Summit Hotel. Rs 500 + tax. 5521810.
- ❖ **Saka dhawa Celebration** 14 June at Stupa View Vegetarian Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha, 4480262
- ❖ **Traditional Nepali Thali lunch** at Patan Museum Café inside Patan Museum. 11AM-2.30 PM. 5526271.
- ❖ **Mexican Food festival** 13-22 June. Dinner: Rs 750 + tax. The Café at Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. 4491234
- ❖ **Weekends BBQ** at the Shambala Garden. 50 percent off through June. Shangri-la Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999
- ❖ **Summer specials** smoked salmon soufflé, shrimp newburg and crispy duck breast. Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 4250440
- ❖ **Naachghar Revisited** with Myrna, an international exotic dancer, and North Indian delicacies. Every evening from 7.30 PM onwards. Rs 749 per person. Yak & Yeti Hotel, Durbar Marg.
- ❖ **Wood fired pizzas, Baskin Robbins icecream, cocktails and coffee** at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel.
- ❖ **World BBQ Nite** 27 June at Dwarika's Hotel. Singaporean satay, Persian kababs, Churasqueria. Rs 699 + tax. 4479488.
- ❖ **Café Bahal** Dieter's delight at Kathmandu Guest House's Food Court, Thamel. 4413632
- ❖ **Kids Combo Meal** at all Bakery Cafés. Kids' meals with exciting gifts.
- ❖ **Saturday BBQ Lunch** at Club Himalaya Nagarkot. Rs 500 per person. 4680083
- ❖ **Papaya salad**, seasonal vegetables with fillet or chicken and Italian icecream at Singma, Jawlakhel, Lalitpur. 552004

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Dakshinkali Package** every Saturday Rs 500+tax. 4370714, 4371537
- ❖ **Shivapuri Heights** a traditional cottage with modern facilities. Rs 1,850 pp. www.escape2nepal.com, Email: info@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Great Godavari Getaway** special weekend packages. Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **The secret of Kathmandu** Overnight package \$99. Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Writing Retreat** Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 375280
- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge** Special offers for Nepalis and expats. 01-361500
- ❖ **Bardia Tiger Madness** special deals for expats. Jungle Base camp, Bardia. 061-532112.

BOOKWORM

Integrated Pest Management in Nepal Fanindra Prasad Neupane (ed)
Himalayan Resources Institute, 2003
Rs 500
This approach to pest management is ecological and socio-economical. It needs collaborative efforts from various experts, institutions and farmers. The contributions in this book seek alternatives to chemicals pesticides wherever possible, advocating minimal and judicious use when unavoidable.

Flora from Kathmandu Valley Neera Joshi Pradhan
Park Gallery, 2002 (Second Edition)
Rs 250
This slim publication is the result of three years worth of intensive study of the Valley's flora by the artist. Most of our garden flowers are exotic, making Pradhan's paintings a valuable nature resource. While retaining accuracy, her work reflects great delicacy and a true admiration for the subject.

The nature of underdevelopment and regional structure of Nepal: A Marxist analysis Baburam Bhattarai
Adroit Publishers, 2003
Rs 960
The author, a leading figure of the CPN (Maoist), probes the subject of why our 'yam' nation is caught in a quagmire of underdevelopment from a historic-materialist perspective. He concludes a revolutionary rupture from the past is necessary if we are to progress into the 21st century.

Courtesy: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 4227711, mandala@ccsl.com.np

CLASSIFIED

Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles, cards, gifts, stationery, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l'Annapurna

Visit Femilines, the Exclusive Lingerie Store for ladies undergarments, nightwear, bathrobes and more. Ladies staff. Opposite Sajha Yatayat, Harihar Bhawan, Pulchowk. Tel: 547428

Flowerlovers: Flowerlovers, it's FUCHSIA time again!! See 60 beautiful varieties in bloom! Our lovely CYCLAMEN are also flowering. Only at THE BISHALNAGAR NURSERY, tel. 4431797; 5 min. from Bhatbateni Supermarket, 2 minutes from Bishalnagar Chowk (turn right and downhill).

Custom Made: Generate Wealth with Feng Shui. Get a custom made tabletop fountain. Call 981054102

Co-Q10 and all dietary supplements imported from Singapore & Malaysia Contact 5520294

To Let: Rabibhawan area, two-storey house, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large kitchen, dining, living, terrace, lobby, porch and telephone. Contact: **Roshani** 4275180

New York Pizza: Free Home delivery Contact:5539345

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

ON NEWSTANDS NOW

SAVE 25% off the cover price

Off the stands you will pay Rs. 1020 annually, **SUBSCRIBE NOW** and receive 12 issues at Rs. 865/- includes delivery within the Valley. To have your copy delivered immediately, call

4781153

or fax completed details to: 4782100

Yes, I would like to subscribe to **the boss**

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. : _____

MYriAD Pvt. Ltd.

NEPALI WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

These last days before the monsoon breaks sees the classic struggle over Nepal of the westerlies fighting a losing battle to hold off the advance of moisture from the Bay of Bengal. In a good year, the monsoon winds prevail and the clouds mass up against the Himalaya and travel westwards. This year, the monsoon is about a week late, and is due to arrive in eastern Nepal on Thursday. Wednesday morning's brief storm was a westerly front making its presence felt one last time. The winds are whipping up sand in the Rajasthan desert (see satellite picture, taken on Wednesday morning) transporting it even up to central Nepal in the form of haze. The monsoon is expected to arrive with a bang this weekend and with it a dramatic change in wind direction, muggy conditions and torrential showers.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
30-19	30-18	30-18	31-19	30-18

BBC on FM 102.4

Mon-Fri	0615-0645	BBC World Today
Sat	0615-0645	BBC
Sun	0615-0645	BBC Agenda
Daily	2045-2115	BBC नेपाली सेवा
Daily	2245-2300	BBC नेपाली सेवा
Sun-Fri	0740- 0800	एकैछिन् (रेडियो पत्रिका)
Sun-Fri	0800- 0830	डबली (विषयगत अन्तरक्रिया)
Sun-Fri	2000- 2030	आजका कुरा (समसामयिक विषयमा बहस)
Sat	0800- 0830	शान्ति अभियान
Sat	1930- 2000	आचार विचार (भ्रष्टाचारविरुद्ध सहाकार्य)
Sat	2000- 2030	कूटनीतिक मञ्च

Radio Sagarmatha
P.O. Box 6958, Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: ++977-1-545680, 545681, Fax: ++ 977-1- 530227
E-mail: radio@radiosagarmatha.org, www.radiosagarmatha.org

Color calibration bar and registration marks.

Color calibration bar and registration marks.

The Matrix, Round II

A return to the post-apocalyptic sci-fi world that we can't get enough of.

1999. Elegant martial arts, sharp and innovative cinematography, a stunningly nightmarish future world with overtones of Descartes' *Meditations*. The Matrix was more than equipped to turn the popular notions of sci-fi blockbusters on its head. The movie created a tsunami that swept through urban sub-cultures. It became fashionable to discuss Neo with philosophy neophytes at universities. Matrixmania was invested with the kind of cool never associated with laser-wielding starship captains and journeys to far-off planets. Imitations were spawned but everyone knew The Matrix got there first. It *created* there'. Two parallel

worlds—one of the Matrix, a computer simulated dream designed to use humans as sources of fuel and energy, and a hard reality outside the program. The creator-director duo behind the movies, the brothers Wachowski, based the basic premise of the movie on Descartes' analytical scepticism that questioned notions of reality. The Matrix repeatedly asks questions about the nature of truth and reality, the possibilities of choice and free will, the meaning of life and love. It offers no answers. The first movie charts Neo's (Keanu Reeves) "rebirth" from the womb of the computer to the responsibility of liberating the human race. He is the One prophesised

by the Oracle as the only being with the power to destroy the Matrix. Together with Trinity (Carrie Anne Moss) and Morpheus (Laurence Fishburn) Neo navigates his way through an unfamiliar post-apocalyptic landscape.

2003. Four years later we are poised to enter that brave new world again. *The Matrix Reloaded* promises more, not only of special effects, action sequences and cutting edge technology but also a deeper journey into the real world—of course, as defined by The Matrix. This time round more humans have broken free and are attempting to live in the real world. As their numbers grow, Zion, the last real-world city, falls under siege to the Machine Army. Only a matter of hours separates Zion from the machines and it is up to Neo, Trinity and Morpheus to save the day. Neo is still a saviour in the sequel but he is forced to make difficult choices. The machines are stronger too and powerful figures on the inside offer increasing resistance, including Agent Smith who thirsts for vengeance.

The genius of the publicity-shy Larry and Andy Wachowski will hit Kathmandu 14 June when *The Matrix Reloaded* premieres at Jai Nepal Cinema. And just to keep you in the loop, look out for the final installation in the trilogy, *The Matrix Revolutions*, due out in November later this year. Watch this space. ♦

The Matrix Reloaded at the Jai Nepal Cinema from 14 June at 1.45, 4.15 and 6.45 PM. *Bhoot* at 11.15 AM. For reservations call 4442220. www.jainepal.com

Coming soon to Jai Nepal Cinema



Charlie's Angels 2: Full Throttle

July 2003

The beautiful and accomplished crime-fighting trio is revved up and raring to go.



Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines

July 2003

Arnold Schwarzenegger battles a stunning and ruthless fembot (female robot) from the future.



Koi Mil Gaya

August 2003

A syrupy Bollywood love story starring Hrithik Roshan and Preity Zinta.

DigitAll Matrix

SAMSUNG RELOADED

Buy Samsung Get Samsung FREE



SAMSUNG DIGITall everyone's invited™

With Every Samsung Projection TV Take Home One Samsung DVD Player Model: M-108

With Every Samsung 21" 25" Plano & 29" TV Take Home One Samsung Vacuum Cleaner Model: VC-6013

With Every Samsung Hitron & 15" Plano TV Take Home One Samsung Watch

MATRIX RELOADED

Jai Nepal Cinema June 14, 2003

HIM ELECTRONICS PRIVATE LIMITED

Fulbright Nepalis

For more than 50 years, Nepali students have benefited from the world's most successful educational exchange.

Thursday was Fulbright Day, and some of the 300 or so Nepalis who have studied in the United States under the Fulbright Program gathered in Kathmandu for an annual get-together.

There certainly isn't anything unique about Nepali students leaving home for a Western education anymore. More than 1,500 Nepalis went to the United States last year alone, a quarter of them to pursue post-graduate degrees. While some

Nepali parents can afford to foot the bill, most students still rely on grants and scholarships. Among the latter, the Fulbright Scholarship is perhaps the most contested and coveted.

This year, there were more than 300 aspirants for the Nepal-wide selection of five candidates for the 2004 Fulbrighters. The prestige attached to being a Fulbright scholar is partially due to a rigorous selection process—only the cream of the crop gets through.

In 51 countries, including Nepal, there are binational commissions to administer the program. "It began with a simple idea, but has grown to allow an untold amount of shared knowledge, cross fertilisation and global networking," says Michael Gill, head of the Fulbright Commission, Nepal. In June 1961, the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal (USEF-Nepal) was formally established, but Nepali

students and scholars had gone to the United States as Fulbright scholars even before that.

In 1952, Ram Chandra Malhotra and Yog Prasad Upadhyaya became the first Nepali Fulbrighters when they were selected to study public administration. Since then, some 260 students, 47 post-doctorate scholars and 46 travel grantees have been to the US under Fulbright auspices to study, teach and to conduct research. In a reverse flow, 122 American students and 133 senior scholars have come to Nepal.

Many Nepali Fulbrighters joined the civil service and rose up the ranks but very few got into politics. Former minister and RPP leader, Prakash Chandra Lohani, a 1962 Fulbrighter, who is the new finance minister in the Surya Bahadur Thapa cabinet is one of the few. "It helped me broaden my perspective—the experience helped me become a better person and a better professional," Lohani told us.

Fulbrighters are required to return to Nepal and work in their field for at least two years. But Dilli Devi Shakya, the president of Fulbright Alumni Association of Nepal (FAAN) is concerned with the rising numbers who stay on in the US, especially those who are studying technical subjects.

Shakya is a supervisor to research students at Tribhuvan University's Department of Botany. She is also the first woman to head the government funded Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST).

"The Fulbright experience teaches you how best to exploit what is at your disposal," the 1990 Fulbrighter adds.

Nepali scholars are diversifying in their academic fields of interest under the Fulbright program. The younger generation has opted for creative writing, fine arts and media studies—a departure from the traditionally popular areas like economics, administration and the sciences. These

changes have also been reflected within the American education system and their teaching values.

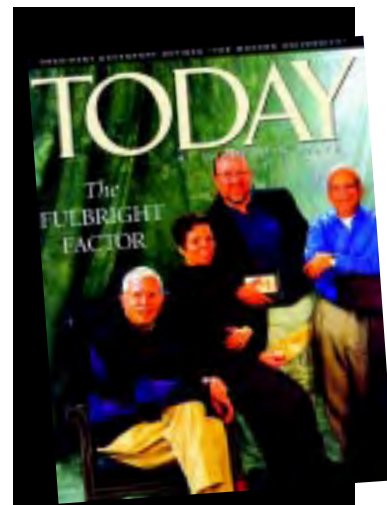
Former head of the National Planning Commission, Mohan Man Sainju, remembers how difficult his first two semesters were as a Fulbright scholar at the University of North Carolina in 1969. "I struggled against the rigidity of science. I wanted to study development not as an isolated economic issue but also in light of its social, political and anthropological connections," Sainju recalls. At least in his case, the hard work seems to have paid off.

USEF-Nepal says the quality of applicants has dipped and crested with political and socio-economic changes in the last 50 years. The quality of early scholars were good because most of them had Master's degrees from universities in India that followed the British-style education system. In the 1970s education suffered a serious setback, but the tide turned for Nepali applicants, especially in the 1990s.

Until then most scholars held government jobs, but today people working in the private sector, international organisations and independent scholars are coming to the fore. "We would like our selection to be more representative of the diversity in the Nepali population," says Gill, who himself was a Peace Corps volunteer here in the 1970s and speaks fluent Nepali. "We are doing better than before, but we still don't get as many dalit and janjati scholars as we would like."

The Fulbright Program was conceived by late US senator J William Fulbright to promote mutual understanding through education between the US and other countries.

The US Congress formally established the program in 1946. An international policy-level governing body, appointed by the US President and consisting of 12 members drawn from academic, cultural and public



From top: Minnesota State University magazine *Today* features former Nepali ambassador to the United States, Damodar Gautam (*extreme right*) on its cover. Illustrious Nepali Fulbrighters Lain Singh Bangdel (*left*) and Dilli Devi Shakya (*right*). Below: US Education Foundation Director in Kathmandu, Michael Gill (*at left below*) with former head of the NPC, Mohan Man Sainju, also a Fulbright scholar.



life, was set up.

The Fulbright Program is the largest exchange of students and scholars in history. Nearly 25,000 individuals have lived, studied, taught and learned in the US and 140 other countries. Along with Peace Corps, the Fulbright Program is hailed as the most successful US government undertaking for knowledge sharing. At present it has mutual exchanges with more than 120 countries. ♦



EPSON
THE POWER TO CREATE

PROJECTORS
EMP-52
Multimedia Projector

is your
PROJECTOR
reproducing the
TRU COLOR?

It's time to use an EPSON sRGB Complaint Projector!

EMP 53 SVGA 1700 ANSI Lumens | EMP 73 XGA 1500 ANSI Lumens | EMP 811 XGA 2000 ANSI Lumens

- Equipped with world's first horizontal keystone correction
- Comply with Microsoft-developed sRGB colour matching specification
- Exclusive EPSON ColourReality colour processing technology
- Whisper-quiet operation • Light weight at 2.9 kg

EMP 53 SVGA 1700 ANSI Lumens
EMP 73 XGA 1500 ANSI Lumens
EMP 730 XGA 2000 ANSI Lumens
EMP 735 XGA 2000 ANSI Lumens
EMP 811 XGA 2000 ANSI Lumens
EMP 8300 XGA 5200 ANSI Lumens

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

Flats for Rent

COMpletely FURNISHED

- * 24 hour Hot Water.
- * 24 hour Security Guard.
- * TV, Music system, Washing Machine and other Equipment offered.
- * Telephone Service.
- * Parcel/ Post box Service.
- * Laundry Service.
- * personal Doctor on call
- * Modern Bathroom with Tub & Shower
- * Roof Top garden.
- * Bed Room size 10' x 12' fee (Two Bed Room)
- * Kitchen Dining & living Room size 22' x 30' feet
- * Parking Space

Himalaya Dream House

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the flats.

Located at - Lazimpat, Kharsanitar
No. of Flats - 4 (Four)
No. of room in a flat - 4 (Four)
Bed Room - 2 (Two)
Kitchen - 1 (One)
Dinning Hall - 1(one) Attached with Kitchen

Contact: Mr. Adhikari Tel: 4420 853, 4410 239, Mobile 9810 39290

REVIEW



Being seen

This is who I am. This is who we are. This is how I want to be seen.



WAYNE AMZITS

Eighteen remarkable portraits taken in Nepal in 2003 by William Mebane, an American photographer and visiting Fulbright Scholar, are on display at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. The individuals in these large sized colour photos look directly at the photographer and the viewer. The people seen here speak for themselves through facial expressions, bodily gestures and the clothes they wear.

Mebane, who characterises himself as a "street photographer" went out on the streets of Kathmandu, Pokhara and other Nepali towns to meet and engage his potential subjects. He was not

looking for the "decisive moment" that captures a person or an action as it is happening. Instead, he is drawn to the person, his or her persona or presence, hopefully revealed through the photographer's lens in an unguarded and willing fashion.

On the rare occasions when Mebane fails, the photo bears the indelible feel of a studio portrait. When he succeeds, as he most often does, the individuals, with expressions and gestures and with the clothes they wear, step out of the photograph with an intensity that says this is who I am, this is who we are, this is how I want to be seen. Or sometimes, more naturally, this is the person you would see if you happened to come by just now without a camera in hand wanting to take my photo.

In a powerful and uncompromising way, the young girls in "Three Hip Hop Girls, Dragon World, Kathmandu" and the young men in "Three Young Men, Lakeside, Pokhara" present both the trappings of pop culture and the reality of being young. These teenagers define themselves by their dress and bearing. The boys are at ease with their pose

while the young girls are more defiant and more guarded. In "Learning to Drive a Motorcycle, Pokhara" (top, left) a young woman and man on the bike seem comfortable with each other, yet apart and sure of themselves. They are not defiantly being young, but they are out on their own, and their dress and bearing speak of their lifestyle and free spirit.

In "Sadhu Putting Water Into His Jeep, Mugling" (top) the irresistible sadhu appears to be more man of the world than ascetic, his jeep more necessary for his trade than a trident or begging bowl.

The man in "Man Breaking Rocks For Gravel, Hemza, Pokhara" sits with his tool in hand midst the rocks he is breaking down into gravel. He appears to be as self-contained as a statue. His body is still, but his eyes and his face seem ready to break open like the rocks he shatters. Is the T-shirt beneath his vest a token of modernity, and is his labour, his exploitation, a necessary underpinning for the modern world?

Mebane in these few portraits presents a Nepal that he characterises as "caught up in the push and pull of tradition and

modern life". He senses individuals claiming identities uniquely their own beneath the trappings and signs of pop culture. Were he to widen his gaze and recognise the situation and the difficult dignity of those like the "Man Breaking Rocks For Gravel", his skills and aesthetic sensibility would unearth not just a changing world, but an unchanging one. A world where individuality is not proclaimed by clothes worn or lifestyle adopted, but by the situation one bears. ♦

(Wayne Amzits is a poet, photographer and long-time resident of Nepal.)

Portraits of Modern Life in Nepal by William Mebane, 13 June-4 July at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited.

SKY LIGHT (P) Ltd.
A foreign-owned Nepali company, in technical collaboration with TECHNAL of France

Approved **TECHNAL** Fabricator
A complete range of high quality European Standard aluminium window and door frames, enclosures, shower cabins, skylights.

Save Nepal's trees! Use Sky Light's perfect alternative to wood!

- Technically versatile products
- Accessory quality
- Colour quality
- Customized service
- Fast response from design to manufacture

Satisfied Customer: Nepal Bayren Electric

Naxal Opp. Police HQ Tel: 423851 Fax: 420789 Email: skylight@mail.com.np

Myriad of paths

Walking is a metaphor for life says photographer Ashok R Shakya of his latest exhibition at Park Gallery. "As in life, while walking, one finds ups and downs, going away and coming home," he believes. A French language teacher and a freelance photographer whose images have won international awards, Shakya's works have been published in magazines, calendars, brochures and postcards. *Garuda* magazine said, "his [Shakya's] photographs tend to make a balance between suffering and grace...His works often inspire a discreet spirituality."

Walking by Ashok R Shakya from 16-22 June at Park Gallery, Lazimpat. It moves to the Summit Hotel, Kupondole, from 24-30 June.

Close up

SINNERS IN HEAVEN
SUMMER BLAST

Friday the 13th

DJ Rummy & International Artist
Psychedelic Lights
Bottomless Bar
Sumptuous Cuisine
More sizzling than ever

13th June
8:00 pm onwards

Ticket: Rs. 1,299/- nett per person
Inclusive of Dinner & all Beverages

YAK & YETI
KATHMANDU
A Yak & Yeti Event

VAT GILBEY'S 69 **Carlsberg** **PEPSI** **NEPAL DELUXE AUDIO VISUAL**

For more information and other promotions visit our website: www.yakandyeti.com
Or call Guest relations 4248999 Extn: 2865

Buy any **McQuay A.C** ...and take away any one of these **SAMSUNG** Products

12 MONTHS Guarantee

Authorized Distributor: **AIRTECH Industries Pvt. Ltd.**
Thapathali, Kathmandu, Tel: 421 9999, 424 3897
Fax: 422 8822, E-mail: airtech@mos.com.np

Nepal Dealers:
Pokhara - 9860-20425, Biratnagar- 535055, Nepalgunj-524200
Dharan- 526704, Narayanghat-525873, Birgunj- 9850-22021, Hetauda-525284

Absolutely FREE
Scheme valid for limited period
*Conditions Apply

McQuay
Air Conditioning
13668 Industrial Park Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55440, U.S.A.

TV CS-14H2
Refrigerator BR118 (118L 4.1cu. ft.)
Microwave Oven CE2377N
Washing Machine WT6502

SAMSUNG DIGITall
everyone's invited..



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Driving me mad

Those of you who think there is nothing more chaotic than Kathmandu traffic are wrong. It is no more chaotic than our politics. But you have a point. We went straight from being bipeds to driving mopeds, and entirely skipped the steeplechase event. So, unlike veteran democracies like the UK which took 500 years to learn to drive on the wrong side of the road, we can't expect ourselves to get there in just 12 years. Before you go for your driving test, therefore, it is a good idea to practice this sample multiple-choice test so that you can get your license without beating around the bush too much.

1. All motorcycle riders and passengers are required to wear helmets:

- a. Unless your helmet has just been stolen at Bishal Bazar.
- b. Except your three little children aged 2, 4, and 5 sitting on the fuel tank who are only required to wear fancy shades and frilly hats.
- c. At all times,
- d. Including when you are asleep, or in the bathroom.

2. The best procedure for taking a vehicle from a parked stationery position into the traffic flow is to:

- a. Swing out into the lane without looking behind to see if any other vehicle is approaching, especially if you are a bus.
- b. If there are school kids waiting to cross the zebra, accelerate so you can beat them to it.
- c. Look into the rearview mirror and wait for a safe gap in traffic to move into lane, even if it means waiting till the next bandh.
- d. Only for Safa Tempos: "Stop, don't look, and go, go go!"

3. The fastest way for a motorcyclist to go from Point A to Point B is to:

- a. Overtake slowpokes by cutting into the opposite lane,

avoiding multiple head-on collisions by the skin of your teeth.

b. Driving on the wrong side of the road is allowed in Nepal and the answer 'a' (above) is legal under the Geneva Convention.

c. If oncoming lane is occupied by traffic, overtake slowpoke cars from the left by cleverly employing the blind spot where they least expect you to be.

d. Stay behind vehicle in front of you and adjust speed depending on traffic conditions.

4. You are driving down Putali Sadak, your mobile vibrates. Do you:

- a. Let it vibrate and enjoy the massage.
- b. Pick up the phone, shout obscenities at the caller and gesticulate recklessly. This is called Road Rage, and it's understandable.
- c. Pick up the phone, chat with the caller and when cop pulls you over slip phone down your shirt and pretend to be excavating ear wax.
- d. Pick up the phone, chat with the caller and have a Rs 100 note ready on the dash board.

5. Seatbelts have been made mandatory for your safety and comfort. Care to comment?

- a. The belt is a good restraint while I am stuck in a julus for two hours at Ratna Park, otherwise I may get out of the car, run amok and start shouting anarchist slogans.
- b. I think we should make seat belts mandatory on rickshaws as well.
- c. All stray cattle on the street must wear helmets and harness from the next fiscal year.
- d. No comment.

If you answered 1 (c) 2 (c) 3 (d) 4 (a) 5 (d) you are not eligible for a driving license at this time, and we suggest you come better prepared next fiscal year.

NEPALI SOCIETY

The gift of mobility

In a country where there are so many injured people in need of rehabilitation, there is a shortage wheelchairs and aids for the handicapped. Finally, a Nepali engineer has started designing and building cheap wheelchairs to meet this demand.

Shankar Man Shrestha crafts custom-designed physiotherapy machines, low-trolley wheelchairs for mothers who

need to do housework and take care of babies, and other apparatus. Recently, he was even asked to design a wheelchair for Tara, a street dog paralysed when she was hit by a car. It took three months for Shankar to put together what is probably Nepal's first canine wheelchair (right).

This 37-year-old teacher at Balaju Technical School has built more than 200 wheelchairs, and his innovativeness is stunning. "I listen very carefully when the patients talk about their requirements," Shankar explains, "then I discuss it with their doctors and therapists. I spend a lot of time designing the right device."

Then comes the



building part, which is not easy because of the shortage of strong, but lightweight material. Often, Shankar has had to go back to the drawing board to find a design solution for unavailable parts. The greatest advantage for physically-challenged Nepalis is the surprising affordability of Shankar's creations. An imported wheelchair costs anywhere up to Rs 70,000, but his cost ten times less. And that comes with free maintenance. "Life in Nepal is difficult enough already for the disabled, my job is to make it somewhat easier by giving them mobility," he says.

The reason they are cheap is because it is a labour of love for Shankar, he does not aim to make money out of it. And Shankar's reward is to see the happiness on the faces of his newly-mobile patients, including Tara as she wheels around happily. ♦

MIN BAIRACHARYA

K. L. DUGAR GROUP

कार्यालयको काम अनि घरघन्दा साथमा हरेक बिहान नियमित व्यायाम पनि

सबै सुखी, सबै खुशी
आखिर यो सब सम्भव हुन्छ, कसरी ?

स्वस्थ मुटु
आजको आवश्यकता
यसलाई साथ दिन्छ

धारा
पूर्णतया शुद्ध तोरीको तेल

CRAYONSKLD42202