

www.nepaltimes.com

NEPALI Times

#169 7 - 13 November 2003 16 pages Rs 25

TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE:
Covers
Personal Accident
Medical, Emergency Expenses
Hospital Benefits
Loss of checked baggage
Delay of checked baggage
Loss of passport
Personal liability

NOW OUR TRAVEL MEDICAL INSURANCE IS MORE WORTHWHILE FOR OUR CORPORATE CLIENTS

- It is more economical
- It is time saving
- It is unique
- It is backed by best securities and world class assistance service

Travelling abroad

Business or pleasure, now you can travel with a free mind...

Goa, India

EVEREST INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.
GPO: 10675, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 4425758, 4444717, 4444718

“My city.”



MIN BAURACHARYA

NARESH NEWAR

On top of Dharara, Kathmandu's Mayor Keshab Sthapit suddenly gets dizzy looking down at his city.

"I can't stand heights," he says, but overcomes vertigo to show us from this vantage point some of his plans to make Nepal's capital more liveable. His hands slice through the crisp morning air to point out the Bishnumati corridor, the Dhobikhola diversion, plans to gentrify Asan, to relocate the bus-stop and turn Bagh Bazar into a high-rise commercial centre.

When the going gets tough, Mayor Sthapit gets going.

Keshab Sthapit is a man in a hurry and wants to be known as a mayor who gets things done. In a country where most politicians are talkers, Sthapit delivers. And he will literally bulldoze through the city to beautify intersections, broaden boulevards or create parks. And you better not be in his way. No wonder, during his first tenure as mayor, Sthapit earned himself the

nickname 'Demolition Man'.

As soon as he was nominated mayor by the Thapa government last month, Sthapit was back to where he had left off, pulling down the petrol pump at Bhotahity to make way for a park. "This is my city. Let's see who'll stop me," he says with characteristic bravado. And, except for those whose houses were directly in his bulldozers' path, most Kathmanduites are happy to at last see a public official who actually makes things happen.

To be sure, most of Sthapit's plans are grandiose, like his project to raze Bagh Bazar and build highrise office blocks, buy Asan's *bahals* to renovate them and turn the area into an IT centre, make a 50km garden along the Ring Road or build a megamall on Tinkune. Critics call him a megalomaniac.

"I don't just demolish things," says the mayor, "besides, you have to sometimes destroy to rebuild." It is clear this is a mellower mayor than last time. The macho talk is still there, but Sthapit seems to be undergoing a spiritual makeover: he is meditating, learning the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence and even taking lessons to do the fearsome Kal Bhairab dance.

continued ➡ p15

Heating up again

Tired of waiting for the palace to respond to their demands, political parties are once more on the warpath. They are organising demonstrations symbolically on Constitution Day on Sunday, 9 November. They say they want to remind extremists of the left and right that "there is still a constitution in this country". The five parties (Nepali Congress, UML, People's Front Nepal, Nepal Workers and Peasants' Party and Nepal Sadhbahana Party) which oppose the king's takeover last October say they have already agreed on the next phase of their agitation which will include the government's appointment of officials for local bodies. "There has already been an agreement on the protest programs," says the UML's Rajendra Pandey. "Soon we will work out days and timing."

The parties had eased the last phase of their campaign, which they had said would be "decisive", after pressure from Kathmandu-based envoys and assurances that the king may accede to their demands which include reinstatement of parliament. But the rift between the parties and the palace seems to be as wide as ever, at a time when the Maoist insurgency is intensifying.

Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 109

Q. Do you agree with the Rastra Bank blacklisting big loan defaulters?

Total votes: 1,134

Weekly Internet Poll # 110. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about Nepal's future?

Park Village
at Budhanil-kantha

Aesthetic Living in Pure Nature

Special Holiday Package

- 48 Suites
- 7 Conference hall
- Amphitheater
- 6 acres garden
- Swimming pool, Health Club
- Mini Cinema hall & Recreation center

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

ENJOY
Every Friday

The Sumptuous Barbecue Dinner
at our illuminated Courtyard and Garden

For Vegetarians
Special Sish Kebabs and many more.

For Reservation: 552 1810

Summit Hotel
So make your best bet!

GS
GRAPHIC STATION

WISH QUALITY T-SHIRT PRINTER

STATION

Kopandol, Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel: 55 47 400/500 Fax: 480
E-mail: printing@graphicstation.net
Web: www.graphicstation.net

Deutsche Post World Net
MAIL EXPRESS LOGISTICS FINANCE

More reliability.

DHL cares. DHL Worldwide Express, global leader in air express, Danzas, global leader in air and ocean freight, and Deutsche Post Euro Express, European leader in parcel delivery have joined together under the name DHL to create a new global standard in express delivery, freight and logistics. The new DHL offers you more performance, more service and more options in more than 220 countries. So if you want a company that can take real care of your business, call DHL on 478 32 48 or visit us at www.dhl.com.

WE MOVE THE WORLD **DHL**

**by CK LAL**

It's time to rethink strategy in the seething tarai.

Authoritarian and totalitarian experiments in governance cause political tremors. It is to control this seething emotion that the Maobadi leadership and the government should both rethink their strategies in the tarai. This landscape is too fragile to bear their excesses anymore. ♦

Himal Bikram KC, email

***Nepali Times:* The UN has offered help to solve the crisis in Nepal, but the government says it doesn't need outside mediation. What can be done?**

Is there a concrete role for the UN?

We have a Catch-22, then. For peace we need development, and for development we need peace.

The Maoists want the UN to amplify their view that there should be no foreign intervention in Nepal.

You just returned from a visit to western Nepal. How have UN programs been affected? What struck me was that the continuity of each UN activity depended on the Maoists. Clearly, all of them, at some point, have run into questions by people identified as Maoists. Permission to continue was given when they understood that the programs are particularly aimed at the poor and most

disadvantaged. We have not felt that our programs had to stop, but much effort has gone into explaining them.

What about the human rights situation?

There is a huge range of issues that I came face to face with over the last two or three days: issues like girls' access to schooling, which is a fundamental

Does the UN have a third party role between Nepal and Bhutan on refugee repatriation?

What I understand is that we have an agreement between Nepal and Bhutan on a bilateral basis to move forward with the return to Bhutan of most refugees in the camps where the verification was first carried out. Normally, when refugees are repatriated, there is some mechanism to help them on their return to verify conditions are met. The international community believes a third party could be helpful, but it depends on Nepal and Bhutan. Nepal has clearly said it would welcome the idea.

But Bhutan is opposed to it.
Indeed.

The UN is often criticised for being top-heavy, and generating enough paperwork to build a ladder to the moon...

And back (laughs). What obviously counts is the difference that one can make to the lives of individuals who are disadvantaged, deprived and are less well off. Reports that analyse situations are important, otherwise we go into things blind, deaf and make stupid mistakes. In many areas, you need to have a decent technical study of things. But, very often, I tend to think what is needed is to take what we know and get on with it rather than studying it again. You won't find me promoting new reports extensively. I believe reports need to be very simple, short and succinct. It is not the volume that counts, the quality of facts and analyses matters.



Clinic Plus

with Protein Serum



Now give your family healthy & beautiful hair
with Clinic Plus Protein Serum Shampoo



Too good to be true?

Refugees doubt the new repatriation agreement between Nepal and Bhutan will ease their way home.

JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI in JHAPA

Shanti Ram Acharya has 12 dependants, all living at Khudunabari camp. Though all of them have been 'lucky' to make it to Category I (bonafide Bhutani), he is having second thoughts about applying for voluntary repatriation that begins on 15 February 2004.

"We wish we could go back, but there are a lot of uncertainties. Yes, we have been assured that we will be given citizenship immediately after repatriation, but what about land, houses and property that we lost?" he asks.

Acharya's dilemma is not uncommon. In the refugee camps of east Nepal, it is apparent that most Bhutanis are sceptical about the "major breakthrough" of the 15th round of ministerial talks in Thimpu last month. The leader of the Nepali delegation, Bhik Bahadur Thapa, said he had returned "a happy man", but his joy is not shared by most Bhutanis here who have waited over a decade to go home.

Walking through narrow alleys between clusters of closely built

thatch huts, there is a conspicuous lack of jubilation surrounding the news that the refugees are closer to repatriation. Such is the distrust of Thimpu's real motives, that almost everyone in the three 'home-going' categories (I, II and IV) are surprisingly non-committal about going back.

"The Thimpu agreement isn't anything new," says Dr Til Bahadur Gurung, camp secretary at Khudunabari. "A timeframe has been set for the completion of repatriation, that's the only new element that I can see." Gurung's ancestral home is



TB Gurung
Camp Sec. Khudunabari

Chirang's Lali Kharka in Bhutan, but he has been placed in category II. This means that should he choose to go back, he will have to spend a minimum of two years in probation and must conform to lengthy processes to regain his citizenship of Bhutan. Among them, he will need to speak Dzongkha, the national language, and provide proof that he never maligned the king, country and the people. He is among 8,595 people from

Khudunabari who fall under the second category. Even after the probation period, there is no written commitment or guarantee that homes and properties confiscated by the regime will be returned.

"The government of Bhutan is only interested in closing down the camps from eastern Nepal because it has become an international embarrassment to them," says Garima Adhikari, the convenor of Refugee Women Forum, and a category II refugee herself. She says the Planned Voluntary Repatriation has confused refugees more than ever. On one hand, they don't want to miss an opportunity that has taken 13 years in the coming, but on the other, they fear renewed persecution inside Bhutan.

"We haven't forgotten the atrocities that drove us here," says Daljeet Rai, a category I refugee who was forcefully evicted on purely religious grounds. "We cannot return blindly when we continue to hear that Christians are still persecuted. I was forced out because I was a Christian, and I will not renounce my faith," Daljeet says, showing us his old

expulsion order.

The contradictory result of the Joint Verification Team (JVT) doesn't seem credible to the refugee interviewees at Khudunabari. Families have been divided into different categories, which if implemented in its present form, would lead to family members separated from each other. Ram Prasad Dahal, his wife Goma and son Ravin were put in the non-Bhutani category. But his other son Govinda and daughter Pramila have been placed in the category of those who 'voluntarily emigrated'. Kumar Khadka, who served in the Thimpu police for seven years, has been categorised as a 'terrorist/criminal' by the JVT. Taking a guilt by association policy, his children, Bibek, 9, and Bishaka, 11, have been tarred by the same brush. His wife, however, was put in category II. "I haven't done anything wrong, I will go back if others will," says a defiant Khadka.

SB Subba, chairman of Bhutani Refugee Representatives Repatriation Committee



SB Subba
Chairman BRRRC

(BRRRC) still holds on to hope. "Perhaps, there aren't too many choices available to us, but I hope it will succeed," he says. "The treatment meted out to this first batch of refugees will be a test for Bhutan, and will determine our future course."

Subba and other refugee leaders agree that the road home may become smoother if direct dialogue is opened between the Bhutani government and refugee representatives themselves, instead of with Nepali government officials in the JVT. "We don't mean the king must negotiate with us, he can send his representatives and things can be sorted out between the monarch and his subjects," says Hari Khanal, a Bhutani journalist and former editor of *Sandesh*.

Refugees are putting forward three conditions for planned repatriation: citizenship, international monitoring, preferably by the UNHCR, and compensation should the Bhutani government be unable to return

confiscated property. Many doubt voluntary repatriation in its present form will be successful. Even UNHCR officials say they won't actively encourage refugees to sign up for repatriation until they have solid proof that conditions inside Bhutan are secure.

"And that can only be ascertained if we're allowed to monitor the process," a UNHCR official here told us. UNHCR also says the Nepali media has exaggerated reports attributed to UNHCR chief Rudd Lubbers at its executive committee meeting in Geneva last month that the camps would be phased out. But some activities like child care centres and distribution of food items with little calorific value were being scaled back.

A senior US diplomat who visited the camps this week also downplayed the Nepal Bhutan bilateral agreement on repatriation. The Thimpu deal, he said, was "laden with hollow assurances" and had hedged on issues like providing residence permits, access to health care, education and welfare facilities to future returnees. ♦

HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK

Aid dependency syndrome



Aid dependency in Nepal poses many problems. One that's rarely considered, yet has a huge impact, arises from the pursuit of top local talent by the various international agencies here. Now it's natural for these well resourced, ostensibly well-meaning organisations to want the best and the brightest of local graduates and those lucky enough to be schooled abroad.

But in Kathmandu, the aidocracy seems to have no regard for the consequences of hiring policies. Adding insult to injury, just to top it off, most international organisations practise a form of financial apartheid by maintaining vast salary differentials between foreign and locally hired staff.

The first thing to note is that ambitious Nepali graduates have few options if they don't want to earn the pittances paid by most indigenous companies. Many of those firms earn lavish profits in Nepal so their low pay rates are indefensible. Those who pay labour market distorting salaries in the aid and development sector can claim—with some justification—good intentions. But only up to a point or two.

First there's the brain drain of local talent, business liberal arts and science graduates who might be inclined to do something for the good of their country or society that isn't funded and directed by foreign money. Those people who should be social activists, environmentalists, reformers are instead pushing paper and learning jargon in an international organisation. Memorising acronyms and acting as 'gatekeepers' for careerist officials from abroad eager to keep moving the ladder braced firmly in the green grass of home.

Then there's the effect of the aid sector's need for media coverage and dissemination on film making, writing and local arts like drama or music—all pressed into the service of selling a message dreamt up in London or Rome. My friends who follow folk music tell me that much of that genre is wrecked by the heavy handed insertion of environmental or gender-sensitive



messages into the traditional arrangements of the countryside. People who should be producing hard-hitting documentaries on corruption among the real elite of this country are instead working alongside them, making soft focus films praising the work of international organisations in this slough of indigenous despond that is Nepal. That's the message I get from almost every single film made for aid. "Things were terrible until our program with the long, stupid acronym came along and liberated the..."

Political talent best suited for activism, union organising or pushing for social change among Nepalis who need it, gets squandered in pseudo-reforming activities like studying how the existing policies of market fundamentalist international financial institutions can survive beyond the latest trend in aid think. Huge agencies like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, that push socially damaging neo-liberal economic nonsense, hire Nepalis and use top local people to make sure that they can

Time for the Valley's acronymic aid agencies to do a long, comprehensive study of their impact on Nepal.

keep doing the same thing while somehow seeming kinder and gentler.

This is a net loss to the country, not just because it prevents real change in the approach of the IFIs. Nepal's political parties, for example, go wanting for fresh talent that isn't sycophantic or mediocre. The old guard goes unchallenged.

The hypocrisy of it all is stunning, especially when you consider the issue of salary differentials. The 'best and brightest' that do get hired as staff or consultants, more often than not, earn far less than their foreign appointed colleagues. Nor do local hires get living expenses, school fees, rent or transport reimbursed, not to mention tax relief. Taking those perks into account, highly paid foreign hires in front line aid agencies earn twice, thrice or more than their Nepali colleagues.

There are a few praiseworthy exceptions, like ICIMOD, that espouse salarial equality, but these are few and far between among the acronymic aid agencies of this Valley.

I'm proud to say this newspaper pays me the same as anyone else who works here, just in case someone was thinking of writing to the editor about that. And I'd really believe in the development mission of the international crowd here if they'd seriously address some of the issues raised above by doing a long, comprehensive study of their impact on Nepal. A study done by Nepalis paid as much as anyone else. And then—radical thinking, I know—released to the public so we can all learn the truth. ♦

“This is not a school, it is a cemetery.”



An empty classroom at Sharada High School in Mudbhara where the shootout took place on 14 October (above). One of the schoolgirls who was wounded in the Mudbhara attack, still recuperating in hospital (left).

NIRMALA SHARMA in MUDBHARA, DOTI
It has been more than three weeks after four students were killed during a firefight between Maoist and security forces at Sharada High School in this far-western district. The Maoists had forced the children to watch their cultural program when an army unit attacked them. The six Maoists whose bodies were rotting in the school for a week were finally buried by the army in the school premises. The army says it had to make the move into the school because they had intelligence that Maoist area commander Agni Shrama was attending the cultural program. The Royal Nepali Army's Doti-based chief, Gaurab Rana, said that if the army had not been careful on 14 October, a bigger mishap would have occurred. Bhubaneswar Sharma, a grade four student, did not know who had come to his school that day and wasn't worried. A while later, he learned that security forces had arrived in the nearby village, but the rebels convinced those present that it was their comrades. The Maoists had already begun their

'people's resistance program' after ending all classes. The rebel's area commander Agni Sharma, who was the chief guest, left immediately after the program, probably after being tipped off about the army's presence. Suddenly, soldiers in civvies opened fire inside the school compound. There was pandemonium with students trying to flee or hide below their desks. Four students and six Maoists were killed. The army says rebels tried to pass themselves off as students by using their uniforms. "Neither side showed it cared about the students' lives," says Dambar Kumari Bika, whose younger sister died in the shooting. "Both used the school for their own purposes." Ninth grader Dharma Kumari Bhurtyal hid in the school canteen after she was injured and stayed there till the firing stopped. Bishnu Prasad Sharma, a student of grade seven, was shot twice in the back and remains in critical condition. Only 80 of the 400 students were present that day because school had just reopened after Dasai. After his school turned into a battlefield, a teacher says he was not willing to go back to the classroom. "My students killed in front of me, how can I go back?" he asks. The students are traumatised knowing that the Maoists are buried in the school yard. "This is no longer a school, it is a cemetery," says Bishnu Datta Joshi, chairman of the school management committee. Nine schools in Mudbhara VDC are still closed, affecting some 2,500 students. Teachers, parents and management committees of the school live in fear and utter confusion. Some teachers have tried to reopen the schools, but students stay away. Kathmandu-based foreign missions and Unicef have condemned the incident, saying it indicated the seriousness of the escalating conflict. (After this report was dispatched, reports from Mudbhara say the Maoists came back to the village this week to rebury their dead comrades outside the school premises.)◆

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

First things first

In his first press conference after he became prime minister five months ago, Surya Bahadur Thapa on Tuesday concentrated on how his government would disarm the Maoist rebels before holding general and local elections. The government would implement a new security plan to contain terrorism with a 'civil military campaign' and 'unified command' between the Royal Nepali Army, Armed Police Force and the police. Although Thapa didn't give details, a civil military campaign is expected to mean arming villagers to resist Maoists. There was no timeframe for elections announced, leading suspicious political parties of the dissolved parliament to smell a rat: they said Thapa was using the ruse of elections to prolong his tenure. But Thapa said he was setting up a task force to make necessary preparations for elections. The plot thickened on the controversy over appointments to constitutional bodies with Thapa clarifying that the delay in the announcement was his doing. His government has been widely criticised for not making the appointments which have remained vacant for a long time, and parties have taken this as proof that the buck doesn't stop with the prime minister.

Where is Shrestha?

The Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (CIJL) of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has condemned the arrest and disappearance of lawyer, Shyam Kumar Shrestha, calling for his immediate release. Shrestha, a member of the Nepal Bar Association, was arrested by security forces at 9PM on 23 October at his Bagh Bazar residence. Security forces put Shrestha in a taxi, stating they were taking him to Maharajgunj for questioning. Inquiries by the Nepal Bar Association at the Home Ministry and human rights investigation bodies within the army and the police has not yielded information on his whereabouts. ICJ/CIJL has denounced the killings and an increase in disappearances by the security forces, and abductions by the Maoists since the end of the ceasefire in August.

Loss of a legend

Musician Nati Kaji, 78, died in Kathmandu 2 November, six years after being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. He had lost the use of his legs and struggled with asthma. Nati Kaji's health deteriorated despite his family taking him to to Delhi for treatment during Tihar. Fans and fellow musicians mourned his passing at a special ceremony at the Royal Nepal Academy. Born Amrit Lal Shrestha in Phulchowk in 1925, he was given the pet name Nati Kaji by his grandparents. Nati Kaji mixed classical and folk music with a reliance on melody and rhythm that gave musical voice to the Nepali soul. Over 50 years, he composed music for the likes of Shiva Shankar, Bacchu Kailash, Narayan Gopal, Bhakta Raj Acharya, Tara Devi and Udit Narayan Jha.

Paying POWs

More than 50 years after they were taken prisoner by the Japanese, the British government has announced an ex gratia payment of £10,000 for Gurkha soldiers in the British army. The decision came a year after the UK High Court ruled that the ex-POWs should be compensated. British Ambassador to Nepal Keith Bloomfield said, "I am delighted with this decision, which I know will be welcomed by many of our ex-servicemen here in Nepal. It is another illustration of the high regard in which both the government and people of the UK hold the Gurkha soldier." To qualify for this payment the veterans must

have been Nepali citizens when the peace treaty between the UK and Japan was signed in 1951. Applications can be made through the site: www.fepow.mod.uk. Padam Gurung, chairman of Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen Organisation (GAESO) said the decision was important for the cause of justice to the British Gurkhas. "Now the Gurkhas who were sent home barefeet and are now very old will get some relief."

Award



This year's Babu Chiri Photojournalism Award went to Kantipur's Chandra Shekhar Karki, for a decade of contribution to the print media. The award was named after Babu Chiri, a mountaineer who died while trying to take a photograph on his descent from the Everest summit.

Test case

A project to drain snow melt from the Tso Rolpa lake in Rolwaling Valley to prevent an outburst flood is also generating electricity, making it the highest hydroelectric plant in the world. The 15kW plant is running on the overflow of the 4,580m Tsho Rolpa glacial lake and generates enough power for a three member monitoring team posted at the station year round, but can serve as a test case for future plants at high altitudes.

Dutch pullout

Parliamentarians of Netherlands will decide on 17 November whether to keep or remove Nepal from its list of support programs. The Dutch government has already proposed that the parliament pull funding out from Nepal, says an announcement on the web page (www.keepnepalonthelist.com), produced by Netherlands Alumini Association of Nepal. The news has stirred panic among NGOs dependent on the Dutch. "We are not concerned for ourself but for the grassroots communities who have been promised support," says an employee from Centre for Rural Technology (CRT), which has been helping low income families in rural districts to improve water mills. "This decision will reflect the sincerity of the Netherlands government towards Nepal," says another CRT employee.

NEW PRODUCTS

NATURAL SOLUTIONS - The Vatika range of products based on Himalayan herbs and natural ingredients have already earned rave reviews in the kingdom. The Dabur Nepal venture recently launched new hair and skin products: Body and Bounce Shampoo, Gentle Cleansing Shampoo, Nourishing Cream Shampoo and Nourishing Hair Conditioner. The Vatika Fairness Face Pack promises to leave the user visibly fairer in just three minutes and the coconut oil-based Vatika Haircomes Oil comes in a new, easy-to-use metal container for easy thawing and pouring.



Printed
in
Nepal.

JAGADAMBA PRESS
japray@mos.com.np
Tel: (01) 5547017, 5547018
Fax: 977-1-5536390

Announcing the arrival in Nepal of a
NEW BOOK

available for half price, Rs 550/- only in Nepal
at Vajra Bookshop, tel: 4220562
& New Tibet Bookstore, tel: 4415788
(Courtesy: Jamchen Lhakhang Monasteries, Boudhanath)

WOOD CRAFT

For Custom Designed Furniture & Interior Works
Contact: Kabindra Pradhan
Ph: 5548518. Before 8 a.m., after 5 p.m.
Email: kabipdh@mail.com.np

Mandala House
APARTMENT HOTEL

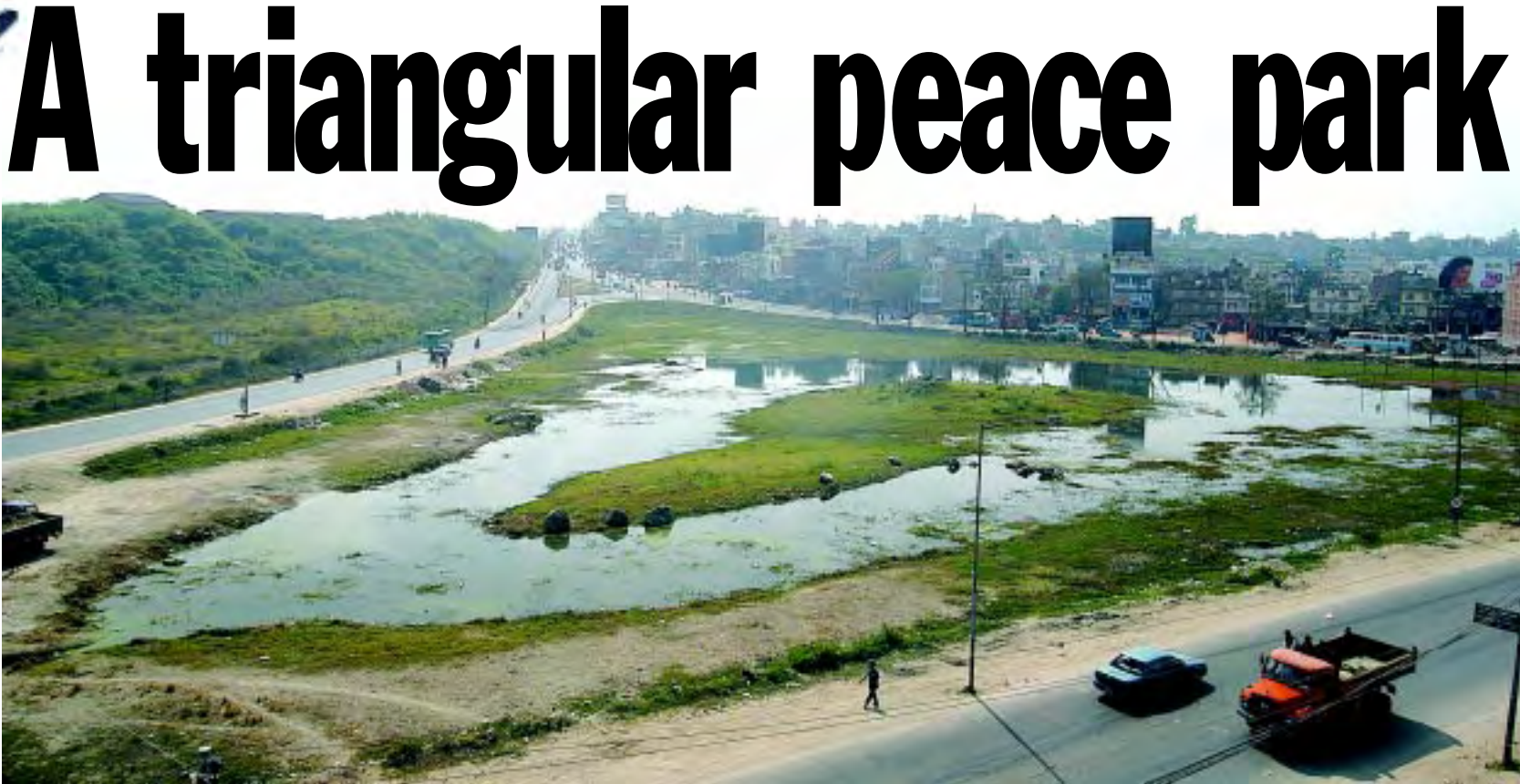
Seasonal Discount
Available

Baluwatar, Kathmandu
Tel: 4412412 (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)
98412-24835 (after 5:00 pm & Saturdays)
E-mail: mandala@wlink.com.np
Web site: www.mandalahouse.com.np



No one wants to give an inch to revive Tinkune.

NARESH NEWAR



NIN BALACHARYA

Do we always need a SAARC Summit or a big international brouhaha to make things happen in this city?

Two years ago, the government decided that the squalid triangular intersection at Tinkune needed an urgent facelift so it would not be a national embarrassment before SAARC summiteers. So, within a fortnight it underwent a dramatic transformation: shanties were demolished and tea shops moved out. Overnight, a picturesque lake had sprung up in the 50-ropani plot with a rock garden, an island festooned with prayer flags and an impromptu pine grove.

The person who pulled off that miracle was Renchin Yonjon, a self-described "social architect and entrepreneur" working with the Kathmandu Municipality then. Unfortunately, after the summit ended everyone forgot about Tinkune again. The edges have now reverted into a garbage dump, the lake has become a wallow for water buffaloes and a convenient site for locals to carry on with their

morning business.

Everyone tsks-tsks as they drive by, but Yonjan has remained committed to turning Tinkune into a symbolic peace park called the Basundhara Mother Earth Project. She is determined that this time, the upgrading will be permanent and maintained through a public-private partnership. Yonjan's plan for the triangle incorporates the five elements of earth, air, fire, water and space, and is purposely designed to resemble the female reproductive system, complete with fallopian tubes.

Designed by architects and landscape artists, Basundhara's three entry points will symbolise Positive Energy, Peace and Wisdom. The garden for wisdom will face the airport road and will be dedicated to Manjushree and Saraswati. It will also have a pond that will represent the primordial lake that was once Kathmandu Valley. "It is time that the people of Kathmandu seriously started thinking of open spaces, my

mission is to create a garden that will not just be an open space but also embody the symbols of peace and harmony that are so important for Nepal today," explains Yonjan.

With funding from Eco Himal and inputs from young Nepali architecture graduates, Yonjan has now finalised her proposal which comes with a sustainability and management plan. It would cost only Rs 12 million to build, and she wants to start in January. She has pitched the idea to Kathmandu's mayor Keshab Sthapit, but hasn't heard from him.

The mayor, as it happens, has his own grandiose vision for Tinkune: a mega shopping mall with a 50ft figure of Manjushree at the centre. Sthapit says he is preparing a public hearing soon in which various plans will be presented to the local people of the area and to prospective private sector sponsors. "First we have to sort out the legal problems," Stapit told us. "The real reason for the delay is political, the

locals were incited by politicians during the last elections not to take our offer of compensation for the land. That is why it is stuck."

The municipality doesn't want to pay more than Rs 3.2 million per ropani, and locals won't accept anything less than Rs 5.1 million. While the haggling goes on, Tinkune remains in limbo. "Governments have budgeted the amount, but never got anything," says 70-year-old Dharma Nath Gajurel, a landowner who is leading a legal battle for Tinkune. Gopal Gautam, another Tinkune land owner is an angry man: "Don't we have any rights at all? You can't just come and take away our land."

Mayor Sthapit says locals are just being greedy. "They should have taken the 30 lakhs when we offered it to them, after all their existing property has appreciated after the intersection was built." Until the legal battle over compensation is sorted out, it seems, Yonjan and her peace park plan will have to wait. ♦

NEPALI PAN

by NEETA POKHREL



Give and take

The recent inaugural NRN and PNO conference was a strictly business affair. People of Nepali origin mingled with Nepalis of Nepali origin, non-resident Nepalis rubbed shoulders with resident Nepalis, and they all talked give-and-take. If we give you this, what will you give us?

Some of the deals struck:

Nepali Passport and Free Visas = Rs 25 billion in investment
Tax-free imports = 1 Home for Elderly

This bartering was serious business. You give us passports and tax subsidies, and we will invest in the motherland. The government echoed it: only if you invest not less than Rs 1 billion. Still, it was a bargain and deals were struck left and right.

There were some transactions that weren't quite heard on the floor of the Soaltee ballroom. We understand that it is natural to get slightly distracted while wining and dining with the movers and shakers of the home country, and saying cheese with stalwarts from various political parties.

Here are some deals that didn't quite make it:
Cashing in on Nepali exoticism = Ten large-scale hydropower plants in Nepal. While foreigners in any country have their share of difficulties, they also have the sheer benefit of being able to exploit their unique identity.

Being an NRN till recently myself, I can tell you how we Nepalis don't need icebreakers. Whether it is a job interview, dealing with clients or even a casual conversation at a bar, mention the word 'Nepal' and the conversation jump starts itself wandering from spiritual to mountaineering and (more recently) to the royal massacre.

Being originally from Nepal immediately separates an NRN from the rest of the hordes of migrants from South Asia, all desperately engaged in the pursuit of liberty and happiness. It often translates into an automatic push up the career ladder. It even works for male NRNs to pick up girls at the bar.

"Where you from?"

"From Nepal"

"Reeeeeeeallly, wow, that's so coool!"

I must admit, this exoticism gave me unprecedented advantage over a lot of my business associates in my days in exile. When 10,000 people in a corporation are struggling to be unique, being from Nepal has its perks.

But this was nothing compared to the superb marketing skills of some of the NRN hoteliers I knew who created empires by selling skinny chicken and calling it 'Special Drumsticks from the Land of Everest', or even: 'the last thing the Buddha ate before renouncing materialism'.

Sure, exploiting cultural exoticism isn't exclusive to Nepalis. Just look at the Irish, who have been spectacularly successful at it. But, in Nepal's case, what does the mother country get in return? Isn't it worth at least 10 large-scale investments in joint venture hydropower plants?

How about other forms of compensation? Every time a Nepali footballer or government official decides to overstay their visa and work in a gas station in Seoul, and technically become an NRN, what does Nepal get in return? OK, let's agree on a compensation package for the motherland:

One disappeared footballer = Two hospitals in Syangja

Then there are the hordes of Nepali students who stay on after college and join the brain drain. What does Nepal get out of investing in their high school education? Here is one possible barter arrangement:

One state educated brain that drains = 1 school in Tehrathum

Neeta Pokhrel is a water and sanitation engineer who is still trying to find her bearings back in Kathmandu.



Transactions that didn't quite make it to the NRN conference.

mediterranean
FOOD PROMOTION

7th to 16th November, 2003

TAKE A CULINARY VOYAGE TO GREECE, ITALY, FRANCE, PORTUGAL, SPAIN...

Olives, Mozzarella, Feta Cheese, Prunes, Truffles, et al - multi regional yet very very Mediterranean. Be it wines or herbs, dear to southern Europeans, or exotic spices that intricately and boldly flavor the diet of north Africans, Mediterranean cuisine transcends boundaries.

For reservations, call 4273999. Ext: 6123

COMPLIMENTARY GLASS OF WINE OR A GLASS OF BEER.

Time: 1900hrs - 2245hrs ~ Venues: Al Fresco ~ Menu: Alla Carte.

Supported by:

Priority Privilege discounts apply.

Tahachal, Kathmandu. Tel.: 4273999. Ext: Al Fresco 6123

House for Rent

A three storey house covering 11,000 sq. ft. in 2 ropani land located in VIP area of Bansbari is available for rent.

Contact : 981024845

Nepali Times: Why do you think Royal Nepal Airlines is in the state it is in?

PJ Shah: The rot began with government interference, and this grew after multiparty democracy. If RNAC had been allowed to function independently, the management would have been more responsible. The government's high-handedness never allowed airline executives to really demonstrate their calibre. They showed their capabilities and professionalism when they moved to private airlines.

Is that why you quit to join Emirates?

It wasn't dissatisfaction with RNAC. Let me be frank, one of the main incentives was financial. Professional pilots were better paid in the international market. At that time, in 1987, RNAC was doing pretty well, despite some internal politics: there were people appointed by the royal palace, the prime minister and ministers. I felt that was unnecessary. Those who were responsible should have been made accountable. Responsibility without accountability does not make sense. That is why we are stuck where we are. We began jet operations with Boeing 727s in 1972. Emirates leased their first jets only in 1985.

They say Royal Nepal reflects the state of the country.

True, you can't compare RNAC with Emirates. The rulers and the people of the UAE are all involved in some kind of business. They have a culture of excellence. They proved that nothing is impossible. The success of Emirates airlines and Dubai are correlated. They go hand in hand. The same model can be replicated in Nepal. If the leaders want that to happen, the idea would work here as well.

How are Nepali workers faring in the Gulf?

To help Nepalis in Dubai, we established a committee with HMG that will lobby for their cause. Hundreds of Nepalis come to the Middle East every day and suffer terrible hardships. More than half are labourers, they do not receive what they were promised and the facilities are not in accordance to the agreements they signed. I have seen 30 Nepalis sleeping in a room barely enough for two small cars. These are the people who prop up our economy. Had it not been for them, Nepal would have become bankrupt. Every year they send home Rs 60 billion in remittances.

These workers don't deposit their hard-earned money in local banks in Dubai, they send it home as soon as they earn it. Sadly, the recently concluded NRN conference downplayed the issue of Nepali labourers abroad. All the participants understood their value and yet, their contribution to the economy did not get enough attention. The meeting only focused on how they could lure investments to Nepal from the diaspora. Sure, Nepal should whip up big investment schemes, but we must not forget the 500,000 Nepali migrant workers who send money home on a regular basis.



After more than two decades as a pilot for Royal Nepal Airlines, PJ Shah went to fly for Emirates in 1987 when that airline was still using 727s. Today, it is one of the world's top operators. A passionate pilot who takes aviation seriously, Shah has kept coming back to his beloved Nepal. In a candid talk with *Nepali Times*, he reminisces about the good old days and has some pointers for the future.

What else happened at the NRN conference?

The conference basically aimed at setting policies for non-resident Nepalis. For people like me, who have Nepali passports, there aren't many problems. But, for those who don't, they face many hassles when they come back to their motherland. Therefore, we believe if NRNs are provided with special identity cards, they will have easy access. But, I have a serious reservation about the way the term NRN has been defined. The definition says if Nepalis spend 182 days in foreign countries, they can be called an NRN. If you travel to the US for six months, can you call yourself an NRN? Only those who stay abroad for work should be defined as NRNs.

What did the conference achieve?

It was something the government should have done long ago. But it promised that it would make rules for NRNs. I believe it will happen. There wasn't sufficient discussion on Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf. Any future policy must include them and recognise their sacrifice and contribution.

ECONOMIC SENSE

by ARTHA BEED

We'd better hurry before we get left further behind.

Come 2004, Sri Lankan Airlines will fly to more than 20 Indian destinations after leasing aircraft from its investor, Emirates. Thai Airways and perhaps even its subsidiary will also network with a number of new cities in India. Theoretically, this means even if the flights are just weekly, India could have 4,000 tourists flying in and out every seven days. The three free trade partners have worked out a mutually beneficial arrangement that puts Nepal in the shadow.

India's attitude of "we are the best" is helping them forge ahead. Competition is fierce between Indian states to lure in tourists and industries. The mood is buoyant with the improvement in technology, transport and communication infrastructures. Even Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Nepal's neighbouring states that everyone loves to poke fun at, are shaping up. No one wants to be left behind.

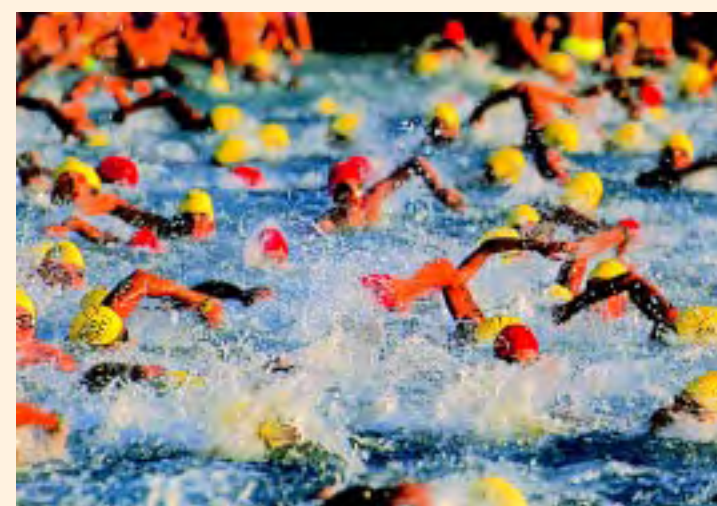
Both India and Thailand are looking at strengthening ties with China. Post-Cancun, they're also sending tentative feelers out towards Brazil and South Africa. As the US tries to find its ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, wooing both India and Pakistan close to presidential elections, it has more fires to fight at home—and not only the Californian conflagration. The Beed predicts this growing trend of wooing regional powers will pave the way for newer blocs sooner than we anticipate.

The inactivity in Nepal is in

sharp contrast to the buzz in the region. By hosting George Bush and the APEC summit, Thailand has shown the world that it is a non-colonised, peaceful nation that can be the future neutral ground for trade as well as peace. Note: the birthplace of the Buddha can no longer claim this Unique Selling Proposition (USP). In Bangkok's business circuit, the Beed was privy to several conversations that all ran along the same line: Thailand has arrived on the global arena. It was apparent in

Lumpur ranges from trade to politics. It shows how a nation can rise above communal violence, a colonial past and crippling economic crises.

What does this have to do with us? Plenty and conversely, precious little. For the oldest and first free trade partner in South Asia, Nepal seems to have fallen into the regional blind spot, an irony that does not escape the Beed. As for how much we register on the Indian radar, a comment from an Indian business person sums it up:



VVIP logistics (Series 7 BMWs made a statement), in the way Prime Minister Shinawatra organised a massive city clean-up and even in a photo-op of various heads of state gussied up in traditional Thai attire at the Royal Palace.

The power shift in not-so distant Malaysia is also of regional importance. Mahathir stepped down, demonstrating that he is no dictator. In his own words, dictators never retire. Is anyone listening in Nepal? The devolution from the old generation to the new in Kuala

“Nepal crops up only when we’re concerned about the ISI.”

As much as we need to separate politics from business, the Beed is pragmatic and realises the path to progress needs the restoration of multiparty democracy. And we'd be wise to also heed our neighbours' examples: network, promote devolution of state power and seize the moment. Till that happens, we'll just lag further and further behind the rest of the region and the world. ♦

arthabeed@yahoo.com.



Everest fully booked

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

Contrary to predictions of a serious shortfall in tourists this season after the breakdown of the ceasefire, October has seen a rebound in trekking traffic—especially in the Khumbu.

Despite an initial spate of cancellations in August, most trekking agencies and tour operators are surprised by the rebound and attribute it partly to the publicity of the Golden Jubilee Anniversary fanfare of the first Everest ascent in May. Tourist arrivals by air in October soared 41 percent compared to the same month last year, and it is actually difficult to get airline seats into Kathmandu and inside Nepal.

“Tourists coming to Nepal have the attitude there are now very few adventure destinations in the world that are considered safe,” says Wanda Vivequin who leads mainly New Zealander trekkers to Nepal. “One of my clients said to me that if they took note of every single travel warning being issued by their embassy these days, they would probably never even leave their own home town.”

Most trekkers this season have concentrated on the Everest and Annapurna region, and after reports of extortion on the Annapurna circuit many decided to go to Khumbu. “Everyone flew to Lukla and headed up, because the Everest region is considered safe,” explains Padam

Nepal’s honest approach to tourism seems to be working.

Ghale of Mandala Treks. There were more than 2,000 trekkers entering the Sagarmatha National Park last month alone.

Even in Maoist-affected areas, trekking groups have not been affected because the guides have an understanding with local commissars about ‘war tax’. In Makalu, trekkers pay a fixed rate of Rs 5,000 per trekker, Rs 1,500 per sardar and Rs 500 per porter. In Simikot, the Maoists demand \$100 per entry. In the Annapurnas it is Rs 1,000 per trekker. (See ‘Letter to a young Maoist’, #168)

The turnover this season seems to have more to do with intensive PR work by travel and trekking agencies with individual clients than any campaign mounted by Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). “We give it straight to our clients about potential risks, and let them decide,” says Ghale. The honesty seems to have paid off.

Vivequin agrees: “I haven’t had a single client cancel a trip with me in the last three years out of fear of coming to Nepal, largely because I have been able to put the conflict



into some sort of context. In my home country of Canada, I often find myself going to great lengths to try and explain to people that in so many ways you have a greater chance of being run over by a bus or a car at home than you have of being harmed by the conflict in Nepal.”

Last month there were up to 300 trekkers a day doing the Annapurna circuit, slightly lower than normal autumn figures. Even though the Annapurnas have always got more trekkers than Everest, news of security concerns there have acted as a deterrent. “Agencies take a risk when we send people there, paying as much as Rs 1,000 per trekker,” says Ganesh Bhattarai, owner of Pub Amsterdam and Boomerang Restaurant at Pokhara’s lakeside. “We give trekkers the most reliable and recent information and let them decide.” Here too, presenting the truth seems to have played a vital role in convincing tourists to visit Nepal.

Honesty is a tourism policy that seems to be working, at least for now. But it won’t last if things here continue to slide. ♦



Clockwise from top left: Reflections on Gokyo lake, soaring over Everest, yak caravans and trekkers make their way up past Ngozumba Glacier.



Save Sagarmatha

Kathmandu Valley is already on the list of endangered world heritage sites. Let Sagarmatha not be next.

LUIS PAULO M FERRAZ in NAMCHE

Even though Kathmandu is preoccupied with the insurgency and political deadlock, trekking tourism survives. But barely.

Maoist extortion along the trails, news of violence and lingering instability are eroding confidence. There is also a longterm problem with the breakdown in management of national parks like the Sagarmatha. The protected region below the world’s highest mountain has been declared a World Heritage Site. But there are significant environmental and social problems in the area which need to be addressed urgently. Otherwise there is

danger that Sagarmatha may go into UNESCO’s endangered list, like Kathmandu Valley.

On a recent 10-day trek to Gokyo, I had mixed feelings of ecstasy and worry. Despite everything, tourism is booming: Everest’s pull, it seems, will overcome all the bad news. In October-November, 66,000 tourists will visit Nepal compared to 47,000 in the same period last year. The NTB campaign that tourists are not the target in the conflict is obviously working.

Sagarmatha National Park is one of the most beautiful places on earth, and yet visitors are constantly reminded of

the unsustainability of development in this fragile region. Trekking below Everest is an international tour product like safaris in Africa or diving off the Thai coast. The main draw is the wilderness. But such ecotourism has to be managed in a sustainable way with clear limits on development.

Sustainable ecotourism requires entrepreneurs and managers to plan, invest, regulate and work with tourist products protecting the environment, minimising social costs affecting local residents and optimising the benefits of tourism. To over-charged visitors in Tengboche who pay Rs 50 for a cup of lemon tea, none of these are visible.

One reason for the popularity of trekking is the existence of porters, who are responsible for a kind of ‘democratisation’ of access to the mountain region. Yet, the exploitation of porters is just one example of mismanagement (see *Nepali Times*, #165). On the second day of the slow walk to Namche Bazar, resting every ten minutes, there was a porter on the uphill with five modern backpacks in the *doko* on his back. He was wearing slippers and at the rest stop, he asked foreigners the kind of questions children ask on the trail: “Do you have a pen? Do you have chocolate?” Looking at him again, it was clear, the porter was indeed a child. A child carrying the load of five trekkers on his back. The responsibility to prevent such abuse rests squarely with the

government department managing the park.

But this once well-managed park appears to be in disarray. Trekkers don’t mind paying the Rs 1,000 as park fee, but they want to see proof that the money is being put to good use. May be the department is active in conservation work, but if that is the case, then its communications strategy is not working. The visitor’s centre at the park headquarters in Namche has now become part of an army base. There is no park staff in sight, and the soldier in the exhibition room points the barrel of his SLR at visitors while frisking their bags. There is barbed wire, sandbag bunkers and trenches all around. If trekking in the area is safe, visitors need to be given the impression that it is safe.

There used to be strict rules in Sagarmatha about plastic, kerosene use and disposal of garbage. None of these seem to be enforced. There are many yak trains going up the mountains, but none coming down with any waste. Behind a row of tea shops along the trail, concealed on a slope is a pile of cans, bottles and plastic. Park regulations strictly ban the use of firewood, but in seven different lodges in the park and the buffer zone during the trek, the only one we found that didn’t use firewood for cooking or heating water was in Namche.

Most protected areas in the world do not have enough financial support, but Sagarmatha does. Just this season, 45

teams are climbing Khumbu’s peaks, including Mt Everest, Makalu, Ama Dablam, Lhotse and Nuptse. The climbing fees alone bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars. Park fees from the 20,000 visitors alone bring in Rs 20 million a year. Where is this money going? One park official has said that 80 percent of the national park’s budget goes to pay the army for security (*Nepali Times*, #164). If that is true, then Nepal’s tourism is subsidising the security apparatus.

Despite all this, and almost by default, trekking actually benefits the local people. The Khumbu economy is vibrant. But without clear limits to growth, tourism will impact on nature. Good management of the national park should be able to encourage broad sharing of the benefits of tourism and avoid cases of human rights abuses. In the absence of government, and its role seemingly restricted to security, the park is already managed by private tour operators and local communities. In that sense, Sagarmatha is already a ‘privately-run’ park.

There is a role, indeed a responsibility, for the government to enforce park regulations again, promote and manage local partnerships. The alternative is an unsustainable free-for-all that will endanger one of the world’s most fragile and beautiful regions. ♦

Luis Paulo M Ferraz is a Brazilian geographer currently living in Kathmandu Valley.



ALL PICS ON THIS PAGE: LUIS PAULO M FERRAZ



Clockwise from top left: Garbage litters the trail again, overloaded porter near Namche and trekkers line up to pay their dues at the entrance to the park in Jorsale.

Fighting for a foreign queen

Out of 25,000 young Nepalis who apply, only 230 make it into the British Army.

... THOMAS BELL in THOSE BAZAR ...

Of the 246 young men gathered at a school field in Those Bazar here recently, only one or two stand a chance of fulfilling their dream of fighting in a foreign army. The are two more rounds of selection, and the physical tests are gruelling. Some 25,000 Nepalis appeared for the selection this year, of these not more than 230 are finally recruited into Britain's Gurkha regiments.

Competition is fierce, the selection itself slow and thorough. One by one, they have their height and their chest expansion measured. Then the exercises are done under the scrutiny of the *galla wallah*, an old Gurkha soldier responsible for recruitment in the district. Every candidate must complete 12 chin-ups, twice what a British recruit must do at the end of his training. Sit-ups and squat thrusts follow. At every stage, more drop out.

"I'm really nervous," confesses Santosh Jagat Magar, 19, "I've been training for a year." He casts an eye over the other candidates, and adds: "The other guys have been training for two to three years." Many who are unsuccessful return every autumn to the temporary selection centres that open up at this time of year across the hills.

Like several of those gathered here, Santosh is an SLC graduate. "Even if we do college we don't get a nice job," he says, "but in the British army if we work hard we can earn a name and support ourselves." For others, it means following the tradition of their fathers and grandfathers.

Ganesh Bahadur Sunwar is here to help the *galla wallah* with the process that his son is taking part in. "If he joins the army, he won't have to worry," he says. "He can stand on his own feet." Suresh Bahadur has heard stories of his father's army days in Hong Kong, Brunei, Australia, Germany and the UK. He says that to get away from

his village is his prime motivation. "The situation in Nepal is no good," he says. "The safest thing is to join."

In the school where the selection is taking place, Maoist graffiti on the walls espouses class war and exalts 'martyrs'. Despite loud cheers and encouragement from the other candidates Suresh managed only 11 of the 12 chin-ups. With a grin, a shrug and a smacking together of his hands he walked away past his expressionless father. He'll be back again next year.

According to Jagat Bahadur Ale, the *galla wallah*, the Maoists told him not to go ahead with recruitment but he did not take them seriously and so far there has been no problem. As the exercises progress the crowd slowly thins out. Despite intense competition, the candidates are supportive of one another if they look like they're giving up. By lunch time on the third day the sit-ups are complete and only half the hopefuls are left.

In his three years as a *galla*, Jagat Ale has seen 23 men from his selections make it all the way into the British Gurkhas. They send him letters and cards at Dasai. He says it is hard to reject people. He does the job in order to give the others the opportunities he had and to maintain the tradition of the Gurkhas, who he believes are the best soldiers in the world.

His sentiments are different from those of the young men trying to join this year, many of whom know little about the institution they are applying to. During 15 years in the British army, Ale fought for seven years in the Brunei emergency in the 1960s. What motivated him while he faced death in the jungle? "Not to let myself and the Gurkhas down in the Queen's eyes," he says. "Our fathers did well, we did well and now I want future Gurkhas to do well so our name is always on top."

Modern recruits have every

chance of following their predecessors into action. Gurkhas have fought in all British war since the Falklands in 1982, and every Gurkha unit was present in Iraq during the second Gulf War. None of the candidates we spoke to said they were aware of the recent court action in London in which seven ex-servicemen lost their case against the British government for better pensions.

On the fourth and final day comes the 'Mr Handsome Contest', a thorough physical examination. Ninety-eight men have made it this far. After examining what seems like every inch of them, Jagat Ale will select 40 to progress to the next stage: Area Selection in Jiri. ♦



Clockwise from top: Jagat Ale conducts a minute inspection for 'The Mr Handsome Contest'.

Galla wallah Jagat Ale measures chest expansion. Candidates needed to be able to expand their chest by 2 inches.

Mothers watch a candidate trying to do 60 sit-ups in two minutes or under. Maoist graffiti adorn the school building at the back.

ALLPICS: THOMAS BELL

KALINTA

classic & modern frames:
imported & manufactured
by KALINTA
Italian matting &
framing accessories

picture framing

Open
9am-5pm
Tel:
4442437

over lamination with UV filter
mounting canvas bonding

KALINTA East side of Royal Palace, Nag Pokhari, Kathmandu

AWON Presents

Single: Rs. 3,499/- nett
(Inclusive of a complimentary
half a bottle of wine)

Couple: Rs. 5,999/- nett
(Inclusive of a complimentary
bottle of wine)

Masquerade Ball

Date: Friday, 14th of November 2003
Time: 7:00 PM onwards
Venue: Regal Ballroom
Yak & Yeti Hotel
Durbar Marg, Kathmandu

For more information and details:
Guest Relations Desk
Hotel Yak & Yeti
4 248 999 Ext. 2865
Gloria Glass (AWON)
gnglass@hotmail.com
4 275 567

Shifting focus

WASHINGTON – InterAction, an umbrella organisation of 160 advocacy and aid groups, called for a drastic overhaul of US foreign aid policy and warned that Washington increasingly views foreign assistance as a tool for national security, which is creating an expanded role for the military in delivering aid overseas. In the report, 'Emerging Trends', the consortium called on Washington to reverse that tendency as well as to fix red tape, improve transparency and achieve coherence between a mushrooming number of aid agencies.

After the attacks on New York's World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, the administration also created a 'National Security Strategy' uniting diplomacy, defence and development, in which aid was officially tied to the self-styled 'war on terror'. InterAction said that since then, it has seen other worrying changes in how foreign aid is handled. Chief among them is that Washington's largest and most visible aid programs are now in Afghanistan and Iraq, two countries attacked by the United States in the past two years. They cautioned that initial funding requests and projections of the ultimate cost and duration of the US engagement in Iraq alone threaten to dwarf all other assistance programs combined. (IPS)

Jackpot

WASHINGTON – Some 70 US companies with good connections to the Bush administration have won at least \$8 billion worth of reconstruction contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan in the past two years, says Centre for Public Integrity (CPI), an independent research group. According to the six-month probe by the centre, the 70 firms donated more money to the presidential campaign of George W Bush than they collectively did to any other politician over the past dozen years.

The investigation, which examined contracts awarded in 2002 through September 2003, provides

the most complete list to date of US contractors in the two nations that were invaded by the US in its 'war on terror'. The report, 'Windfalls of War: US Contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan', shows that Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR), the subsidiary of the giant US oil field services firm Halliburton, was the top recipient of federal contracts for the two countries, worth more than \$2.3 billion. The CPI, which prides itself on "public service journalism" and says it does not accept funding from corporations, labour unions or governments, said its research also found that dozens of lower-profile but well-connected companies also won big in the reconstruction bonanza. (IPS)

'Biggest threat'

BRUSSELS – European citizens think that Israel poses the greatest threat to world peace, according to a survey released Monday by the European Commission. Fifty-nine percent of Europeans replied "yes" when asked whether or not Israel presents a threat world peace. Comparatively, 53 percent thought North Korea, Iran and the United States a threat to world peace. Fifty-two per cent said Iraq posed the greatest threat to world peace, while 50 percent named Afghanistan and 48 percent Pakistan. The findings from the Eurobarometer survey 'Iraq and Peace in the World' have sparked outrage from Israeli authorities. Israeli officials said the survey was proof that anti-Semitism lay behind political criticism of Israel. Launching the full report Monday, the EC said the Israeli reaction was "legitimate", but refused any further comment beyond stating that EU policies were not affected by such poll findings.

The information released last week also showed that 68 percent of EU citizens think the war in Iraq was "not justified" and want the United States to foot the reconstruction bill. The survey report offers fresh indications of deep hostility towards US foreign policy. (IPS)

"Should I stay, or should I go?"



PEYMAN PEJMAN in BAGHDAD

A missile strike on a US Chinook helicopter and several other attacks killed 18 Americans in one day. Earlier, three suicide bombing attacks against police stations in various corners of the capital, one that was foiled, and a fifth attack against the office of the International Red Cross killed 34 people and wounded 224.

The bombings have confronted the coalition forces with a stark choice. To oversimplify and borrow from an old song, it is "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" If US forces continue to play the major security role, the increasing casualty figures may become too prohibitive in the months approaching the next US presidential election.

More than 120 US soldiers have died in Iraq since 1 May 2003, the day President George W Bush called the end of the major phase of military operations in Iraq. More US soldiers have now died in Iraq after they war than during the operations to topple Saddam Hussein. Coalition officials acknowledge that their troops come under an average of 25 attacks every day. Four to six soldiers die each week and another 40 are wounded.

It is not just the number of attacks that commanders confront. It is also the innovative tactics used to carry out these attacks. In the attack on Sunday against a hotel in Baghdad housing military and civilian officials, the attackers used an electricity generator, a home-welded rocket launcher filled with dozens of 68mm and 85mm missiles, and a timer to launch multiple missiles. They did not have to be there.

In other instances, they have laid land mines on roads frequented by US forces, exploded them and then jumped out of the bushes to ambush them

and cause further casualties. The attacks seem well-resourced and well-planned. The five attacks on Monday, almost in all four corners of Baghdad, came within 15 minutes of one another.

To remove its soldiers from harm's way as much as possible, the Bush administration sought a new United Nations Security Council resolution that would pave the way for Muslim nations such as neighbouring Turkey to contribute troops to the coalition forces.

After the single deadliest day in Baghdad since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the coalition forces are in a quandary.

The new arrivals were to be stationed in areas north and west of Baghdad where the US forces have seen most of the attacks against them. But many Iraqis rebelled, saying they want US forces out, and not replaced by other foreign forces.

Turkey now says it will send troops only if the Iraqis ask for them. Other Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait and Jordan have flatly refused the request unless a "legitimate" Iraqi government invites them. Unable to find at least a part substitute for itself, Washington is now succumbing to a demand Iraqis have been asking for months.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington plans to give a higher profile to Iraqi police and army. The United States had not expected the level of resistance it is facing, he said. But implementing that stated desire will not be easy.

First, it would require a sharp departure from present policy. One of the first acts of Washington's civilian administrator Paul Bremer was to dissolve the 400,000-strong Iraqi army. That affected at least 10 percent of Iraqi society. An average Iraqi family is six persons. At the time Bremer said the act was necessary because Saddam's army was associated with much of the crimes, wars and genocidal acts of the former dictator. Many Iraqis objected to the move, saying there are 'bad apples' in every segment of every society.

After refusing for months to reinstate the Iraqi army, coalition officials now say they could bring back portions of it to help the US forces with law and order. But even if the plan goes through, the Iraqi units are unlikely to be deployed inside the cities. That task will be delegated to the Iraqi police.

That will not be easy either. Bremer and his advisors have said they do not believe there are enough trained and equipped Iraqi policemen. There is some dispute whether new recruits should be trained at existing training facilities in Iraq or sent overseas.

Whether they are trained in Iraq or overseas, employing enough Iraqi policemen to take charge of law and order would take months if not years, coalition officials say. To prevent the security situation from deteriorating even further, US forces will have to maintain their positions for the time being, and perhaps suffer more casualties.

"If your standard for improvement in the security situation is whether a bomb goes off here or there, this is going to be a long year for us, for you, and for the Iraqis," Brig Gen Martin Dempsey in charge of security for the Baghdad area told reporters Sunday. "One thing is certain," he added. "Failure is not an option and we cannot leave this country without being able to hand it over properly to the Iraqis." ♦ (IPS)

MOMOS & MORE
the finest momos in town
now in **Dhobighat**
Battispatali Tel: 4471957 Dhobighat Tel: 5520692
Try us once and you'll come back for more!

Complete Solution Of T-Shirts Screen Printing with International Standard Export Quality.
HARATI MATA UDHYOG
(Specialist in T-Shirt Screen Printing)
Poko, New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph. No: 4286668, 4280378, Fax: 977-1-4274173
E-mail: hharatimata@wlink.com.np

Only authorised dealer of
THE NORTH FACE
NEVER STOP EXPLORING
WINTER WEARS
CASUAL WEARS
FOOTWEARS
BACKPACKS
MOUNTAINEERING
ACCESSORIES & EQUIPMENTS
SHERPA ADVENTURE OUTLET (P) LTD.
Tri-Gov-Marga, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal
(Opposite Himalayan Bank.)
Tel: 977-1-4445101
Email: sao@mail.com.np

Beautiful at any age
keep a **PASHMINA** close to your SKIN
One stop for the Best Pashmina, Best Prices, Guaranteed Quality
NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY
Head Office & Factory: Redcross Marg Kalimati (Near Hotel Soaltee) PO Box: 1956, Kathmandu
Tel: 4273292, 4277023 Fax: 977-1-420092 Email: npipushpa@wlink.com.np n www.nepalpashminaindustry.com

Chandrika rocks the boat

FEIZAL SAMATH in COLOMBO – The firing by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga Tuesday of three ministers has triggered a major constitutional uproar, but is unlikely to upset the peace process and a 20-month long ceasefire, analysts here say. Defence Minister Tilak Marapana, Interior Minister John Amaratunga and Media Minister Imtiaz Bakeer Markar were removed from their posts under constitutional powers vested in the president.

The move, which stunned many Sri Lankans, came hours before Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was due to meet US President George W Bush in Washington. “This is shocking news,” said Jehan Perera, media director at the National Peace Council (NPC), a privately funded peace promoter. The dismissals add to the perception of more political instability in Sri Lanka, where Kumaratunga and Wickremesinghe have long had differences over the peace process in the past few years.

The peace process that began in September 2002 continues, but the Tamil Tiger rebels suspended participation in April and said that progress was too slow. However, talks are expected to start next month. In the meantime, Kumaratunga has swiftly moved to take charge at the three ministries, appointing her confidantes as permanent secretaries to the institutions. News reports say she is planning a major shake-up in the departments that come under defence, media and interior.

She ordered troops stationed at state television stations and at the government printing press. Her moves were triggered by widely published proposals made by Tamil rebels on the formation of an interim administration in the north-east region, where the majority of Tamils live in this South Asian island nation. The rebels, formally known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, said they wanted to lead an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) with autonomous powers—if necessary, outside the country’s constitution—to rule the north-east for five years. Elections would then be held afterwards.

In the structure they propose for an interim administration, the Tigers want wide powers over



MIN BAURACHARYA

The surprise dismissals of Sri Lankan ministers are unlikely to upset the peace process.

raising revenues and the imposition of taxes, and over land and law and order. They also want to have the power to negotiate foreign aid. NPC’s Perera said Kumaratunga’s reactions in the wake of the Tigers’ announcement were not warranted by conditions on the ground. After all, he said, this was the first time they have made proposals for a negotiated political settlement to end the 20-year long ethnic conflict—and these deserve to at least be discussed.

“This is very unfortunate since the LTTE step was welcomed by the international community led by the United States,” he added in an interview. The sacking of the three ministers means an end to a shaky cohabitation between Wickremesinghe’s United

National Party (UNP), which was elected to power in December 2001, and Kumaratunga, who was elected separately in 2000 while leading the then ruling People’s Alliance coalition.

Kumaratunga had also expressed unhappiness about the way the military and the police were being run and had reprimanded the ministers, all Wickremesinghe’s nominees. But Kethish Loganathan, director of the Peace and Conflict Unit at the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), said he did not expect the peace process to be shattered by the latest political divisions. “In any case peace talks were only likely to resume next month to discuss the proposals made by Tamil rebels,” he said.

There was no immediate reaction from the LTTE to the latest developments. But public support for the peace process, despite concerns over the LTTE strengthening its forces and taking control in the north-east, remains high. This is given the fact that the ceasefire has been the longest so far. The absence of war has also yielded dividends in the form of economic stimulus and freer movement of people in the war-torn north and the east, areas that were once closed to the public. ♦ (IPS)

Still in control

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe insists he still has a mandate for reaching peace with Tamil Tiger rebels despite a growing political crisis. Earlier, President Chandrika Kumaratunga declared a state of emergency in Sri Lanka which began officially at 1800 GMT on Wednesday, citing instability in the country. However, she stressed that the current ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) would not be affected by the emergency measures. Speaking in the US after President Kumaratunga accused the president of seeking to create “anarchy and chaos” while he was out of the country. Government ministers said that, despite the turmoil, they had asked peace mediator Norway to proceed with arranging face-to-face talks with rebels, later this month or early next month. The emergency allows for detentions without charge, bans public gatherings and gives the president extensive control over the media. The LTTE has not commented on the president’s moves.

OPINION

by RAJDEEP SARDESAI

A tale of two Indias



One of the main problems arising out of Delhi’s close proximity to the Hindi heartland, especially the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, is that those states exert a disproportionate influence over the media and the national imagination.

As a result of this excessive preoccupation with the politics of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the political worldview of any number of Indians is largely shaped by what happens in that part of the country. For example, if a majority of Indians today have a negative view of politicians, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar must take a lot of the blame. There are political defects and corruption everywhere, but it’s only in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that there exists a wholesale bazaar for legislators.

Though other regions across the country too have their fair share of legislators with criminal records, it’s only in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that people can win elections by contesting a seat from jail. Moreover, while caste and communities are important in most states, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar they dictate every facet of life.

Frankly, the entire notion of the criminalisation of politics can be ascribed to the politics of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Though other states have encouraged candidacies on the basis of money and muscle power, none has done it on the scale of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

While politicians and chief ministers of the two states remain mired in the politics of caste hatred and self-aggrandisement, Krishna and Chandra Babu Naidu are aggressively pursuing market-friendly investment policies and attending international IT conferences as part of the new process of globalization. By contrast, the administrations in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are geared toward exploiting power and milking the system dry rather than deploying resources toward development.

India’s north-south divide still looms large.

The result is that the statistical disparity today between those two states and the rest of the country is glaring on every possible social and economic indicator. There are fewer hospitals and schools per capita in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh than in any other part of the country. Their education systems have collapsed completely, leaving them without functioning college systems.

While other southern states, following Kerala’s example, are inching toward total literacy, Bihar still has literacy levels below the 50 percent mark. And while the figures that establish the poverty line remain contentious, the number of people living below the poverty line in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar seems to be twice as high as in any other part of the country.

Furthermore, while states like Gujarat are growing at the rate of 8-10 percent a year, the growth rates for Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are around 1-2 percent. And while Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu have jointly attracted more than 50 percent of the country’s domestic and foreign investment in the last decade, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have accounted for less than 3 percent of total investment.

These figures are now threatening the very future of Indian democracy. Population figures reveal that nearly one in four Indians lives in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and while large parts of southern India have population growth rates below replacement levels, the populations of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are growing at around 2.9 percent a year.

At that rate, around 350 million Indians will be living in Uttar Pradesh alone by 2050. How long will the rest of the country share the burden of carrying its two nonfunctioning, overpopulated states? Will there be a day in the future when a Maharashtra or a Gujarat, a Tamil Nadu or an Andhra Pradesh decides that it would like to function as an independent political entity, signing its own free-trade agreements with neighboring countries because they do not want to be burdened for the wrongs of these two states?

This may seem an exaggerated fear, but one can now see two distinct Indias emerging: one that is outward-looking, market-friendly and development-oriented, and another that is inward-looking, caste-driven and overpopulated. The danger is that the contrast between these two Indias could shape our future politics and economic growth and bring greater misery and problems for all concerned. ♦

Rajdeep Sardeasi is managing news editor at NDTV, this piece was translated from his op-ed piece in the *Dainik Bhaskar* newspaper in Bhopal.

SAMSUNG
PRESENTS

EVERYTHING THAT HAS A BEGINNING HAS AN END

MATRIX
REVOLUTIONS

JAI NEPAL CINEMA
NOVEMBER 7

Guerrillas in the east



Bhojraj Bhat in *Spacetime*, 1 November

स्पेसटाइम दैनिक

It has already been four years since he became a Maoist guerrilla. He is just 18 and he has survived two deadly attacks in Jumla and Argakhanchi. He has two bullet wounds in his chest and lower abdomen from the battle. Yet, Bir Bahadur Shahi wants to carry on fighting. Although he is from mid-western Nepal, Bir Bahadur is now in the eastern district of Sankhuwasabha. When he joined the Maoist fold, he was a seventh-grader. He knows that he cannot pursue his higher studies now. But, he is confident that if his party can wrest state power through the gun, he will win a position in the army.

There are many Maoists like Bir Bahadur Shahi. These are young boys and girls who did not even get to finish high schools. Most of them are seventh or eighth graders and they share almost similar stories of how they became Maoists. And they all hope that one day their party will rule and their futures will be secure.

The company commander of the 18th Battalion Jas Bahadur Bista commands a unit of 150 guerrillas, but is not educated. He knows that if he joins the army, he would have to be happy with the post of a sergeant. Namuna Balsulab, is

from Hedangna in Sankhuwasabha district, but she is not so sure about her future. “The party has assured me that it will recruit me in the army, but let’s see what happens.” Her comrade is a 17-year-old girl from Humla, currently posted in the east. She has heard that her party will choose her husband and marry her off within two years. “If they don’t do it, I guess I will marry a guy within the party whom I like.”

But, 14-year-old Pasang is not bothered about her marriage. She is happy that she has been able to feed herself two times a day after she joined she Maoists. “When I used to be a shepherd, there was no guarantee of food. Today I get plenty to eat, I am enjoying this life.” Pasang does not carry guns like others do, but her rucksack is full of grenades and explosives.

Most of the guerrillas in the village of Hedangna which is a one-and-half day walk from the district headquarters at Khandbari are between 14-18 years. It is not an easy life, but the daily military routine and comradeship sustains them. They get up early in the morning and take part in a parade bearing their arms. They perform sentry duty at night and guard places where the rebels organise village meetings. They are paid Rs 200 every month as pocket expenses. “We rarely get to spend this money since the party takes care of most of our daily needs,” said one young Maoist.

Backdoor entry

Rajdhani, 1 November

राजधानी

DARCHULA – Diseased animals are being supplied from India and Tibet to Nepal through the northern borders of Darchula district. Despite quarantine laws for animals prior to entry, many sick livestock are already in the country. “It’s quite easy as there are open borders everywhere,” says Mangal Singh Dadal of Sunsera.

This checkpoint was established to prevent the spread of contagious diseases among other healthy animals. Experts say the sick animals pose a threat not only to other animals but to humans as well. Most of these sick animals are used for meat while some are used for milk and carrying loads.

The Livestock Services Act of 2001 directs that domesticated animals and raw meat are first inspected at quarantine checkpoints and allowed passage only after they are certified disease-free.

Fourth estate

Deshantar, 2 November

देशान्तर साप्ताहिक

Journalists in the mid- and far-west are being targeted by both the Maoists and security forces. They constantly face death threats if they don’t publish positive coverage of military and rebel operations. “Everyday, we live in fear of getting killed not only at the hands of Maoists but the army as well,” says a Dang-based journalist from *Space Time*. He added that most journalists don’t have telephone lines to send their reports to Kathmandu. “Those covering the conflict are under enormous stress on the job, and almost everyone is forced to curry

favour with security officers,” says a Channel Nepal correspondent in Banke.

It’s a situation that encourages impunity because Nepal lacks information laws to protect journalists. Reporters complain their publishers do not provide enough resources or care about their security. “All they are concerned about is breaking stories and not how we manage to get it,” says another daily paper reporter in Banke.

Both the Maoists and the state should realise journalists are just doing their job. When journalists write a story with a dateline from a conflict-ridden area, the army accuses them of keeping ties with the rebels. And when the army organises a media junket, the Maoists threaten journalists for being pro-government.

Press passes were issued to media personnel covering the conflict with the assurance that they would be protected. No more. Several journalists have been beaten up and their passes seized by the Maoists. “Nowadays we just use our citizenship cards,” says a reporter from *Nepal Samacharpatra* in Dadeldhura.

Tourists exempted

Kantipur, 2 November

कान्तिपुर

“All tourists are welcome,” reads a Maoist notice at Ghorepani. Written on the walls with red ink, the message hints that the Maoists may have stopped collecting Rs 1,000 ‘war tax’ from tourists. Trekkers have returned to Ghandruk, Tadapani, Ghorepani in the Annapurna circuit. Things are taking a turn for the better since the Maoists stopped their extortion and the army halted

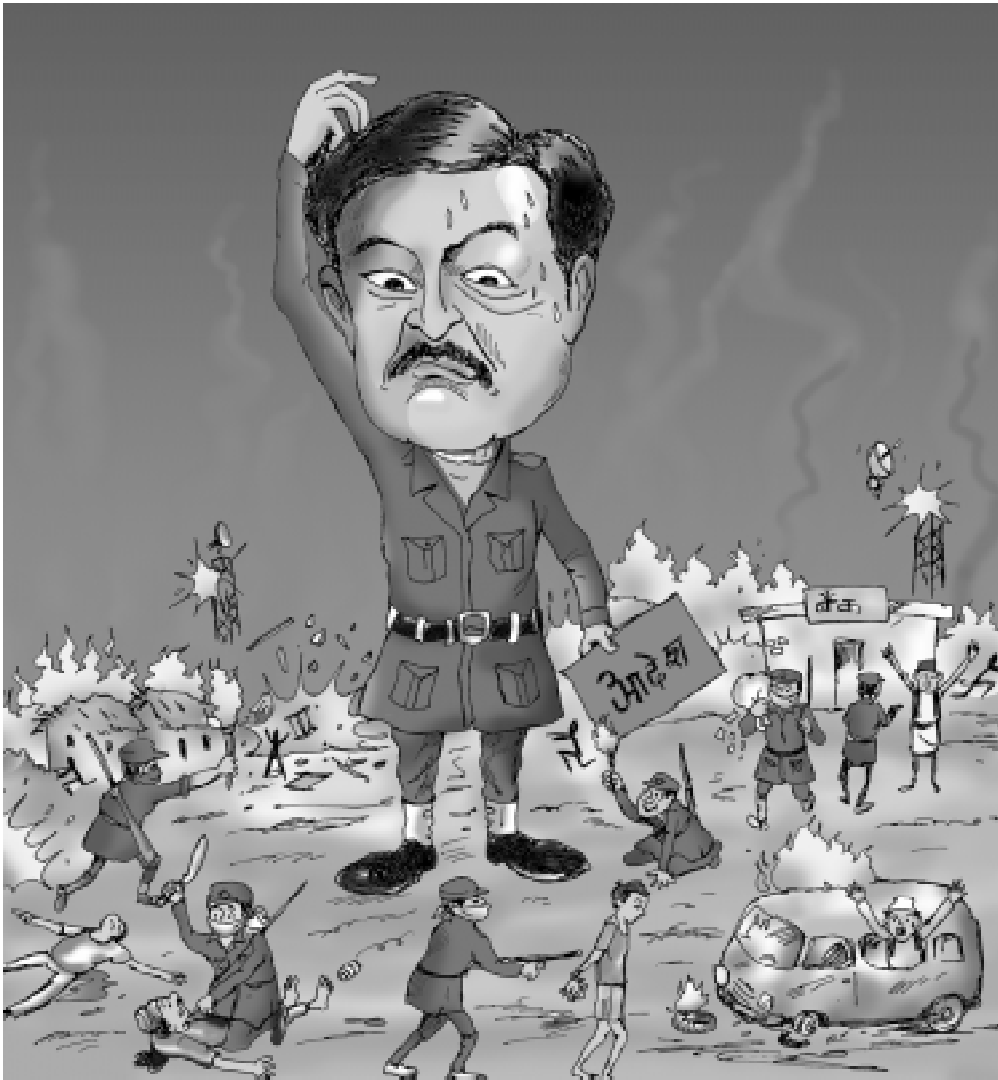
security activities. Although the figures are still quite low (200 visitors daily compared to 500 in previous years) there is still an air of optimism here. Locals, however, are still not off the hook. Maoists are still targetting local hotels and lodges, many have been forced to pay up or leave. Teachers and government staff have to donate part of their salaries and the hoteliers have to pay Rs 10,0000 every year for the revolution. Even small tea-shops are not exempt.

Bullet in the head

Kantipur, 31 October

कान्तिपुर

For the last month-and-a-half, a teacher in western Nepal has lived with a bullet in his head. On 21 September, Maoists came to Nepal Rastriya Secondary School at Dodari in Bardiya and ordered Kiran Raj Yogi to leave with them. They took the 31-year-old to the schoolyard and shot him, execution style in the head. Luckily, the teacher survived and was rushed to Lucknow Medical College in India but after initial treatment, doctors said they couldn’t dislodge the bullet. Now Kiran is at the district hospital at Gulariya, Bardiya. Prabodh Regmi, his doctor, says Kiran is paralysed down his left side because of the bullet. Shanti Yogi, Kiran’s sister-in-law, said the medical treatment is putting them under great financial stress. “We have already spent around Rs 10,0000 in the treatment by borrowing from relatives. Taking him to another hospital for treatment is going to mean more expenses.” The government hasn’t helped at all. Kiran has an eight-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter.



Envelope: Order

हिमाल

Himal Khabarpatrika, 2-16 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“I am responsible for the delays in the appointments to the constitutional bodies.”

-Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa in *Kantipur*, 5 November

Elections are inevitable

Chandra Bahadur Gurung of the RPP in *Jana Bhabana*, 3 November

जन भावना

The country is in shambles today because of bad leadership and no longterm vision after the Peoples’ Movement of 1990, which is why we find ourselves in this terrible predicament.

The government’s concept paper, envisaging sweeping changes in the country’ socio-economic situation through the constitution, has been welcomed by many quarters of society. The Maoists abandoned talks and resumed violence because they had other plans but we still believe talks are the only way out of this problem. Violence has reached a climax and negotiations must resume at any cost. The Maoist leadership seem to have realised that destroying national property and arbitrary murders are not endearing them to the public. This is why Prachanda recently issued a press release announcing changes in their modus operandi. The Maoists have no other choice but to come to the table because the government is independent of their control.

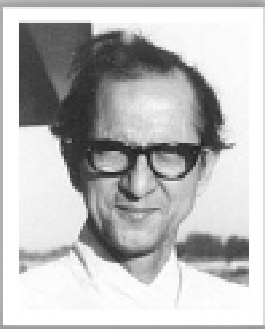
The country lacks elected representatives at all levels. Therefore, this is the need of the hour. State power must be handed to an elected government. Elections are inevitable and we should all work towards earliest possible dates. These elections are important for the protection of democracy and the sovereignty of the people. It is wrong to say the present government is using elections as an excuse to stay legitimate. As a matter of fact, their days are numbered if elections take place.

Events over the years have proved that the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) failed to rule the country well. The five agitating parties, including the NC and the UML, have complicated political problems in the country. We should be working together to raise Nepal out of the present crisis but everywhere you look, you’ll only see people with vested interests.



Back at Sundarijal >47

“The king had high praise for me.”



BP Koirala has been handed over from army to police custody, and is no longer held under the Security Act. Things are more relaxed, but he is still in solitary confinement. He is worried about doctor's orders not to drink tea, since he had turned tea preparation into a ritual in his cell. He is produced before the court again, and is happy to meet his relatives. When it is time to go, young Manisha hangs on her grandfather and insists on going to jail with him.

Wednesday, 27 April 1977

[no entry]

Thursday, 28 April

BP 130/80

Sundarijal

Dr Shrestha (police + jail doctor) saw me + has prescribed some medicines for throat + liver + digestive disorder. He is a homely type of person, not inspiring great confidence as a doctor, but a man with common sense and like Pinaky Babu believes in minimum medication. He introduced himself as police doctor + I asked him whether he was in charge of the prison also. He said: yes. Then I asked him about Shailaja. He said: who Shailaja? I said: Acharya. Then he said his assistants visit the jail regularly. Obviously he was reluctant to tell me about her. Otherwise there was no point in him asking me in the 1st instance which Shailaja I meant. DSP informed me that the army was refusing to allow the police the use of the refrigerator at the colonel's place in the arsenal where perishable food meant for us needs to be stocked. The DSP didn't know what to do now. Sundarijal has no market, hence everything has to be brought from Kathmandu, even vegetables. The officer here is perplexed. The doctor has advised me to give up tea + coffee altogether because of my heart condition. This is a problem. I don't take coffee at all, but tea I need in the morning and in the afternoon, and I take it strong. In jail, this habit is reinforced. As a matter of fact I was not keen on tea outside altho I took it in the company of others. Since Sushila is extremely fond of it—addicted to it—I used to like it for her sake also. But here—particularly after GM was removed from this camp + I was made alone, I started taking interest in tea and its preparation. I have almost made it into some kind of a ceremony, and I enjoy every sip of it. The whole process takes me about 45 minutes to 1 hour in the afternoon. I take some biscuits + a piece of cheese along with it. I bring everything in a nice tray from the dining room into my study. All this I will have to give up—and without knowing what other alternative activity could be devised.

Friday, 29 April

Sundarijal

Was taken to the court today. There advocates Ganeshraj, Kusum and Krishna Pd are defending me. I had about an hours private consultation with them. I showed them the statement that I have prepared. They approved of it. I told them that I would like the cases to be demolished on facts themselves—because I feel that the cases have been falsely framed or at least don't have sufficient basis on fact. I am particularly interested in the case of Capt Thapa in which I too am involved. Krishna Pd seems to think that we shouldn't take the stand on charges being framed because, in that case, the political character of the cases would be lost + those who are undergoing various terms of imprisonment would feel left out. I think there is some substance in his argument. But you also want to establish that previous decisions of the court have been based on insufficient materials—there has been no attempt at finding the truth before the judgements were handed down to the accused. I told the court today that I take moral responsibility for everything. Since I wanted to make a long statement [about] why I had given a call for revolution, the court was hesitant to record my statement. There was some stalemate, the discussion was proceeding when the court rose for the day. I have to appear again the day after. The judge permitted my family members to see me during the recess of 60 mt—Sushila, Rosa, Chetana, Kalpana, Sujata, Nona, Niru, Santosh, Sriharsha, Kalpana's daughter + Manisha. The small courtroom was full of them—Manisha always kept herself close to me + when it was time for them to go, she insisted that she wanted to stay with me in the prison. I had some difficulty inducing her to go home with Sushila. The police (DSP) provided tea + biscuits for all of us. The atmosphere was very friendly. Sushila told me that Chandra Shekhar had come + was leaving Kathmandu this afternoon. All our friends in India have sent us greetings. Chandra Shekhar perhaps saw the king who had high praise for me (“a great man”) but who also said that he had difficulties about my release as a result of great pressure. Chandra Sh. Should have inquired what the king's difficulties were. Chandra Sh. wanted to meet Shailaja in prison, which was not allowed. I am full of excitement today. In the evening returned to the loneliness of the camp.



Cadenza and Friends work their brand of music mojo in the heart of Patan.

Jazz at Patan

Some things change, others reappear quite satisfyingly year after year. Come winter, jazz aficionados in the Valley clear their calendar for the most important date in the season: Jazz at Patan. This annual event featuring Nepal's homegrown jazz band, Cadenza, has grown in popularity since the first concert in 2000, and this year they're eager to play their favourite venue for a concert for peace.

“We play music from the heart, and we're never going to prostitute that,” says Navin Chhettri, Cadenza's drummer, vocalist and unofficial spokesperson. There is an eclectic playlist with six original tunes, African rhythms with Hindustani classical music and jazz standards fused with Nepali classical styles. While the band's

original line-up has expanded to seven, the concert will also feature the formidable talent of tabla player Robin Lal, vocalist Gurudev Kamad, Santosh Bhakta Shrestha on the ishray and sarod player Suresh Bajracharya. With the exception of young school-going James Lhalungpa who plays sax in the band, the rest are full-time musicians dedicated to their craft with a fierce defiance that carried them through lean periods when Thamel bars refused them gigs and they were viewed as an oddity bound for failure.

It's not that bizarre to team jazz and eastern classical music together, explains Chhettri. The head of jazz is comparable to the ragas, which form the basis of improvisations that are the

unrehearsed expression of musicians as they trade onstage.

People (and that includes international artist Sting) seem impressed and not a little surprised to find jazz alive and kicking in the Himalaya. “Playing Patan is always rewarding because the audience response is terrific and basically the place lends it's own energy,” Navin says. “This is where we bring all that we learnt and experienced in the year to our listeners. That's cool.” With due respect to the musician, that's red-hot jazz. ♦

Jazz at Patan: A Concert for Peace. 6PM, 8 November at Patan Museum. Tickets: Rs 750. Available at Upstairs Jazz Bar, Lazimpat and Summit Hotel, Kuponhole.

This masquerade

It's well and truly a global village if you can recreate a Venetian masquerade ball and import Austrian dancers to come frolic in Nepal. Next Friday, the Atrium at the Hotel Yak & Yeti will have all the elements necessary to eat, drink and make merry: music, masks, a fabulous menu, delicious wine and wonderful surprises that we are not at liberty to disclose.

In renaissance Italy and the royal courts of Europe, masquerades were a holiday from strict social decorum. What that translates to in Kathmandu remains to be seen, but the Active Women of Nepal (AWON) are determined to get things just right for their first charity ball which promises to be a big tamasha, the likes of which has probably not been seen in Lal Darbar since Rana days.

There is more than meets the eye at this charity Venetian ball.

dance classes prior to The Masquerade Ball with German dance master Andreas Lehrke. Those with a severe case of two left feet can sit back and admire professional dancers Karin Lemberger and Peter Kantor from one of Vienna's most prestigious dance schools perform. “This is going to be the event of the year!” promises Marilu. Looks like New Year's Eve has come early. ♦

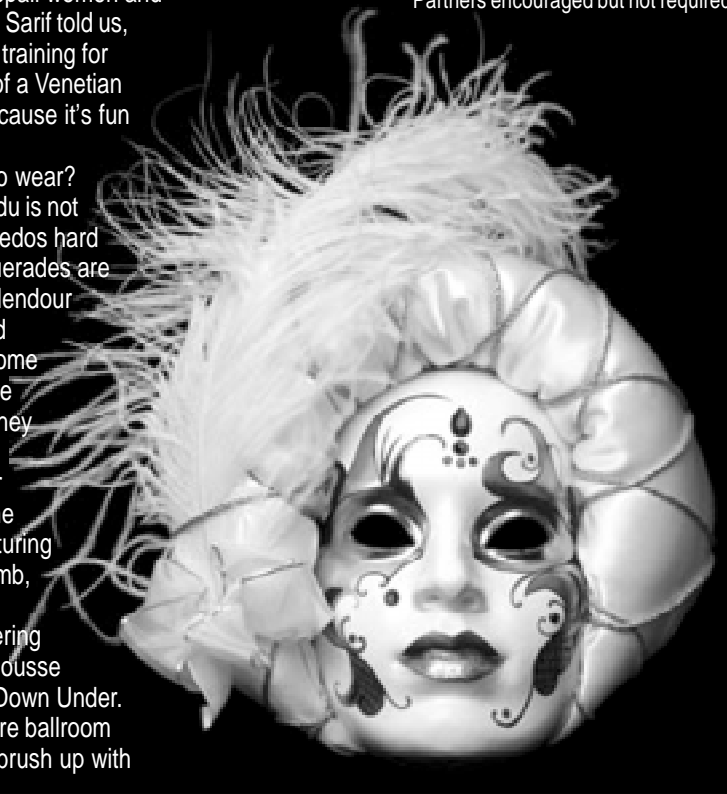
AWON presents The Masquerade Ball on Friday 14 November at Hotel Yak & Yeti. Tickets: Rs 3,499 per person, Rs 6,000 per couple.

Andre's ballroom dance classes: 11,13 November, Hotel Yak & Yeti. Rs 200 per session. Partners encouraged but not required.

All the carousing comes with a feelgood factor: charity. Proceeds will be poured into AWON's welfare schemes for Nepali women and children. AWON president Marilu Sarif told us, “The money will go to vocational training for women, scholarships. The idea of a Venetian masquerade ball was perfect because it's fun and educational as well.”

But what ever is one going to wear? Sourcing a ballgown in Kathmandu is not easy, and gentlemen will find tuxedos hard to come by. Which is why masquerades are so exciting. Colour, pomp and splendour rule masquerades. Hidden behind bejeweled masks, some Nepali some imported, all those who attend are welcome to come as whatever they fancy.

Y&Y's Executive Chef Victor Holla has lined up a spread for the evening. It'll be haute cuisine featuring smoked salmon, New Zealand lamb, special Italian breads, a dessert buffet that features a mouthwatering white chocolate and Drambuie mousse and top drawer Tyrell vino from Down Under. AWON is going so far as to ensure ballroom skills that aren't up to snuff can brush up with



ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Fate and Freedom** Unique handmade carpets by John Collins till 23 November at Siddhartha Art Gallery. 4218048
- ❖ **My Creation** Paintings by Kiran Manandhar. 5-14 November at Gallery Nine, Lazimpat. 4428694
- ❖ **Mon Regard** Photographs by Santosh FAU (Tuladhar) at Molière Auditorium, Alliance Française of Kathmandu from 3-8 November.
- ❖ **Rhythmic Existential Relationship** Paintings by Nabendra Limbu at NAFA, Sita Bhawan till 9 November.

EVENTS

- ❖ **The God's Dance of Kathmandu Valley** 7PM on Tuesdays. Tea+Ticket: Rs 400 at Hotel Vajra.
- ❖ **Social Science Baha Library** at the Patan Dhoka, opens 31 October. 5548142
- ❖ **Cine-Club: Le Bounty** 9 November. 2PM at Auditorium Molière at Alliance Française, Thapathali. 4241163
- ❖ **Friendship Everest Sky race** 16km from Namche Bazar to Thame, Khumbu. Organised by Cho-Oyu Trekking, 18 November.
- ❖ **Lazimpat Film Shows:** *Talk to Her* (Amolodovar) 11 November; *Chocolat* (Johnny Depp) 13 November. 7.30 PM at Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **AWON presents The Masquerade Ball** on 14 November at Hotel Yak & Yeti. Rs 3,500 per person, Rs 6,000 per couple.

MUSIC

- ❖ **Catch 22** back at the Rum Doodle.
- ❖ **Jazz at Patan: a Concert for Peace** Nepali classical music and jazz by Cadenza and Friends. 6PM at Patan Museum, 8 November. Tickets Rs 750. 5521810, 981052968
- ❖ **Abhaya & The Steam Injuns** every Friday at Fusion, Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Archirock Concert** featuring Robin n' Looza:, Cobweb, Karma Band and more 2-6PM on 8-9 November at BICC. 50 percent discount on *Matrix Revolution* at Jai Nepal with purchase of concert ticket.
- ❖ **Orient Express** Latin Jazz band at the Rox Garden 7PM on 14, 15 November, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu.

DRINK

- ❖ **Winter Warmers** at the Sumeru Bar with 25 percent discount between 6-8PM at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Festival of tropical black rum drinks** and great steaks at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4433043
- ❖ **Cosmic Cocktails** and chic home furnishings at Mitra Lounge Bar and Mausam homestyle boutique. Above Café Mitra, Thamel. 4259015

FOOD

- ❖ **Mediterranean Food Promotion:** Dine on Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Moroccan food with a complimentary glass of wine, 7-16 November, dinner only. Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kathmandu.
- ❖ **Sunday Brunch** at Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, 11AM-3PM. Buckwheat pancakes, scrambled eggs with smoked salmon and chives, muesli, yoghurt, fresh fruits, a glass of wine and more for Rs 400. 5543017
- ❖ **Dosa Festival** at The Café 7PM onwards till 15 November. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu.
- ❖ **English Football**, steaks and draft beer for Rs 55 per glass at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4433043.
- ❖ **BBQ in the Shambala Garden** everyday at 7PM. 4412999
- ❖ **Sekuwa Saanjh** Friday BBQ from 7:30PM at Rs 555 at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Café U** Japanese home-cooking, cakes and coffee. Opp British School, Sanepa. 5523263
- ❖ **Roadhouse Cafe** for wood fired pizzas and more. Opp St Mary's School, Pulchowk. 5521755
- ❖ **Traditional Nepali Thali lunch** at Patan Museum Café inside Patan Museum. 11AM-2.30 PM. Cocktails and snacks 2-7.30 PM. 5526271
- ❖ **Saturday BBQ Lunch** at Club Himalaya Nagarkot. Rs 500 per person. 468008
- ❖ **Traditional Newari Thali** at Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. 4431632
- ❖ **Weekend Ban Bhoj** at the Godavari Village Resort. Reservation recommended. 5560675.
- ❖ **Krishnarpan** ceremonial Nepali cuisine fit for a king. Reservation recommended. 4479488

GETAWAYS

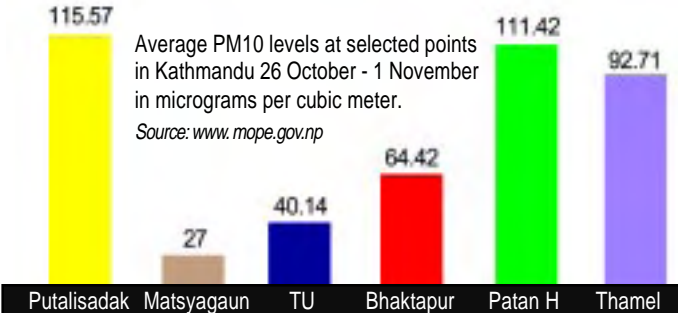
- ❖ **Microflight flying adventures** with the Avia Club, Pokhara.
- ❖ **Shivapuri Heights Cottage** 30 minutes from Kathmandu, at the edge of the Shivapuri Reserve. Email: info@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Weekend Special** for Rs 3000 per couple, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280
- ❖ **TGIF overnight package** at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Back to Nature** overnight package for resident expatriates at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Shivapuri Cottage, Dadagaon** Nature, peace and luxury. 4354331 Email: cbbasnyat@hotmail.com
- ❖ **Magnificent mountains** and deluxe tents at Adventure Tented Camp & Country Kitchen. 4418992 Email: advcamp@wnik.com

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY



Good	< 60
Ok	61 to 120
Unhealthy	121 to 350
Harmful	351 to 425
Hazardous	>425

The average air quality of Kathmandu Valley recorded an improvement last week with 'moderate' and 'good' air in all six air quality monitoring stations. Although Putali Sadak was slightly better than normal, it was still the most-polluted area with daily average of 130 PM10 last Friday. The weekly average for Putali Sadak is 112 PM10, which is a considerable reduction from last week's 180. The second-most polluted site is Patan Hospital.



NEPALI WEATHER

VIS-06-11-2003 05:00 GMT

by MAUSAM BEED

The most significant weather development this week is the arrival of the first westerly front of the season in the western Himalaya over Kashmir. A weak jet stream has now made its season migration south from the Tibetan plateau, which will push the frontal system away into western Tibet. But the change in wind direction will bring us slight respite from the Indo-Gangetic haze which has reduced visibility over the whole region, including Nepal, this past week. Although this westerly front lacks bluster, it will bring down temperatures. The timely arrival of the westerlies is a good sign that winter rain may be more normal than in previous few years. Over the weekend, the Valley will enjoy temperatures in the mid-20s despite some passing cloud cover.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



BOOKWORM



Zoya Warsi, John Follan, Rita Cristofari
Reviewed by
80
A young Afghan woman's journey of her resistance against the Taliban and religious fanaticism as part of the Revolutionary Women of Afghanistan. She grew up in Afghanistan but escaped to Pakistan as a teenager after the disappearance and death of her parents. Zoya is our witness to the horrors perpetrated by the Taliban and the Mujahaddin warlords.



Nietzsche: Selected Writings
Srishti Publications, 1998
Rs 232
Friedrich Nietzsche's most prophetic, futuristic and apocalyptic philosophies are presented in this book that reveals his insights. The book is an instant guide to the madness in our society which he prophesied a century ago. Nietzsche as a philosopher against society, both the state and the herd. Nietzsche as a philosopher with a hammer.



Rise and shine

Get ready for a brand new day with
BBC World Today.

Every morning on 102.4 FM from 5:45-6:15 AM

Daily 2045-2115 **BBC** नेपाली सेवा
Daily 2245-2300 **BBC** नेपाली सेवा

BBC
on FM 102.4

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



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 Saiha Yatayat, Harihar Bhawan, Pulchowk. Tel: 547428

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

LIVE IN STYLE! Arcadia Apartments in the heart of Thamel. Centrally located, fully furnished apartments at unbelievable rates. For details: 981026903, 4260187

Renting made easy:
www.21etonline.com- Looking for a place to stay- Log on to find the perfect house, apartment or even a retail space that meets all your needs. Make an easy 1000 bucks by reporting a vacant property to us. Find out how- www.21etonline.com

To Let: Pleasant room (with private, ensuite bathroom) in a quiet bungalow in Lazimpat. Share kitchen and large lounge. Perhaps suitable for visiting professional or volunteer. Tel 4428549

Get 10 % exclusive discount on the normal subscription rate of Himalmedia's publication namely; Himal Khabarpatrika, Nepali Times and Wave magazine. Only at the Grihini Department Store limited, Baluwatar, Phone: 4415186

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

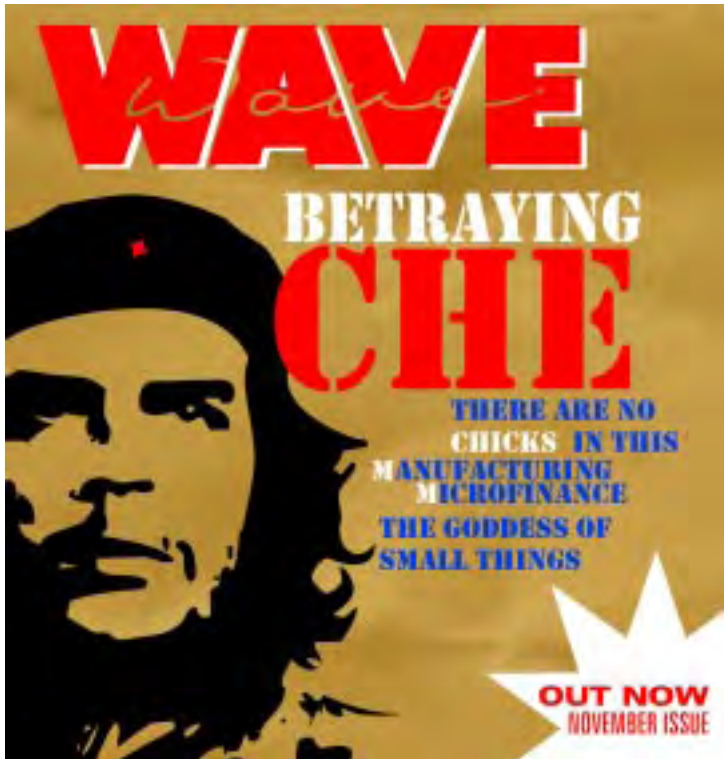
Everything that has a beginning has an end, and so it is with the final instalment of The Matrix trilogy. *Revolutions* makes good on the genius brothers Wachowski's promise to fuse Kafka, *Alice in Wonderland*, the New Testament and *The Wizard of Oz*. If *The Matrix* and *Reloaded* chartered the spiritual/prophetic path to the war between the machines and mankind, *Revolutions* delivers on their promise with bombastic action and climactic delight. Neo (Keanu Reeves), Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) and Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) maintain those intense, serious expressions throughout, and Hugo Weaving reprises his role as Agent Smith with his usual sado-masochistic lopsided grin. Their roles are flawless, perfectly planned but the mood is darker, more fatalistic, the stakes higher.



JAI NEPAL CINEMA

MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Call 4442220 for bookings.
www.jainepal.com
12PM, 3PM, 6PM



A mellowed mayor?



The two faces of Keshab Sthapit: malevolent (left) and benevolent (right).

nothing is impossible. A team of engineers is poring over the Ring Road garden project and pointing out flaws in the plan. Sthapit brushes them off. “You’ll get everything you need, don’t use words like ‘impossible’,” he tells them. Spread out on the desk in his office are bold new plans for improving the city: new streets to decongest traffic, a masterplan for more efficient garbage management, a scheme to enforce zoning laws in the city’s historical heart.

For this mayor, garbage is an opportunity, not a problem. His idea is to turn the limestone pit at the cement factory site at Chobar into a gigantic compost heap for the city’s organic waste

and sell the fertiliser. “We could generate 40,000 tons of high-grade manure every year and sell it to fund our urban renewal plans,” he says, making it sound rather easier than it would be.

But will that money be enough to buy up private property for his town re-planning? Sthapit has it all figured out: it is called “zero cost and value appreciation”. The compensation to people who lose property is that their remaining property will be worth five times more when an area is upgraded. The municipality is trying to put this formula to work on the Soaltee-Kalanki and the Min Bhawan-Battisputali link roads, but with considerable resistance from sceptical locals. ♦

(See also: ‘Mr Establishment’, *Nepali Times*, # 90)



from p1

“I’ve already cut down on cigarettes and alcohol, and I’m on my way to becoming a pure vegetarian,” says Sthapit, dragging on his second cigarette on the parapet of the Dharara tower. Unlike his predecessor, PL Singh, who said he wanted to transform Kathmandu into Singapore, Sthapit’s plans are less ambitious. He would be satisfied if he could turn it into Bangkok. Without the traffic. “Or maybe Kuala Lumpur,” he says. “What Mahathir did to Malaysia, we can do in five years.”

Sthapit’s more immediate plans are to meet the challenge of the city’s population which has swollen by 100,000 in the last two years due to people fleeing violence in the countryside. This has put pressure on services like water, transportation, housing and garbage. These are problems that need national solutions pushed by the government, how can the city tackle them? The mayor’s answer: “Well,

there is no national government, so we have to try to do what we can here.”

Besides, Sthapit thinks these problems will resolve themselves once the fighting stops. Even so, with proper planning he believes the Valley can absorb up to 3.5 million people. “If you look at Kathmandu from up here,” he says, gesturing at the jumble of houses over Khichapokhari, “you will see that the growth is horizontal, the solution is to go vertical outside the city core. We can make this a vibrant, cosmopolitan city.”

Sthapit’s staunchest critics are rivals from within the left movement. In a television talk show last month, one of them called him a “dreamer”. Sthapit replied: “I have nothing to say to people who don’t dare to dream.” Another Sthapitism: “Nepal is not least-developed country, it is least-managed country.”

Back at his office, it is clear this is a mayor who doesn’t take no for an answer, and believes

Dove
does not dry your skin like soap
because it is 1/4 moisturiser

Rs. 35/-

Summit Hotel
upstairsideas
Supported by
Times

SUMMIT HOTEL & PATAN MUSEUM CAFE IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE UPSTAIRS IDEAS
PRESENTS
JAZZ
PATAN
a concert for Peace

FEATURING
CADENZA & FRIENDS

Navin Chhetri DRUMS/ VOCALES	Robin Lal Shrestha TABLA
Pravin Chhetri TRUMPET	Suresh Bhojra Shrestha SHRUTI
Jigme Sherpa GUITARS	Suresh Raj Bajracharya SAROD
Chi Thapa BASS	Ganesh Pandey PIANO
James Lhadungpo SAXOPHONE	Ganesh Kamad HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL VOCALES
Sidhant Thapa PERCUSSION	

DATE: 8th NOVEMBER
TIME: 6:00PM ONWARDS
VENUE: Patan Museum, PATAN
TICKETS: RS. 750

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT: THE UPSTAIRS JAZZ BAR, LAZIMPT | SUMMIT HOTEL, KOPCHOWLE HEIGHT
PATAN MUSEUM CAFE, PATAN DURBAR SQUARE. TICKETS BOOKING: 5-521010; 5-524454; 4-410434; 4-427217
Gate opens at 5:30pm. *Special Buffet Dinner@Rs.215 at the Museum Cafe.



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Martial bliss

It is when one's wife starts taking martial art lessons after 20 years of marriage that one instinctively knows that this country is firmly on the path of militarisation. It also means, as I was to soon find out, that the term 'marital bliss' takes on a whole new meaning.

I know my wife is making progress because her homework is to practice some of the more intricate lethal hand-to-hand combat techniques like chokes, throws and joint-locking manoeuvres on her better half, viz: me. As a supportive househusband who has always loved being kicked around, it behooves me to provide full encouragement to her latest self-improvement endeavour. She has just been practicing take-downs, ground grappling, palm and pressure-point strikes, and I can now say with some authority that I know what it feels like to be a stuntman opposite Steven Segal in the film, *Belly of the Beast*.

When one's wife suddenly transforms herself into a ninja, there is really not much you can do but learn to be a crouching tiger oneself as a deterrence. The first step, then, is to research the history and evolution of martial arts so one has a solid theoretical foundation.

Being a warlike species, the human race has been fighting each other tooth and nail since time in memoriam. For instance, ancient murals depict mankind always on a heightened state of alert. They used to defend themselves against marauding sabre-tooth tigers, woolly mammoths or fire-breathing

dragons by putting their (mankind's) security forces under unified command and retreating into prehistoric caves.

Even when some peacenik emperors of the Middle Kingdom banned weapons, human beings found ways to tear each other asunder with their bare hands. This art was perfected in China, which through the ages has experimented with Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism and, later, Maoism. The tradition of martial arts stressed character development, physical fitness and proper decorum towards adversaries, so that when one does break every bone in their body, one does so non-violently, with compassion, discipline and self-control.

The fact that martial arts have endured for so many centuries means that its techniques have been perfected as they were handed down from one generation of Black Belts to the next, right up to the Lagankhel Branch of the Aikido and Kyokushin Training Institute where they teach you the doctrine of preemptively kicking ass.

This is the doctrine that allows one to land a high kick on anyone suspected of harbouring a germ warhead, which can be every second person in this city, and ask questions later. This is slightly different from the Bloody Nose Doctrine, which is a martial principle under which one firmly believes that one's opponent will not agree to resume talking to you unless one smashes him to pulp.

But if you will excuse me, I have a marital law class to go to. ♦



In the name of the Father

Even those who don't personally know Father Eugene Watrin will recognise him as the priest on the bicycle on Kathmandu streets. Until last year, there was no slowing down this 82-year-young Jesuit. Rain or shine, day or night, Watrin would be pedaling away on the Tripureswor uphill without getting off.

It's a long way from Dayton, Ohio, where Watrin was born and raised till he joined the Jesuit order at 19. He knew it meant he could never marry, committing his whole life to the service and severing ties with parents, sisters and younger brother. Though the Vatican later changed the rules, it would be 21 years of living halfway across the globe before Watrin met his family again.

After nine years in India, Watrin was delighted when offered the chance of teaching in Nepal. In 1955, he began as hostel prefect at St Xavier's Godavari School and taught English language, literature and biology to many boys who are now movers and shakers in the land.

When he became principal in 1962, Watrin secured the property at Tara Mahal in Jawalakhel for primary day students. "You can't just give an education, it's more of a cooperative effort between teachers, students and parents," says Watrin who believes in an all-round education that emphasises sports, hiking and community service.

No wonder there was

something different about 'Godavarians': graduates of St Xavier's. Almost as soon as the first students finished school, Watrin established the Godavari Alumni Association (GAA) so the boys (and later, girl members) could contribute to society through social service. Worried about his former students having to go abroad to college, Watrin set up St Xavier's College in Thapathali in 1988.

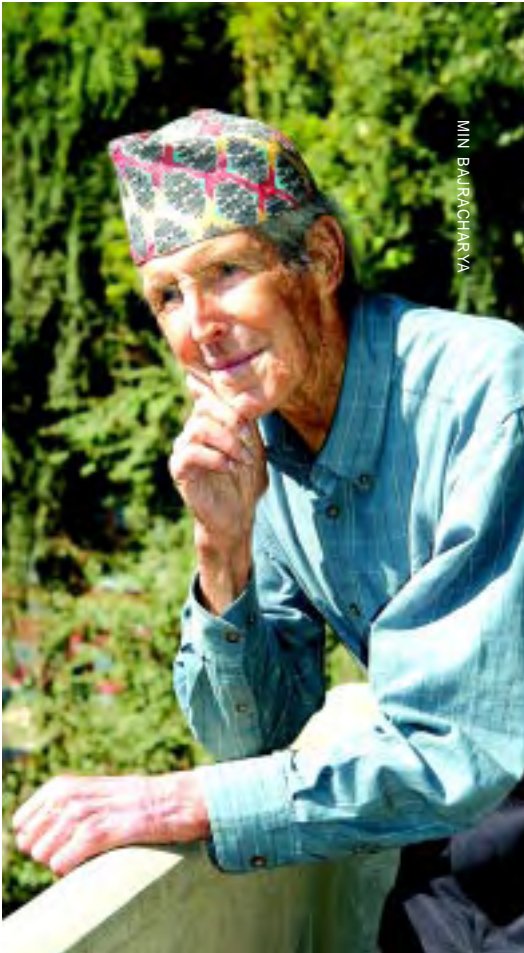
Last year, Watrin was diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas. His doctor advised return to the US where he was told the disease had progressed too far to operate and chemotherapy was the only recourse. Watrin found the treatment is available here, and that was all the excuse he needed to return to Nepal. Last week, doctors were surprised to find the cancer had all but disappeared and attributed it to Watrin's spiritual strength and tenacity.

Later this month, Watrin will receive the Gorkha Dakshin Bahu from King Gyanendra for his lifelong service to Nepal. But as one of his students recognises: "Father Watrin does not seek applause, in a place where so much is done

for effect." His work has not ended, and Watrin says he still has two or three projects he wants to start.

Watrin is now back on his bicycle, and asked whether it's such a good idea, his clear blue eyes widen: "God's will is my will. It's kind of my karma to accept what God has put before me." So, we'll be seeing more of the good padre negotiating traffic. ♦

(Sraddha Basnyat)



MIN BARACHARVA

From 23rd December 2003 we offer you weekly direct flights on Boeing 767-300ER aircraft with 24 Star Class seats and 248 Economy seats from Kathmandu to Amsterdam and worldwide connections with other carriers such as KLM

Star Class

For information contact
Martinair
C/o General Sales Agent, Marco Polo Travels Nepal
Heritage Plaza II, Kamaladi, Post Box 2769
Tel: 977-1-4247215, 4255664, 4255665, 4242019
Fax: 977-1-4244484, Email: airline_marco@polo.com.np
www.martinair.com

Office Hour Daily 9:00AM - 5:00PM
Lunch Break 1:00PM - 2:00PM, Saturday 9:00AM - 1:00PM, Sunday and Public Holidays Closed

Martinair
your wings

K. L. DUGAR GROUP

अन्न शुद्ध गर्नुको चक्की आटा
आइरन Iron (Reduce) + मिन्टालीन ए Vitamin 'A' + फोलिक एसिड Folic Acid गुण

आशिर्वाद
शुद्ध गर्नुको चक्की आटा

आइरन जरुरी हुन्छ किन ?

- बच्चाहरूमा स्वस्थ शरीर, बौद्धिक विकास, तीव्र बुद्धि साथै शारीरिक वृद्धिका लागि ।
- विद्यार्थीमा अध्ययनको लागि तथ्या अध्ययन हुन्छ बच्चा र पढाई तथा अन्य क्रियाकलापमा सक्रिय बनाउनका लागि ।
- गर्भवती आमा र बच्चाको राम्रो स्वास्थ्यको लागि ।

त्यसैले वैज्ञानिक अनुसन्धानद्वारा प्रमाणित गर्नुको पिठोमा आइरनको आपूर्ति उपयुक्त र सरल हुने हुँदा के. एल. दुग्ग ग्रुपले आशिर्वाद चक्की आटालाई आइरन, मिन्टालीन ए र खनिज घटाना सहित पूर्ण पोषिक स्वादिलो चक्की आटामा प्रस्तुत गरेको छ ।

आशिर्वाद
शुद्ध गर्नुको चक्की आटा

गर्नुको सम्पूर्ण स्वाद चक्की आटामा, सम्पूर्ण पोषिकता नरम रोटीमा