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2003

This year was bloodier than last year. What will next year be like?

2004



JANUARY: After months of secret negotiations, a ceasefire is declared. The government withdraws the terrorist label and bounty on capture of Maoists.

FEBRUARY: Maoists organise mass meetings in various cities, including Kathmandu. Baburam Bhattarai and Ram Bahadur Thapa make public appearances for the first time. Government forms negotiating team headed by Minister Narayan Singh Pun.

MARCH: First formal peace talks between the government and Maoists begin in Kathmandu. Despite the ceasefire, Maoist extortion and threats continue throughout the country although there aren't any major clashes.

APRIL: Tourism in the peak trekking season is

hit by the effect of SARS. China seals border. A Himalmedia poll on Nepali new year shows 70% of Nepalis think Maoist demands can be met by peaceful means and 20 percent would vote for them if they lay down arms.

MAY: Five parties launch first phase of agitation to force the king to reverse his 4 October move. Their demand: either restore parliament or form an all-party government. The United States lists Maoists as a terrorist organisation, prompting the rebels to harden their anti-American stance. Nepal benefits from worldwide publicity at the Everest Golden Jubilee celebrations. New records and traffic jams on the world's highest mountain.

JUNE: Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand resigns, setting off a scramble to replace him. King Gyanendra asks parties to recommend candidate, but opts for Surya Bahadur Thapa instead of Madhab Nepal. Parties close down 8,000 schools all over the country for a week.

JULY: In response to a Maoist demand, the government frees three rebel leaders to resume peace talks. Agitating parties come up with an 18-point program aimed at curtailing royal powers. There are no signs of reconstruction and rehabilitation as the period of no war no peace drags on.

AUGUST: Children are declared a zone of peace. Army kills 17 Maoists in Doramaba just as talks are being held in Dang. Maoists declare an end

to the ceasefire, government restores terrorist tag. Maoists begin urban assassination killing senior army colonel in Kathmandu.

SEPTEMBER: Nepal joins the WTO in Cancun. Conflict escalates with heavy Maoist casualties. Maoists take attacks down to the tarai. Kathmandu-based ambassadors lean on parties to patch up with king, they tone down agitation.

OCTOBER: Under pressure from civil society Maoists declare a 9-day unilateral Dasai ceasefire. Security forces continue operations. The CIAA arrests former Nepali Congress and RPP ministers for corruption. Global Nepali diaspora holds its first ever conference in Kathmandu.

NOVEMBER: The government sets up a 'unified command' under the army and says it will arm villagers to resist Maoists. Both moves condemned by rights groups and donors. Maoists use landmines to target security patrols with devastating effect. Interpol once again issues red corner notice against 11 Maoist leaders. Despite insurgency, tourism rebounds.

DECEMBER: Five parties resume agitation, arrest of three student leaders angers protestors. Government announces amnesty and rehabilitation for Maoists who surrender. National Human Rights Commission issues list of more than 808 people disappeared by both sides.

Best and worst case scenarios

As 2003 draws to a close, neither the palace and the parties, nor the army and the Maoists show signs of negotiating. What is in store for 2004?

Best case scenario: Palace and the parties agree on a national government that will rise above vested interest to agree on a ceasefire, while working towards local elections. The Maoists could be persuaded to join the political mainstream and contest parliamentary elections in two years.

Worst case scenario: The king and parties carry on as sworn enemies, pushing the parties to join the Maoists in a republican cause. The parties' agitation merges with the insurgency and the country sinks further into anarchy, the insurgency takes on an ethnic edge, there is greater militarisation, more human rights violations and at least another decade of worthless conflict.

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Weekly Internet Poll # 116

Q. Is a military solution the only way to resolve Nepal's insurgency?

Total votes: 1,494

Weekly Internet Poll # 117. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Now that their leaders have been released, should the students call off their agitation?

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STATE OF THE STATE

by CK LAL



Boom, gloom and doom

We live in the present with the memories of our past, and undermine our future.

After storming into the history of Nepal with the Kot Massacre, Jang Bahadur did three things. First, he acquired social legitimacy by forcing intermarriages between the Shah clans with their Kunwar soldiers. Second, he reinforced it by either butchering or exiling the competition. Third, he acquired political legitimacy from the East India Company by offering the services of the Gorkha Army for activities like crushing the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny for which Karl Marx gave Jang the appellation 'British dog'.

These shrewd moves served Jang's extended clan for well over 150 years, even though his sons had to enjoy their prosperity in exile when his brothers did to each other what he had done to his illustrious uncles. The cross-marriages between the Shahs and Ranas fused the

two into the single ruling family of Nepal.

Rai, Magar and Gurung youngsters paid with their lives in Flanders Field, Mesopotamia and the Burma Front so that Nepal's rulers would continue to profit from their ties to the British. Had successive Rana cousins been less tyrannical, perhaps the bravery of Gorkha soldiers would have been much less desperate. Nepali rulers got used to a 'permanent war economy': living as if there was no tomorrow.

Lord Krishna says in the *Gita* that people emulate what their 'superior beings' do, so the present generation of Nepal's has also learnt to live for the day. Kathmandu's rulers live their sepia colour life reminiscing about the good old pre-1990 days when the downtrodden knew their place and stayed there. The neo-elite lived off the glory of the Jan Andolan of

1990 that made them what they are. The Maobadis draw their inspiration from the China of 1960s, a period in their history that Chinese themselves are trying hard to forget.

A society lives in the present, with the memories of its past, without realising that it is undermining its own future in the process. After successive years of stagnation, the government predicts that the economy will grow by over 4.3 percent, exceeding the budgetary target set for this year. The World Bank reports that Kathmandu's air is the dirtiest of all 17 Asian cities that it surveyed, perhaps proving the link between economic growth and ecological suicide.

Such a rosy forecast from the Finance Minister makes one wonder if he has taken note of the poverty reduction equation that says it takes 6.8 percent growth in the GDP to create 2.5 percent more employment. It is unlikely that 4.3 percent economic growth will lead to any poverty reduction—especially given our present exponential growth in military spending.

The boom in Kathmandu amidst a climate of doom and gloom enveloping the rest of the kingdom is reminiscent of the early 20th century when the Ranas, rewarded for their loyalty to the British, competed to outdo each other by building extravagant palaces. History is testimony to what happened later. The paradox of plenty amidst poverty is inherently unsustainable.

These are some of the questions that we should be worrying about at the end of another year. Over time, the anti-monarchy slogans that rent Ratna Park will become redundant. Maobadis will ultimately peter out. There is no doubt that the people will finally prevail. Such is the march of history. As the Rig Veda says: "All things will pass." ♦



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

There are times these days when the sense of déjà vu is so acute it gets unbearable. The appearance on state television news of Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa at the airport on Tuesday flanked by pre-1990 faces to warn protesters on the streets that he would tolerate all criticism except condemnation of the monarchy was straight out of another era.

It is when once self-evident truths have to be restated and enforced by policemen dressed like ninjas that you know the polity has entered another age. The more things change in Nepal, the more they remain the same.

To be fair to the prime minister, this erstwhile warrior against 'underground extra-constitutional forces' during the Panchayat period is still a bulwark against the rise of the hardline right. Having been consistently centrist throughout his career, he apparently sees familiar ghosts from 20 years ago lurking again in the corridors of power.

The day after returning from his second SAARC tour, Thapa reversed the potentially disastrous decision to put three student union leaders behind bars. That short-sighted move had carried all the hallmarks of a bygone era, and was proof to many of the ascendancy of Panchayat-era throwbacks in Kathmandu. We get vertigo just watching them struggle to grab the steering wheel as the bus with all of us in it careens to the edge.

There are now too many signs of democratic reversal for this trend to be a fluke: the belief that nominating a new prime minister is some kind of a solution, the announcement of yet another royal civic reception in Nepalganj next month, a familiar sycophantic ambience in the air.

There is a reckless disregard for public will and national sentiment. When you see power as a zero sum game, there is a 50-50 chance you will lose. To win at all cost, it is tempting then, to use militarisation, religious fundamentalism, or revert to authoritarianism. But it is no victory if you haven't addressed the grievances that set all this off in the first place: we don't want this to escalate from a class war to an ethnic or separatist conflagration.

It is already too late to set some things right. But future Nepal's will never forgive us if we don't try, even at this late hour, to work towards a Nepal where power is devolved to the periphery—the only guarantee of lasting peace.

Time is unrelenting, it moves on. Time heals, time manages itself, it takes care of things. We in Nepal have always let time take its course. It is the fatalistic excuse of the feckless to let things drift. Let us, in this new year, take time by its horns. Let us lift ourselves from this quicksand, from a gathering miasma of apathy and hopelessness, to restore faith in our own ability to set things right.

LETTERS

ROYAL RESOLVE

The World Bank country director in Nepal, Ken Ohashi, wrote in a local English daily recently that the Managing Director of the World Bank, Shengman Zhang, had an audience with His Majesty the King during which the monarch, sharing "the sense of impatience" (of the World Bank), asked the visiting official to "insist on specific and tight deadlines" (with the government) in implementing reforms.

In the mid-80s, as a joint secretary in the National Planning Commission we had to persuade the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Loan Mission to make user management of forests one of the conditionalities for the loan. They obliged and it worked, paving the way for the vigorous regeneration of forests in our country. I had to resort to the ploy because I was too small a fry in the bureaucracy to successfully

prevail over the recalcitrant Ministry of Forest at the time, and there was no other help around.

But not the omnipotent king of Nepal. Zhang probably went away a disappointed man because the king did not tell him that he would direct the government to fulfil its commitments, or else.

This particular episode certainly did not add to the dignity of the monarchy. The monarch should surround himself with advisers not only with demonstrated loyalty but also the know-how to make the state machinery work more efficiently. More than the World Bank, it is the vast multitude of poor and powerless Nepal's who are longing for such royal resolve.

The monarch has an unenviable but historic role to discharge as he presides over the country's current political transition. This challenge is made more complex and paradoxical because after elections the reins of state power have to be handed back to the same genre of

politicians whose sustained misuse of popular mandate brought about the catastrophe that the country suffers at present.

The king will not earn laurels from the people if he has to meekly surrender power to them as being demanded at present by the opportunistic coalition of the otherwise highly unlike-minded political parties. As difficult as the proposition might sound, the king has to engineer such changes so that the politicians, once restored to power, will find that they can do no harm to the country.

The issue at stake is the devolution of authority to stakeholders at the grassroots so they are sufficiently and inalienably empowered to plan, implement and manage their own development initiatives. It is this principle that worked in the robust resurgence of our forest wealth, despite chronic bad governance perpetrated by stinkingly corrupt politicians during the last dozen years of democracy.

The priority for the country

today is to replicate this experience across all socio-economic arenas that directly affect the peoples' welfare: education, health, agricultural, development and population control among others. While such devolution promises the building of a stronger Nepal, it is frustrating that the international community, interested in Nepal's security, have not found it necessary to advise the country along this line.

Bihari Krishna Shrestha
Kathmandu

ROYAL NEPAL

Your puff piece on Royal Nepal Airlines ('Royal Nepal Airlines battles battered image', # 175) does nothing to mitigate the suffering of thousands of passengers who have been inconvenienced and treated like dirt by Nepal's flag carrier. Nor does it force the airline to take responsibility for its dismal performance. The airline's managing director you interviewed in the same issue is right when he says the airline

reflects the state of the country. Look at the way he is passing the buck on past mismanagement and past corruption, blaming everyone but himself. He sure is talking like a Nepali politician.

JN Singh,
New Delhi

● Mohan Khanal is right ('The airline develops if the country develops', #175) when he says that it is political interference by corrupt politicians in the past 12 years that has ruined his airline. I personally have watched helplessly as hundreds of people were forced into the airline's staff roll every time there was a new

tourism minister. The politicians never allowed the airline to buy the kind of equipment it required, but arm-twisted them to negotiate exorbitant lease rates on unsuitable aircraft and pocket vast sums in kickbacks. 'Lauda' is now synonymous with corruption because of this. The politicians not only ruined the airline, but they also ruined the country. And they are back on the streets burning tyres because they want to get back to plundering the country.

Name withheld on request
Kathmandu



Voice of the people

KISHORE NEPAL

Walls limit our freedom, said poet Basu Sashi in another age. Those lines make more sense today than when it was penned: the higher and thicker our walls, the more insecure we become.

In the villages, where many young Nepalis die at the hands of the Maoists or security forces, the sense of insecurity is acute. Most deaths never get reported. Dead husbands and sons, daughters slaughtered become mere statistics. The list of disappeareds grows every day.

The few stories that do reach Kathmandu, are either untrue or distorted. A fortnight ago, national newspapers reported the case of 20-year-old Suresh Baral, a student in Pokhara, who was reportedly killed in the crossfire between the Maoists and security forces when the rebels started firing from across the lake in Raniban. Only later, it was revealed that there were no rebels at all, only a rumours of Maoists on motorbikes. Two innocent young people were shot when panic-stricken sentries sprayed surrounding residential buildings with gunfire.

It's time that we started asking for the truth, straight from the horse's mouth. It's time we let the villagers, farmers, students, bus passengers and local teachers speak. As a journalist, I was always trying to find a way where my role would be minimal, how we in the media could give a forum to the people. We hit upon the idea of a roving field-based television talk show. We would broadcast the voice of the people with minimal editing.

A television program shows that Nepalis still have the courage to speak up. The nation listens.



Participants at a *Mat Abhimat* program in Pokhara.

Four months ago, when we started broadcasting '*Mat Abhimat*' on Nepal Television every Tuesday night, it seemed like a bold step because, unlike conventional Kathmandu-centred talk programs with studio guests, we took our studio right to the people. We thought knew it would not be easy gathering people in places where speaking the truth on camera was suicidal. But we underestimated how brave people can be when they have suffered and have nothing to lose.

In four months we visited 24

districts, and we were overwhelmed by the extent of local participation. Numbers grew from 30 participants in Gorkha to 100 in Dadeldhura. People walked for days to be on the show and pour out their sorrows and shared their hopes. The format is open: everyone gets an opportunity to speak as long as possible. They are intelligent and speak with simplicity about violence, extortion, threats, corruption and hopes for peace. There is no manipulation or superficiality. Without fear they express their frustrations towards both the army

and the Maoists. At times, it is us in the editing rooms who have to think twice about including statements that could get them into trouble.

As a journalist, this is satisfying work: we are pushed into the background and the medium takes over. It brings satisfaction and also tears of sorrow to hear the suffering of the Nepali people who have been made childless, widows and orphans.

Jaykishor Laba, a lawyer in Janakpur, has been living on the street for the past few months. He describes what his son, Sanjib Karna, looks like to anyone who will listen. His wife, Bimala Debi, runs towards every familiar face and weeps when it is not her son. Every time the phone rings, both hope it's their boy at the other end. They don't know where he is, or even if he is still alive.

In Parsa, the Maoists killed Phulkumari Debi's husband, a policeman, and she tells us on camera she doesn't want to live anymore. "What is left for me now? It doesn't make any difference whether I live or die." In Gorkha, a brother laments the loss of his sister but feels nothing for his other sibling who joined the rebels and died in an encounter. "He died for his political commitments but my sister had nothing to do with the Maoists, she wouldn't even hurt an ant," Rudra Pokhrel, principal of a local school, said on *Mat Abhimat*.

Jasoda Sharma in Baglung exists in a limbo. Her husband was disappeared and although the village regards her a widow, she still walks around with *sindoor*. "For how long do we have to live in misery like this?" asks Bhuyuman Ligal, 84, from

Palpa. He says that he has seen too many young people die and disappear. The tears running down his wrinkled face say the rest.

Through *Mat Abhimat*, the unheard voices of Nepal's rural population from the most violence-ridden districts are now on record. Of course there are risks involved. Just two days before Dasai, in Saule Bazar at Doti, we arrived at an encounter and found three policemen bleeding to death on the ground. That sight left me and our crew sleepless for many nights. At Dipayal, a Maoist disguised as an army officer tried to force a police constable to pressurise us into giving him a ride in our car. And on our way back to Dhangadi, we found ourselves in the middle of a shootout.



The 21 talk shows we have broadcast so far made me realise that the people are still optimistic and aspire to a better future. The people of Nepal, away from the cities and big towns, are honest, hardworking and don't have big dreams. They want peace and understood very clearly what's at stake. We all stand to learn more by listening to what they have to say. ♦

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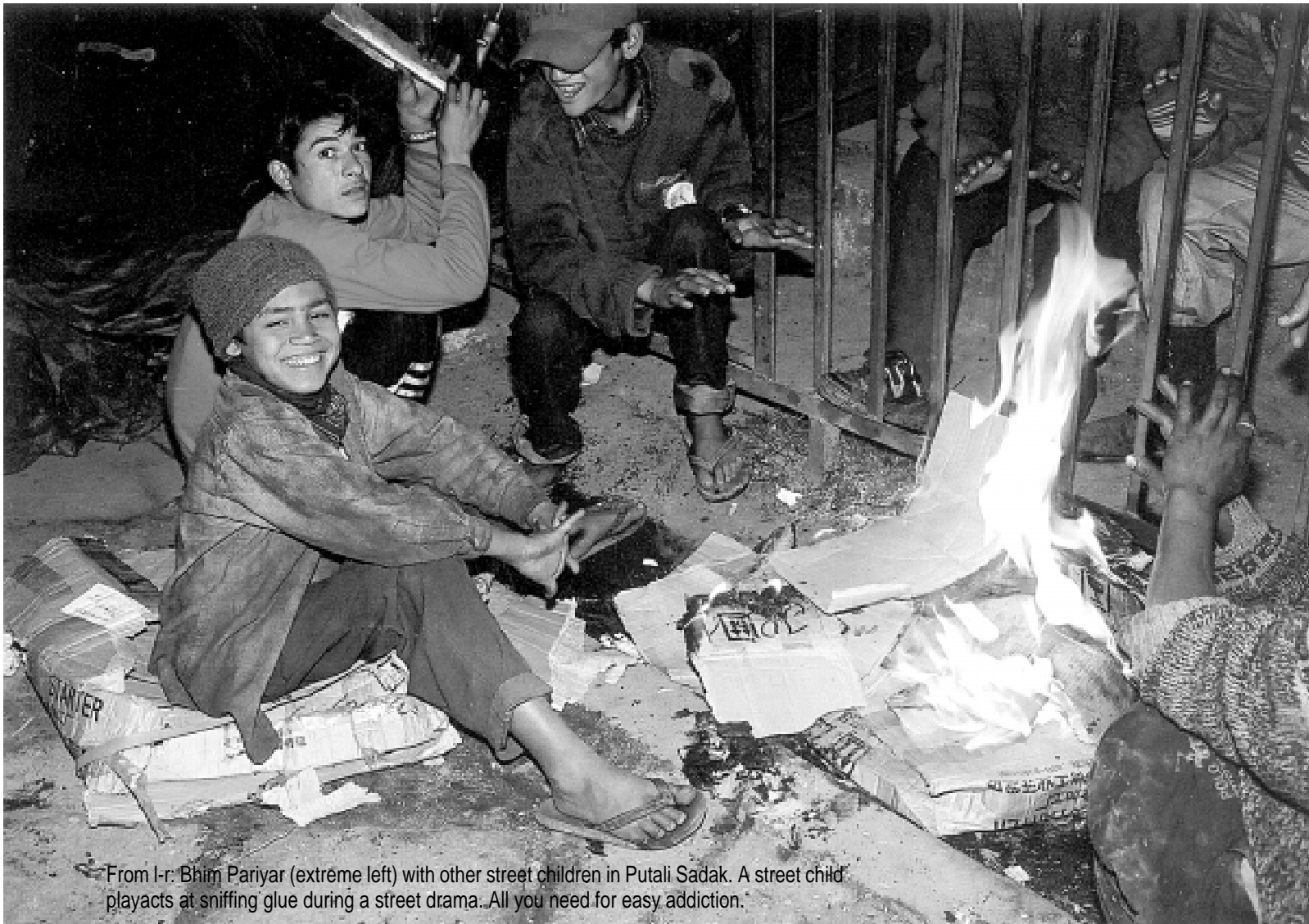
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From l-r: Bhim Pariyar (extreme left) with other street children in Putali Sadak. A street child playacts at sniffing glue during a street drama. All you need for easy addiction.

Glued to the streets

The Valley's street children crisis has a growing new dimension: glue addiction.

KIRAN PANDEY

NARESH NEWAR

It's late night at Putali Sadak. The busy street is quiet and the good citizens of the capital have gone home to sleep. But this is the best time of day for Bhim Pariyar and his friends—no policemen, no shop-keepers or taxi drivers to harass them.

Under the ghostly yellow glow of the halogen lamps, they make a bonfire of cardboard boxes and huddle around the flames for their favourite pastime: listening to Bhim spin stories of impossible exploits. He is the 10-year-old prince of Putali Sadak's rag world, and the richest among his peers. He makes an enviable Rs 400 a day selling plastic.

It's almost 9PM now, time for Bhim, the youngest and most hard-working in the group, to scour the dirty innards of

Kathmandu to find recyclable rubbish. "There's no competition at night because all the others are asleep," says Bhim. With a headphone over his head and a walkman tied securely to his waist ("You don't really want to know how I got this," he says with a laugh), he walks into the dark while his friends spread their thin blankets on the pavement. "That one's crazy, I wonder why he works so hard," says one of his friends.

"I wish I was home even if it meant living with my cruel stepmother and father," says 14-year-old Rajen Subba who ran away from his home in Kakaribhitta. He has been living on the streets since he was eight, and believes it's too late for him to go home now. Rajen is weak, having recently recovered from a

severe chest infection. Now, living in the cold with no warm clothing and little food to eat, Rajen seeks escape from the cold and loneliness by inhaling fumes from carpet glue that has been squeezed into an old milk bag. The adhesive contains toluene, a sweet-smelling neurotoxic hydrocarbon, which depresses the appetite and takes the edge off the winter.

"I forget everything. I won't feel cold and hungry and can sleep easily," Rajen explains. The neurotoxin dissolves the cell membrane of the brain cells and also causes hallucinations. "Last night, I saw one god but don't remember which one," Milan Tamang, 14, jokes with his friends. "I got so furious when I couldn't see anything last night," says Rabi Gurung, 16. He is

admired in his circle for his addiction to glue.

Sniffing glue is a short 'trip' with an immediate high. The pleasure is temporary, and the children are unaware that sniffing causes permanent neurological damage, kidney or liver failure, paralysis and even death. A report last year by the child welfare organisation, CWIN, found that nearly 95 percent of all Kathmandu street children were hooked to glue. Researchers found some children use as many as 15 tubes a day—a single tube can last five sessions.

The cheapest glue is made in Nepal and is easily available in all hardware shops. A tube costs anywhere between Rs 20-40 for 25mg. "I was really surprised by the number of street children coming to buy carpet dendrite

from my shop, now I know," says Ramesh Shrestha who owns a shop in Jawalakhel.

"The government should make it illegal to sell the dendrites to minors," says activist Sumnima Tuladhar of CWIN. CWIN and another group, Sath-Sath, organised an awareness workshop for shopkeepers with Kathmandu Valley Police but this hasn't lead to a decrease in the problem. Some shopkeepers increased the price of glue to discourage the children, but the demand is too high. There is also a lack of in-depth research and no longterm study of the health problems faced by users. "This is an emerging problem. If we don't take it seriously, then a lot of lives will be at stake," says Bisio Bajracharya of Sath-Sath.

A surprising number of

activist groups working for child rights contacted during the research into this article seem unaware of the epidemic. Kathmandu Valley Police has paid serious attention, but since glue sniffing is not considered illegal they have problems in controlling shops that sell glue to children. "The best we can do is raise awareness among shop owners and the street children," says Assistant Sub-Inspector Salina Gurung from Valley Police Women's Cell.

Sniffing glue is relatively new to Nepal but is rampant in Latin America, Southeast Asia, South Africa and now in South Asia. According to reports, out of 40 million street children in Latin America, more than half sniff glue. Their numbers are rising in Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia,

HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK

Time passages



Ponder, if you will, the importance of time. Not the magazine, which at its best is a prop for not showing fear on airplanes. No, I want to think this week about the time that governs when we sleep, work, travel and live our lives.

We can't control its passage. At best, we can try to manage time. But, contrary to what quite a few foreign residents of this capital city may believe, we can't stop time. It rolls on, even when you're wearing sandals and a dashiki. One of the most effective techniques of managing time came to us from a Canadian named Sanford Fleming. A railway engineer by profession, Fleming got to thinking about the passage of time when he missed a train in 1878.

Less than 10 years later, the entire world had adopted his notion of Universal Standard Time, based on the British imperial notion that the world was centered on London.

It was a simple enough idea. A single system of time for the entire planet that began in the village of Greenwich and marched away east and west in one hour intervals, encircling the globe and ensuring that everyone got to do their daily activities in—well—daylight.

This was an especially important concept in a place like North America. Canada and the United States are wide countries and thanks to Sanford Fleming's idea, New Yorkers and Los Angelinos, along with Canadian fishermen on both coasts, work in the daytime, not at night.

Alas for the people of China and India, it appears that Fleming is considered a dangerous radical there. Both of Asia's behemoths are also wide countries, China is almost as wide as the United States. India's extremities—from the Rann of Kutch to the mountain jungles



of Arunachal Pradesh—are as far apart as, say, Los Angeles and Atlanta. That's four time zones in America. As for Russia, the land of Rasputin sneers at North America's puny time zone count. You have to reset your watch 11 times as you fly from Vladivostok to the border of Byelorussia.

But India? China? Nope, just the one time zone for us thanks. So if you're in Beijing or Delhi, all is well. You get up at dawn, go to the fields or the office when the sun is warming the sky and head home at dusk. No problem. But how about the people of Urumchi in distant Xinjiang province? They awake and start their day's labor when there

A new year is as good a time to ponder the benefits of time zones.

are still five hours of darkness left. And they take their first drink of fermented mares' milk at high noon, figuratively speaking. The same disconnects plague people in Dibrugah, Assam or Bhuj, Gujarat minus the mares' milk.

Simply put, some pinhead in the recent history of both countries has decided that 'National Unity' matters more than the convenience and safety of citizens so the entire country will follow the capital's schedule.

Ironically, methinks, that the British Empire found ways to accommodate both the imperial center and the fringes of its far flung possessions but modern, ostensibly anti-colonial nation states can't.

This idea of time zone nationalism spills over into Nepal as well. In the scheme of things, we could be two different times if we followed international norms. The country is wide enough. And that pesky 45 minutes that has to be added to any time given in almost every other part of the world. Confusing to the innumerate, present company included.

Given that standardised time is a Canadian invention, I am honored to urge India, China, Nepal, and all other holdouts from the march of Flemingsque progress, to reconsider their stance on the question of time. If only so we can get in a few extra pegs at the end of a long day. Mares' milk anyone? ♦



SATH SATH

Malaysia, Pakistan, India and the Philippines, which has the largest population of street children.

One country has dared to take extreme measures to control the trend: Kenya. In Nairobi this year the government criminalised the supply of harmful substances to minors as well as child glue addicts. The new law states any person found distributing such substances faces three years incarceration.

Here in Nepal, the trend is leaving the streets and entering schools. "It's time for us to take this issue seriously because the trend is spreading to classrooms," says Bajracharya who has seen students sniffing glue on the premises of a private high school in Lalitpur. "We found a lot of school girls are pasting glue onto their ties and sniffing it during class," says Tuladhar.

The immediate danger to glue addicts on the streets is being run over by cars. Recently, a teenager jumped from a bridge and broke his leg. He did not know what he was doing. Another 10-year-old

boy walked straight into a motorcycle and nearly died. A 14-year old girl was cut in a traffic accident.

Nepal's basic drug law is the Narcotic Drugs (Control) Act, 2033 (1976), under which 'the cultivation, production, preparation, manufacture, export, import, purchase, possession, sale or consumption of most commonly abused drugs' is illegal. The Narcotic Drug Control Act, amended in 1993, implements most of the UN Single Convention and the 1972 Protocol by addressing narcotics production, manufacture, sales, import and exports. In association with the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), Nepal has developed a master plan for drug abuse control.

While all this legalese looks good on paper, what Bhim Pariyar and his friends on Putali Sadak need this holiday season is a little kindness, a lot of awareness and a chance of rehabilitation. ♦

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

WB pollution report flayed

A World Bank report presented at an environmental meeting in Manila last week that named Kathmandu as the most polluted city in Asia has been flayed by air quality experts in Nepal. The report that went out internationally on the wire services last week lists New Delhi and China's Chongqing as second and third.

But Nepali environment experts, including those involved in air quality monitoring, say the report is unprofessional and has distorted the real picture. A World Bank consultant appears to have taken raw data of three-hour averages during rush hour from Kathmandu's worst-polluted streets and compared it to annual averages of other cities. That survey of Kathmandu air was carried out by the ESPS project in Kathmandu to determine the location of its monitoring meters, and measured the worst areas of Kathmandu during the most-polluted peak hours during winter.

The World Bank report cited Kathmandu's PM10 concentration (particles smaller than 10 microns per cubic metre) at more than 500, while the actual annual average is about 150. The World Bank report compared the worst pollution in Kathmandu to average levels for other cities. "This has done incalculable harm to Kathmandu's image," said air quality researcher, Toran Sharma at *Aja ko Kura* discussion program on Radio Sagarmatha on Tuesday. "Sure, Kathmandu has a pollution problem but you can't extrapolate data from non-standardised measurements." Kathmandu Valley ambient air pollution is now being measured by six monitoring stations and is posted on the Ministry of Population and Environment website (www.mope.gov.np) and weekly averages are carried in this newspaper (page 14).

The World Bank cited the case of Bangkok, where the visibility at the city's airport improved from about five km in 1996 to nine km in 2000. And, in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, the phase-out of two-stroke engines on motorcycle taxis has slashed concentrations of fine airborne particulate matter by 41 percent.

Loan

The Asian Development Bank this week approved a \$20 million loan to Nepal to improve levels of food security, nutrition, incomes and employment from livestock production and small-scale livestock related enterprises for 164,000 families in 48 districts of Nepal. The main focus is on developing livestock production, processing and marketing in 22 districts.

"The livestock subsector is one of the key entry points for programs to reach the rural poor and, if correctly oriented to small animals, its development favours disadvantaged groups, such as women and poor farmers," says Brian Fawcett, ADB Principal Project Economist. Livestock accounts for 31 percent of agricultural GDP.

NEW PRODUCTS

A SPECIAL DERBY: There's no horsing around with whisky and although plenty of it is available, Nepal Liquors and McDowell believe "the unique blend and impressive aesthetics" of their recently launched Derby Special Premium will put their product in a class apart. The blend of superior Scotch and finest Indian malts is available in 180ml, 375ml and 750ml bottles and are priced between Rs120-470.



TAKEN PLACES: Whether you need scheduled cargo transportation or a specialised charter to ship auto parts, live animals, delicate high-tech goods or precious perishables, no other carrier promises to deliver like Martinair

which began its cargo service in Nepal from 22



December. Nearly 10 tons of cargo can be taken to the Martinair cargo hub at Sharjah, bound for worldwide destinations. Marco Polo Travels, the Martinair Cargo GSA in the kingdom, say the company employs the most dedicated professionals, provides personalised and efficient service anytime, anywhere and sets the industry standard for cargo management. The B767-300 ER aircraft flights will fly from Amsterdam to Kathmandu via Sharjah.

RITZY SNACK: Crisp, lightly salted and light, Ritz biscuits could be the new contender for the favourite accompaniment to your morning cuppa. The Golchha organisation in association with Hulas Biscuits and Confectionaries are banking on the quality and the packaging of their product that is available throughout Nepal in 75gm boxes.



RETAIL LENDER: Everest Bank Launched their flexi loan scheme under the retail lending segment that entitles loans to individuals and business houses against a mortgage of immovable properties up to 150 percent of the loan amount. The bank has been making steady and sustained growth of over 50 percent in its operating profits for the first quarter of the current financial year.



COOL RIDER: A new and affordable Hero Smart motorcycle has entered the Nepali market. Manufactured by Hero Motors Company of India, the supply is made through Nepal's SNS Automotives. With an American engine and Italian design, this four-stroke engine 75cc motorcycle has one the best mileage—100km on a litre of petrol, making it a budget investment for Nepali bikers.



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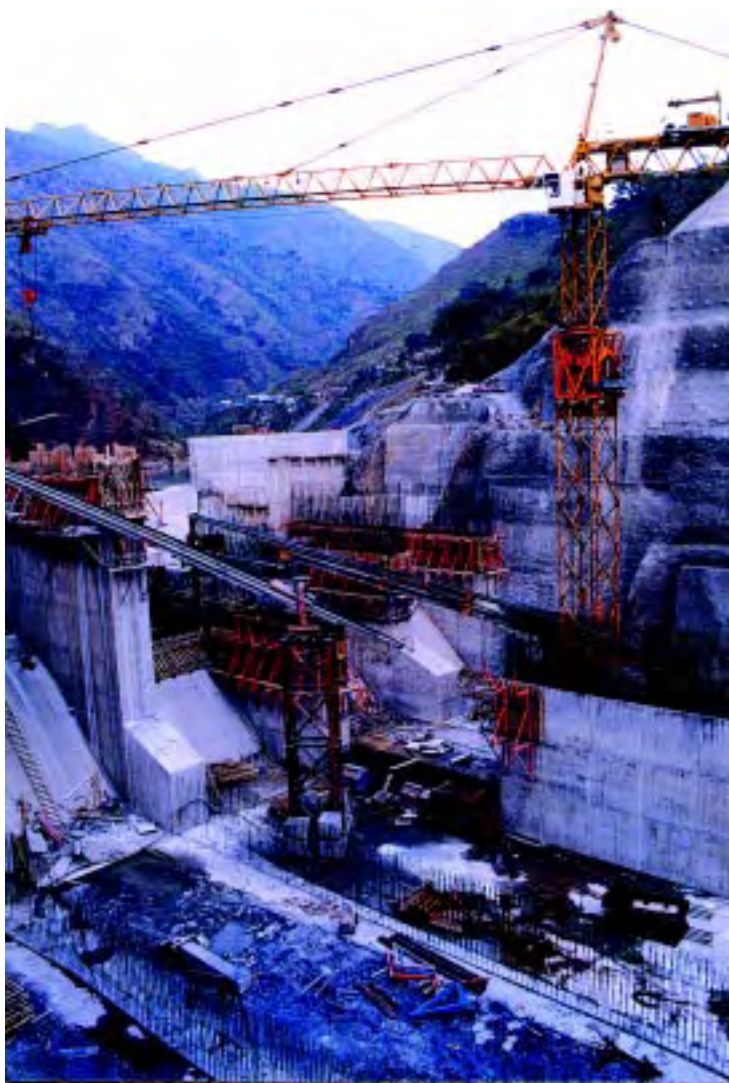
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Dam development

How local support frittered away on Nepal's largest hydropower project, the Kali Gandaki A.



Bikas had finally arrived, and locals were promised jobs, electricity, school and roads. People would no longer have to go to work in India or the Middle East. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) speedily built the road, and electricity was promised to most VDCs.

Nepal's adolescent democracy and civil society was heralding a new era of openness. The cancellation of the 402MW Arun III project in East Nepal by the World Bank and other donors in 1994 had favoured Kali Gandaki as an attractive alternative. But Arun also forced project developers to use new democratic processes for more public consultation. Cash compensation

was provided to families who lost land to the access road for the first time. Local political leaders did not have higher education, lacked negotiation skills and were unable to raise important vital questions. Their support was total, they did not envisage any negative effects.

Families living in the dam site at Mirmi and the power house site at Beltari remember their naivete. It was only when land acquisition details were printed in *Gorkhapatra* that they started seeing flaws in the deal. Then powerful locals started negotiating with project staff for good jobs on the site.

Rival local alliances sprang up. The Italians who were the

main contractors paid high rates and salaries for even junior jobs. People were therefore supportive of them, but those who did not get the jobs were angered and this led to divisions in the community. Power was played out in small circles as people negotiated at all levels. Roads and electricity were replaced by other priorities.

When their expectations were not fulfilled, the people resorted to negotiation through constant agitation. They were starting to learn about the intricacies of large projects, and that the only way to have a say was to follow the 'mass can create an effect' rule. Some of their demands were met, others not. Project developers used local power channels to make it difficult for the agitations to be successful.

The high rate of employment during the construction period made locals relatively cash-rich and they found new ways to spend it. But the absence of economic vibrancy after the construction finished forced them to look for alternatives or return to agriculture.

Migration to urban centres within Nepal or outside (both temporary and permanent) increased. People accustomed to income and a heightened cost of living found it difficult to adjust. Those who had learnt technical

skills moved to jobs in the Middle Marsyangdi project in Lamjung. People realised that political dealings are not the only means to gain benefits and economic activities have to be taken seriously as well.

Having lost their land and resources, most don't take risks anymore. In mid-2003, local land was up for acquisition to build an army camp. Although the locals were bitter and resentful, they could no longer revolt, as the crucial negotiation advantage they had when the project was being built did not exist. Land prices tripled over the years. In comparison to other projects, the compensation rates were better but it could not match the rise in prices after project intervention. Most of the powerful have either bought small farms in the tarai or shifted to Kathmandu.

The rampant small-scale corruption during the project period made locals antagonistic towards the project. They now realise that with better information and community orientation, they could have bargained for more support such as drinking water facilities. But most are now resigned to their fate again. All for the sake of *bikas*.

Kavita Rai is an anthropologist, currently pursuing her PhD at the Center for Development Research, University of Bonn, Germany.

Countries need to build hydropower projects for energy and economic gain, but their construction has to be balanced by local needs. Understanding this balance makes all the difference between good projects and bad.

This is the main lesson from the 144MW Kali Gandaki A, the largest hydropower project in Nepal (See: 'Kali Gandaki inauguration may be delayed',

Nepali Times, #174). Ten VDCs are affected by the power plant, dam site and reservoir which are spread over four districts: Syangja, Palpa, Gulmi and Parbat. The most seriously affected 250 families live in Shree Krishna Gandaki VDC in Syangja.

Despite large political factions in the main project area, there was overwhelming support from the local people when the project was first announced.

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There are some channels where regional advertising happens a lot, like CNBC. But any seasoned advertiser who has been to India recognises that there are better bangs for the buck if you plan for India, so a lot of people go through this learning process by going through Singapore or Hong Kong. For most of them, India is the dominant market, and any regional advantage is a happy spillover because the numbers in India are a lot larger. Also, the people in the region who are accessing the Indian channels are predominantly Indian.

by **ASHUTOSH TIWARI**

Art for mart's sake

Reputation: A painting is a risky investment. A serious collector wants to make sure that the painting bought today goes up in value over time—the artist's critical reputation must increase and appreciate in future. Unfortunately, in Nepal, one can never really be sure about how good a particular Nepali contemporary artist is or gauge their potential. Some well-known artists, even from within the *baristha* fold, could be mere media stars with fawning press coverage for everything they do, despite work that is

Marrying art with business.

Failing that, he can take inspiration from Vincent van Gogh's life: Van Gogh sold nothing when he was alive. Other artists who sold much more are largely forgotten today. But aided by the work of historians and critics, Van Gogh's

For Nepali contemporary artists too, rather than complaining about the wildly fluctuating current prices of their paintings (that could be resold for higher prices later on), the more pressing challenge is to look for ways to establish a critical reputation so that their paintings continue to pull in money long after they are gone. ♦

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Happily ever after



"Families surely provide the foundation of a relationship."

George Varughese

SRADDHA BASNYAT

If the demographics of new Nepali couples these days is any indication, Nepal is well on its way to becoming an integrated society. King Prithbi Narayan Shah described the kingdom he united as a garden of many flowers. Well those flowers are getting cross-pollinated like never before.

Judging by an informal poll we carried out over the last marriage season, Nepali men and women are increasingly venturing beyond their caste-mates to find mates. And looking around Kathmandu it's not all that easy anymore to fit people into neat categories of caste and ethnic orientation based on facial features and accents anymore.

Today's intercultural couples are taking urban society by storm, even those that condone segregation. Two years ago when Monica Rizal, a Bahuni, married a Tamang, Chandan Lama, she recalls most people came to the marriage out of curiosity. "Things are changing. Now everybody is getting married intercaste. It's such an accepted part of society in the city," Monica muses. The Rizal and Lama households have readily accepted their children's choice. Luckily, Monica's family was not

strictly Brahmin and Chandan's own mother is a Bahuni and father Tamang, so there was precedence for inter-ethnic wedlock.

Monica and Chandan are well aware of the tolerance and leniency that urban life affords them. "I know there are still strong social barriers especially in the villages. But Kathmandu is becoming a melting pot and I don't feel like we've broken any barriers except the conditioning that society has imposed on us since childhood," says Chandan.

Couples whose parents had mixed marriages feel it's easier to go through with it themselves for a variety of reasons, but at the core, it's family support that make all things possible. Just ask Sheri and Satendra Thapa. Sheri's father is Nigerian, her mother a Magar and her brother is married to a Sherpa. After they tied the knot, Satendra's family did not demand the couple stay with them.

Recalls Satendra: "Growing up in Dehradun, I didn't know about caste. Maybe because we were a minority, no one needed to know my father's *jath* or *thar*. I married a Nepali and that's it. It's ridiculous—people have gone to the moon and come back and we're still stuck on the *jath* thing."

The concept of saving, keeping and maintaining 'face' is integral to Nepal's collectivist social structure, and personal life is gossip for the neighbourhood. Villages are less tolerant of those who don't live by the rules (*see box, p9*). In the order of things, almost all traditionalists view inter-racial marriages as even more galling than inter-caste unions




"Nepalis have to become one, and inter-ethnic marriages will do this."

Madankrishna Shrestha



"It's ridiculous- people have gone to the moon and come back and we're still stuck on this *jath* thing."

Satendra Thapa






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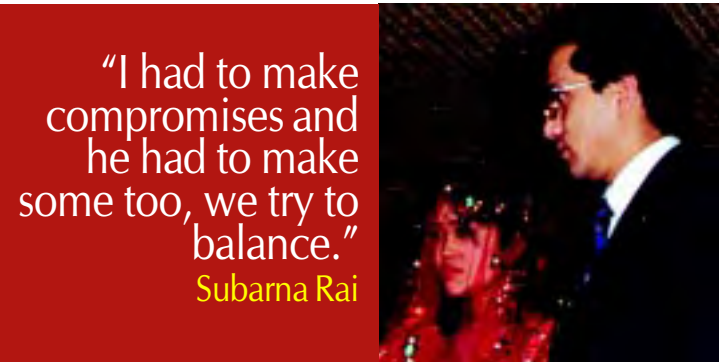


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तपाईं जहाँ भए पनि ... दुबोर्ग

Inter-caste, inter-ethnic, inter-racial. Nepalis are getting married all over the place.



"I had to make compromises and he had to make some too, we try to balance."
Subarna Rai

but that's precisely what's happening as more Nepalis travel and live abroad.

Kala and George Varughese think of their union as complementing each other. Kala is the daughter of a Gurung soldier in the British army, born and raised in Brunei. George's parents are Keralan Christians and educators. The only prerequisite they had regarding George's wedding was that it be a Christian ceremony. In fluent Nepali, George says, "Nepalis are surprised I am married to a Nepali, but I was born in Gorkha and brought up in Nepal, so when I explain it to them, they are impressed."

For Kala and George, the greatest obstacle hasn't been society—it is government bureaucracy. Their Christian wedding led to 10 months in and out of government offices for a marriage certificate. With Kala in the final trimester of her pregnancy, they have to face another unpleasant reality: "My children won't be eligible for Nepali citizenship regardless of how much we contribute to Nepal because my child's father is a foreigner."

Chandra Gurung had his

marriage give and take is important, and maybe more so in an inter-racial marriage."

Compromise is something Subarna Rai understands. Her husband Rajendra Rai is Catholic. A Catholic priest officiated their wedding ceremony in 1992, in which Subarna chose to wear a red sari, *sindur* and *pote*, in keeping with her Newari roots. Her in-laws came to ask for her hand in marriage for Rajendra, afraid the couple would elope, and her family accepted with no problems. "My family is nuclear, independent and very liberal," says Subarna. Though Subarna did not convert to Christianity, their son was baptised.

One half of Nepal's favourite comic duo, Madankrishna Shrestha met his better half Yashoda at work. She was a Bahuni and he a Newari. They were worried their families would not accept their union so they had small ceremony at Suryabinayak with just friends present. It took two weeks for their parents to come around which was followed by a traditional wedding with all the trimmings. "My father was understanding," recalls Mandankrishna. Inter-caste marriage was the focus of



"In any marriage give and take is important, and maybe more so in an inter-racial marriage."
Chandra Gurung

family's support and belongs to a culture that not only accepted his Japanese wife, Tokiko Sato, but immediately made her feel completely comfortable. During their small wedding ceremony in Chandra's home village of Siklis in Lamjung, Tokiko wore traditional Gurung garb and family and friends came to celebrate their union. When Chandra went to visit Tokiko's family in Japan, he found them very similar to the Gurungs.

Later, Chandra challenged the traditional role of the father in Japan where he was a 'househusband'. "I would be so tired when my wife got home, but I enjoyed it," he recalls. "In any

Madankrishna and Haribangsha Acharya's telefilm *Pandhra Gate*. "My children know people are all the same, which is a very important attitude in today's world," says Madankrishna.

Then there was another famous couple: he a PhD in architecture and she a lecturer at Pulchok Engineering Campus. She came from an affluent Newari clan, he from a landed Bahun family in Gorkha. Later, he joined politics and she became a social activist. Hisila Yami and Baburam Bhattarai have a daughter: Manavi Yami Bhattarai. They live underground, but not because of their inter-ethnic marriage. ♦

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World view 2004

World trends in the new year that Nepalis need to know, and worry, about.



BHAGIRATH YOGI in LONDON

One of the major political features of 2004 is going to be major democracies exercising fresh mandates of their people in all areas, especially trade. Following the debacle of the WTO talks at Cancun, the Doha Round too could collapse if the North doesn't open its markets to the South. While the big fish tout the Third Age of Globalisation, the fate of millions who go hungry every day will probably remain neglected.

The new year should herald in changes with a spate of national elections right across the globe, and whoever wins the one in the US, that country will plunge on as an unparalleled unilateral force. Starting close to home with India, the largest democracy in the world will hold parliamentary elections in October. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who is all set to become the first non-Congress chief executive to spend five years in office, could bring dates forward if he succumbs to pressures from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to cash in on the recent poll results where they swept three out of four state elections. New Delhi's pre-eminence in the SAARC constellation will not be eclipsed in 2004.

Pakistan will have its moment of glory as the host of the SAARC Summit in January. While everyone will make nice for the media circus and despite easing of bilateral tensions, it's uncertain whether the two antagonistic neighbours will make a lasting breakthrough. In Sri Lanka, the power struggle between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is not going to abate. But at least the Tamil rebels continue to observe the ceasefire despite tensions with the Sri Lankan army. The rest of Southeast Asia will also see a spate of elections: presidential in the Philippines and general elections in Indonesia and Malaysia, the first in Malaysia after the departure of the charismatic Mahathir Mohammad.

One of Nepal's major donors, the EU, will expand to 25 members from its current 15 on 1 May 2004. The new EU will debate on a new constitution while France and Germany try to emerge from under the US shadow in foreign policy and defence affairs. Britain is expected to register a modest economic growth of 2 percent while keeping the inflation at around 1.6 percent. The Labour government is likely to crack down on illegal asylum seekers but open doors for skilled migrants.

In Russia, bolstered by the



parliamentary poll victory late last year, President Vladimir Putin is all set to march into a victorious reelection in March. While he may have to face popular discontent in the wake of the slow economy, analysts say a Putin win is a foregone conclusion, especially with no serious rivals.

If nothing happens between now and then to mar the triumphalism following the Saddam capture, President George Bush will go on to a second term. Elections 2004 will be a referendum on Bush policies, including his decision to go to war against Iraq. Though nearly three million people lost their jobs since Bush Jr came to power, his strong Republican ideals is still supported. Nepali garment exporters may need to hold their collective breaths a while longer.

In the Middle-east, Iraq will take a while to stabilise. The reconstruction boom is projected to push the economy up by as much as 20 percent, which means Nepalis could soon be lining up outside the Iraqi Embassy for employment opportunities. The Israel-Palestine conflict is likely to prolong though both sides continue to pay lip-service to the road map for peace. The

main threat to global peace and development will still be terrorism. While chances are slim that Osama bin Laden will be "smoked out" by US forces, al-Qaeda and its allies will still wreak havoc in insidiously effective ways and the democratisation of Islam will continue to top the world public debate forum.

2004, China, the other emerging global power, will enjoy strong economic growth (8.2 percent) while attempting to maintain political stability. The country's constitution will guarantee some sort of private-property rights in March and people will be issued passports more easily, possibly resulting in a huge outflow of Chinese tourists. Nepal, however, will be unprepared for the boom, despite being the first South Asian country to be declared an outbound destination for Chinese nationals.

Nepal's biggest bilateral donor, Japan, is likely to register a modest economic growth between 1-2 percent. Having won parliamentary polls, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will be preoccupied with the security policy. Though one-fifth of the Japanese population will be 65 or over, there is still strong resistance to opening its labour market to foreigners. The perception that outsiders cause trouble is gaining ground (*see p11*).

The economic boom will continue in the Gulf, and this will maintain the outflow of Nepali migrant workers. Our government had better regularise the foreign employment sector and protect the interests of nationals working abroad. The other destination for Nepali workers, Malaysia, will see a continued upswing with accelerated growth. Nearly 100,000 Nepalis now work in Malaysia, and it's time to think about upgrading the average income of the workers with skills training.

Away from political wrangling, global competition and nationalistic zeal will reach Olympic heights during August in Athens. This may just prove to be too much temptation for the Nepali squad who are wont to disappear once on foreign soil. ♦

Bhagirath Yogi works at the BBC Nepali Service in London.



MB NAQVI in ISLAMABAD

This month's narrow escape by Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf of an attempt on his life has made him even more important to the international coalition in its 'war on terror'. The incident could not but alarm US and several European governments that see Musharraf, the country's embattled military dictator, as a lynchpin in this Western-led war.

What is disconcerting about this bomb attack was its sophistication. It was an expertly assembled operation that must have taken experienced bombers at least an hour or more to attach to a bridge and was timed to go off at exactly the time when Musharraf's motorcade was to pass over the bridge. That Musharraf escaped is said to be due to a device fit in the cars he uses: it jams the electronic timing device, and it successfully jammed the timer for a minute or so during which the vehicles passed over the bridge.

Speculation is rife: either the Islamic terrorists have penetrated the official security apparatus or it was an elaborate drama staged to impress the US administration about the perilous circumstances that Musharraf is in, while stoutly defending Western causes. Going by this theory, he would thus earn more understanding, support and aid from US President George W Bush.

This is addition to recent and ongoing developments in the India-Pakistan relationship, which apart from Iraq and Afghanistan have made Musharraf even more important to the international coalition fighting terror that now badly wants Pakistan to make up with India. Musharraf, as it happens, is engaged in just that effort. He is also the key asset that the West possesses for fruition of its schemes for South Asia as well as Central Asia.

For that, it is essential that his regime is consolidated at home and threats to it eliminated. But inside Pakistan, Musharraf is beleaguered, though he has support from the United States, British, Chinese, Russian, some European and even the Indian and Israeli governments. How or why is his support at home so patchy and uncertain while all major nations are ready to keep his regime afloat?

The reasons are several. First, the manner of his coming to power and the nature of his regime have forced

the Commonwealth to keep Pakistan's membership suspended. He violated his country's constitution in seizing power the way he did: he was a dismissed officer of the Pakistan Army, dismissed by competent authority. Instead of obeying the prime minister's orders, he staged a coup, overturned the organic law of the land and imprisoned the then prime minister, Nawaz Sharif.

In addition, he has arbitrarily amended the constitution to permit himself to remain army chief and president, able to dismiss all elected governments and assemblies. Most major parties refuse to recognise the legitimacy of his presidency or that of this amended constitution.

This confrontation, dubbed by many as a fixed fight, is not likely to bring any significant change in the situation even if all the demands of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA)—the alliance of six religious parties—are met by Musharraf. He would remain in power with all of today's powers. The MMA now controls 20 percent of the parliament, has its own government in the North West Frontier Province and comprises a large chunk of Balochistan's provincial government as a result of October 2002 polls.

The two, for political purposes, are seen as partners in the army's major enterprises. This is one reason why many say MMA stands for 'Military-Mullah Alliance' and why the harsh MMA rhetoric of opposing the Musharraf regime lacks credibility. The MMA's rise is often said to be Bush's gift to Pakistan. In all seven elections in Pakistan until 2002, religious parties, all combined, never got more than eight percent of the national vote. Thanks to 11 September and the US invasion of Afghanistan, the toppling of the Taliban regime made a darling of all religious parties. But today, Musharraf is opposed by all the major mainstream parties.

It is actually a three-way division among the major parties: the largest party to emerge from the October 2002 polls, under a controversial legal framework, was the Pakistan Peoples Party led by self-exiled former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, then by the Pakistan Muslim League of exiled former prime minister Sharif. ♦ (IPS)

Scott and the Sherpas

Kantipur, 21 December

“It is not possible without the Sherpas,” is a cliché among mountaineers. But as soon as they get back to their countries they forget about them. Other than a few like Edmund Hillary and Junko Tabei, most summiters usually ride the glory of their climb without a thought for those who made it possible. Now there is one more person who is showing his thanks in concrete ways. British mountaineer Doug Scott is involved in building a porter shelter in Machermo in Gokyo valley, three days’ walk from Namche Bazar.

Scott saw that porters suffer the most when they are hired by disorganised and cheap agencies. Since there are very few houses in Machermo, there isn’t enough room for the porters. “We started the shelter to protect the porters from the cold and other hardships,” says Scott, “The cold and high altitude endangers their lives.”

According to the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG), in the last decade at least three porters died each year in the Himalaya. The proposed shelter will cost Rs 5.8 million and is at about 5,420m on the route to Cho La peak, considered one of the toughest trekking passes. Two hundred trekkers go there annually despite the high risk of extreme cold coupled with high altitude. “This shelter will really be of great relief for the porters,” says Ang Tshering, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, which had also helped set up a similar shelter in Lobuche and the Island peak area. Scott plans to hire a medical doctor and a nurse for the peak tourist season and has been helping porters through Community Action Nepal.



Second chance

Nepal Samacharpatra, 20 December

Orphaned by the insurgency, the fate of Nepali children hangs in he balance. Their rehabilitation has been restricted to lip service. A few girls have been lucky enough to be in school, even though it is hundreds of miles away from home. Eleven Nepali children are enrolled in the Michael Jop Memorial and Medical Institute in the south Indian city of Chennai. Five of them are from Humla, one each from Kabhre and Kathmandu and four from the Bhutanese refugee camps in eastern Nepal. Thirty more Nepali girls who have been orphaned by the ongoing conflict will be enrolled in the school by mid-2004.

Seven-year-old twins Sita and Sapana were left orphans after the Maoists slit their father’s throat nearly two years ago. Soon after, their mother’s disappeared, leaving the girls with no one but an aged grandmother, who managed to get them admitted to the Indian school. The school was established three years ago by PP Jop in memory of his son who died in a car accident, and provides education to 400 girl children from conflict areas around the world.

The Sagarmatha Youth Awareness Group in Lalitpur, which coordinates enrolment from Nepal says it is finding it difficult getting proof that the girls are victims of the ongoing conflict.

Faux pas

Deshantar, 21 December

When Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa deplaned at Dhaka Airport earlier this week, his Bangladeshi counterpart Begum Khalida Zia and other senior officials were there to welcome him. The Bangladeshi prime minister advanced to offer Thapa a bouquet. Immediately after that, she greeted him with her hands joined to offer namaskar. In the meantime, Thapa passed the bouquet to one of his aides and offered a handshake. The Bangla-deshi chief executive was still standing with her namaskar, while Thapa kept his hand out. Neither knew what to do next, when an aide whispered something in Thapa’s ears. Thapa then returned the namaskar and gave up the idea of shaking hands. This little fluster took about 30 seconds and state-controlled Nepal Television aired the full footage without cuts in the evening.

Open secret

Chief Election Commissioner Keshab Raj Rajbhandari in Spacetime, 22 December

“My duty is to hold elections but the responsibilities of political parties and the government are equally crucial to create the right environment for these elections to take place. I have not held

discussions with both of these parties till date. The Election Commission is there to hold elections but only after dates for the polls are fixed after the government, political parties and security agencies show they are ready.

They could be doing just that at the moment. The election commission has already started doing the necessary homework. We have focused on increasing our offices in the districts. So far,

we have branches in only 30 districts. I am also studying the internal structure of the commission. Once this is completed, I will start working in a concrete manner for the elections.

I have nothing to say to those who oppose me. I am an open secret. I am grateful to the constitutional council that recommended me for the post of election commissioner and to the king who appointed me.”



"Sa'b, he's got a bomb"
"Unh-huh."
"Sa'b he's got a gun."
Unh-huh."
Sa'b he's shouting rousing slogans."
WHAT?!"

राजधानी Rajdhani, 21 December

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Maoists are not just Nepal’s problem, they are also a challenge to Indian security.”

Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Shyam Saran in Rajdhani, 21 December

The disappeared

In the eight years since the Moaist insurgency began, the bell has tolled for thousands of Nepalis. For families of those who have gone missing, there is no closure, no permission to grieve—nothing but the hollow feeling of not knowing where their loved ones are. The following is a list of 808 disappeared since 2000 by both sides. It is based on information from families, friends, relatives and other organisations and does not include those not reported to NHRC. A few from this list have been released, but others disappeared in the past weeks need to be added. A majority (663) were abducted by the state, and 69 of the total were women.

Name	District	By
Bhaghi Damai Pariyar	Accham	State
Dil Bahadur Shah (Shital)	Achham	State
Harka Bd. Saud	Achham	State
Janak Bahadur Bista	Achham	Maoist
Krishna Prasad Haishi	Achham	State
Prem B. Rawal	Achham	State
Purana Prasad Khanal	Arghakhachi	State
Tarapati Pokharel	Arghakhachi	State
Tej Prasad Pokharel	Arghakhachi	State
Ram Prasad Kafila	Baglung	State
Surya Prasad Sharma	Baglung	State
Uta Raj Kharel	Baglung	State
Nobraj Nap	Baitadi	State
Surendra Singh Thakuala	Baitadi	State
Bharat Bahadur Thapa	Bajura	Maoist
Tula B. Thapa	Bajura	State
Bhanga Tharu	Banka	State
Bikau Lal Koiri	Banka	State
Bishnu Kumar Aryal	Banka	State
Charan Das Dhoi	Banka	State
Devi Prasad Adhikari	Banka	State
Dhan Bahadur B.K	Banka	State
Dhan Bahadur Chhetri	Banka	State
Dhan Kumari Chaudhari	Banka	State
Gopal Thama Chhetri	Bake	State
Hari B. Khatri	Banka	State
Hari Prasad Subedi	Banka	State
Hari Prasad Sudedi	Banka	State
Hikmat Bista	Banka	State
Hom Bahadur Bhandari	Banka	State
Hukim Bahadur K. C	Banka	State
Jahir Kha	Banka	State
Juhariya Lal Tharu	Banka	State
Kaman Singh Kanai	Banka	State
Khil Prasad Bhusal	Banka	State
Kripam Murai	Banka	State
Krishna Bahadur Tharu	Banka	State
Kuber Rijal	Banka	State
Lal B. Dangi	Banka	State
Mahandra Bikram Oli	Banka	State
Mishri lai Bhudhathoki	Banka	State
Mohammad Jakir Shek	Banka	State
Mohan Bikram Aryal	Banka	State
Mohan Lal Oli	Banka	State
Mukunda Singh Bali (Ajit)	Banka	State
Nanika K. Ansari	Banka	State
Narayan Prasad Acharya	Banka	State
Pawan Tharu	Banka	State
Penta B.K	Banka	State
Phool Raj Chaudhari	Banka	State
Prtima Gautam	Banka	State
Rahish Kha	Banka	State
Raj Bahadur Chaudhari	Banka	State
Raja Ram Tharu	Banka	State
Ram Milan Balmiki	Banka	State
Ram Prasad Pokharel	Banka	State
Ram Prasad Pokhrel	Banka	State
Ram Prasad Tharu	Banka	State
Rashi Raj Pokheral	Banka	Stat
Shajir Kha	Banka	Stat
Sher Bahadur Wali	Banka	Stat
Shubha Bahadur Bhandari	Banka	State
Shuleman Kha	Banka	State
Teeka Ram Giri	Banka	State
Teju Ranabhat	Banka	State

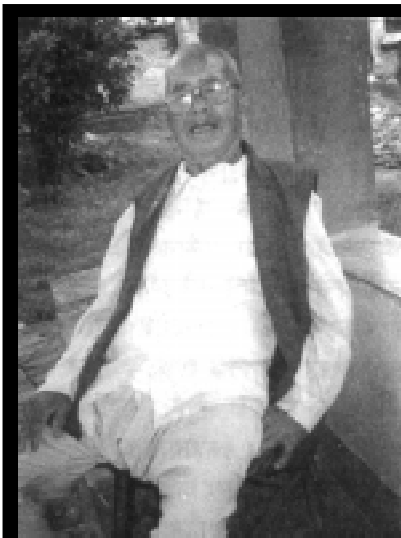
Tek Bahadur B. K	Banka	State
Tika Jung Shahi	Banka	State
Til Bahadur Rijhal	Banka	State
Yagya Bahadur Budha	Banka	State
Bhola Guragain	Bara	State
Bikash Chaulagain (Jhamka)	Bara	State
Dependra Karki	Bara	State
Itasad Hussan Ansari	Bara	State
Jyoti Guragain	Bara	State
Kamala Kumar Guragain	Bara	State
Laxmi Dhakal	Bara	State
Sita Guragain	Bara	State
Suraj Guragain	Bara	State
Tika Nepal	Bara	State
Babu Ram Tharu	Bara	State
Badhu Tharu	Bardia	State
Bhudhi Tharu	Bardia	State
Bhuvan Kumar Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Budhi Tharu	Bardia	State
Bum B. Shai	Bardia	State
Chillu Tharu	Bardia	State
Darwari Tharu	Bardia	State
Govra Tharu	Bardia	State
Him B. Bista	Bardia	Maoist
Hira Singh Budhamagar	Bardia	State
Jirani Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Kali Bista	Bardia	Maoist
Kamala Chudhari	Bardia	State
Kamala Kumar Lamichhane	Bardia	State
Kaser Bahadur Basnet	Bardia	State
Kimlai Tharu	Bardia	State
Krishna Prasad Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Lahanu Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Lahanu Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Lauti Tharu	Bardia	State
Laxmi Ram Tharu	Bardia	State
Lok Ram Tharu	Bardia	State
Mohan Tharu	Bardia	State
Mukh Lal Tharu	Bardia	State
Nim Prakash Tharu	Bardia	State
Nuwa (Dhani Ram) Tharu	Bardia	State
Palta Tharu	Bardia	State
Pati Ram Tharu	Bardia	State
Patiram Tharu	Bardia	State
Priya Tharu	Bardia	State
Raghuwa Tharu	Bardia	State
Rajan Kumar Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Ram Bahadur Chhetri	Bardia	State
Ram Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Ramesh Bahadur Tharu	Bardia	State
Ramghor Tharu	Bardia	State
Rohina Tharu (Chuka, Gova)	Bardia	State
Santaram Tharu	Bardia	State
Shanu Tharu	Bardia	State
Som prasad Tharu	Bardia	State
Sonia Tharu	Bardia	State
Suraj Kumar Bhattarai	Bardia	State
Suraj Tharu	Bardia	State
Suresh Kumar Wali	Bardia	State
Suresh Tharu	Bardia	State
Surya Tharu	Bardia	State
Thagga Tharu	Bardia	State
Tirtha B. Thapa	Bardia	State
Tribhuvan Giri	Bardia	State
Tulashi Ram Tharu	Bardia	State

Yagya Bahadur Rawal	Bardia	State
Yogendra Tharu	Bardia	State
Jeet Bahadur Chaudhari	Bardia	State
Anu Shai	Bhaktapur	State
Buddi Narayan Tyaaadhana	Bhaktapur	State
Dil Bahadur Tharu	Bhaktapur	State
Gangaram Shrestha	Bhaktapur	State
Hari Prasad Suwal	Bhaktapur	State
Jagat Krishna Pokhrel	Bhaktapur	State
Navaraj Dulal	Bhaktapur	State
Rajendra Regmi	Bhaktapur	State
Ram B. Khadka	Bhaktapur	Maoist
Sagna Taj	Bhaktapur	State
Sahadev Ghimire	Bhaktapur	State
Shree Shyita N. Prajapati	Bhaktapur	State
Udisha Shai	Bhaktapur	Unknown
Yam Bahadur Shodari	Bhaktapur	State
Bharat Karki	Bhojpur	State
Bhishnu Shrestha	Bhojpur	Maoist
Deepak Rai	Bhojpur	Maoist
Iswor Rai	Bhojpur	Maoist
Madhav Prasad Neupane	Bhojpur	Maoist
Nabin Rai	Bhojpu	State
Navin Kumar Rai	Bhojpur	State
Om Kumar Shrestha	Bhojpur	Maoist
Shaligram Adhikari	Bhojpur	Unknown
Suman Shrestha	Bhojpur	Maoist
Dambar Bahadur Gurung	Chitawan	State
Dil Bahadur Adhikari	Chitwan	State
Gyanandra Tripathi	Chitwan	State
Hari B. Tamang	Chitwan	State
Karma B. Tamang	Chitwan	State
Krishna K.C.	Chitwan	State
Megnath Sharma	Chitwan	State
Miss. Ambika Mudbhari	Chitwan	State
Prakash Khanal	Chitwan	State
Rajan Neupane	Chitwan	State
Ratna K. Tamang	Chitwan	State
Sharda Shrestha	Chitwan	State
Shusma Khanal	Chitwan	State
Dal Bahadur Dhami	Dadeldhura	State
Dan Bahadur Bohora	Dadeldhura	State
Dil Bahadur Jagri	Dadeldhura	State
Lal Bahadur Bohora	Dadeldhura	State
Prem Bitalu	Dadeldhura	State
Thagi B.K	Dadeldhura	State
Dhirendra bahadur Rawal	Dallekh	State
Nagmal Bista	Dallekh	State
Arjan Kumar Adhikari	Dang	State
Bhim B. Chaudhari	Dang	State
Bir B. Thapa	Dang	State
Bishow Raj Acharya	Dang	State
Deepak Kumar Chaudhari	Dang	State
Dhaniram Chaudhari	Dang	State
Dhruba Kumar Adhikari	Dang	State
Ganesh Thapa	Dang	State
Hari Lal Chaudhri	Dang	State
Jhuma Kumari Sen Wali.	Dang	Maoist
Kedar Nath Chaudhari	Dang	State
Khem B. Nepali	Dang	State
Kuiera Chaudhari (Ram)	Dang	State
Obiraj Dagai	Dang	State
Prem B. Chaudhari	Dang	State
Pushkar Raj subedhi	Dang	State
Rajeeb Basnet	Dang	Maoist
Resam B. Gharti	Dang	State

Shoman chudhari	Dang	State
Shomraj Chaudhari	Dang	State
Udaya Ram Chaudhari	Dang	State
Uttar Kumar Shrestha	Dang	State
Yub Raj Sharma	Dang	Maoist
Yubaraj Sharma	Dang	State
Denesh Kuwar	Darchula	Unknown
Gagan Singh Kuwar	Darchula	Unknown
Badrilal Tamang	Dhading	State
Basudev Banskota	Dhading	State
Chatu Man Gurung	Dhading	State
Deewakar Luitail	Dhading	State
Diwakar Luitail	Dhading	State
Gyanendra Prasad Bidari	Dhading	State
Hari Lamsal	Dhading	State
Janak Lamichhane	Dhading	State
Krishna Kumar Regmi	Dhading	State
Mukunda Prasad Panta	Dhading	State
Phoolmaya Tamang	Dhading	State
Pradesh Chandra Lohani	Dhading	State
Ram P. Tripathi	Dhading	State
Ram Prasad Acharya	Dhading	State
Ramhari Rupakheti	Dhading	State
Than P. Lohani	Dhading	State
Achut K.C.	Dhading	State
Baikuntha BhujelDhanding	Dhading	Unknown
Chandra Bd. Poudyal	Dhading	State
Dhanshyam Adhikari	Dhading	State
Gyanendra Prasad Bldari	Dhading	State
Hari Pd. Acharya	Dhading	State
Indra Bahadur Aryal	Dhading	State
Ishwori Prasad Regmi	Dhading	State
Mukunda Prasad Panta	Dhading	State
Navaraj Thapa	Dhading	State
Puspa Thapaliya	Dhading	State
Shyam Pd Rupakheti	Dhading	State
Sudersan Regmi	Dhading	State
Thakur Pudasaini	Dhading	State
Bhagat Mandol	Dhanusa	State
Durgash K. Lama	Dhanusha	State
Hardev Mandal	Dhanusha	State
Jetendra Jha	Dhanusha	State
Pramod Narayan Mandal	Dhanusha	State
Raj Kumar Yadav	Dhanusha	State
Sanjaya Raya	Dhanusha	State
Sanjeev K. Karma	Dhanusha	State
Shailandra Yadav	Dhanusha	State
Shobhit Yadav	Dhanusha	State
Hari Shankar Bhandari	Dholakha	State
Dil Bahadur Bhudhathoki	Dolakha	Maoist
Sunil Rajbhandari	Doti	Unknown
Badri Bahadur Pandey	Gorkha	State
Budhi Sipakar	Gorkha	State
Chandra P. Khanal	Gorkha	State
Deepak Lamichhane	Gorkha	State
Dipendra Pant	Gorkha	State
Dipendra Panta	Gorkha	State
Gita Thapamagar	Gorkha	State
Hom Bahadur Thapa	Gorkha	Maioist
Kemar B. Nepali	Gorkha	State
Kumar Dhakal	Gorkha	State
Lila Yadav	Gorkha	State
Nirmala Bhaihata	Gorkha	State
Pampha Kumal	Gorkha	State
Rajendra Dhakal	Gorkha	State
Rajendra Kanel,	Gorkha	State

Rajendra Prajuli	Gorkha	State
Rajendra Raman Khanal	Gorkha	State
Raju Gurung	Gorkha	State
Ram Bahadur Ghimire	Gorkha	State
Rudra Khanal	Gorkha	State
Sanjaya Dhakal	Gorkha	State
Sarada Prasad Adhikari	Gorkha	State
Suman Dhakal	Gorkha	State
Tanka Prasad Devkota	Gorkha	State
Thakur Prasad Kandel	Gorkha	State
Tula B. Nepali	Gorkha	State
Bimal Gyawali	Gulmi	State
Padam Neupane	Gulmi	Maoist
Adaan Singh Thapa	Humla	Maoist
Chhaka Bahadur Lama	Humla	State
Netra Phadera	Humla	Maoist
Puspa Raj Neupane	Ilam	State
Tirtharaj Kathiwoda	Ilam	State
Asagar Ali	Mothari (In India)	State
Khamba Lal Gautam	Jajarkot	State
Birendra	Jhapa	State
Deepak Budhathoki	Jhapa	State
Deepak Chindra Acharya	Jhapa	State
Depak Bhudhathoki	Jhapa	State
Gopal Dhakal	Jhapa	State
Krishna Bahadur Limbu	Jhapa	State
Milan Khadka	Jhapa	State
Puspa Raj Besnat	Jhapa	State
Sanitram Bhattarai	Jhapa	State
Suresh Kumar Pokharel	Jhapa	State
Bhim Giri	Kailali	State
Binod Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Bishnu Prasad Gawali	Kailali	State
Jariki Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Karan Singh Gartimagar	Kailali	State
Khadka Bahadur Thapa	Kailali	Maoist
Kumari Damai	Kailali	State
Kumari Nepali	Kailali	State
Kusum Kumari Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Lahuram Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Narayan Prasad Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Narayan Prasad Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Promod Uprati	Kailali	Maoist
Sehotri Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Sudhir Chaudhari	Kailali	State
Kulman Shai	Kalikot	Maoist
Parek Bahadur Shahi	Kalikot	State
Dan Shinga Thapa	Kanchanpur	Maoist
Nirmal Kumari Meenu	Kapilvastu	State
Pradeep Khanal	Kaski	State
Purna Poudel	Kaski	State
Raju Chhetri	Kaski	State
Ram Chandra Subedi	Kaski	State
Shom Bahadur B. K	Kaski	State
Shree Ram Subeki	Kaski	State
Yash P. Subedi	Kaski	State
Aaite Muktan	Kathmandu	Unknown
Abdual Gumar	Kathmandu	State
Alexander Grabhenicraya	Kathmandu	State
Amrit Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Anil Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Arjun Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Arjun Thapaliya	Kathmandu	State
Arun Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Aruna Tadal	Kathmandu	State
Ashok Lama	Kathmandu	State

Bandhu Pandy	Kathmandu	State
Basudev Aryal	Kathmandu	State
Bhasu Lal Shrestha	Kathmandu	Unknown
Bhata Ram Lamichhane	Kathmandu	State
Bhim Raj Marjan	Kathmandu	State
Bhiv P. Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Bindhu Pandy	Kathmandu	State
Bipin Bhandari	Kathmandu	State
Chatnath Dangal	Kathmandu	State
Chhabilal Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Chhatra B. Shrestha	Kathmandu	Unknown
Dalak Bd. Tamang	Kathmandu	State
Danda Pani Neupane	Kathmandu	State
Deepa Rokaa	Kathmandu	Unknown
Deepak Amatya	Kathmandu	
Deepak Pokharel	Kathmandu	Unknown
Dev Bahadur Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Dil Bahadur Rai	Kathmandu	State
Dil Bahadur Rai	Kathmandu	State
Ganga Prasad Tiwari	Kathmandu	State
Gopi Krishna Thapaliya	Kathmandu	State
Gyan Bahadur Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Gyanendra Nepal	Kathmandu	Unknown
Hari Pd. Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Hari Sharan Shrestha	Kathmandu	Unknown
Hariidwar Kuwar	Kathmandu	State
Harsha Man Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Hem Pd. Ghimire	Kathmandu	State
Jamil Ahmad	Kathmandu	Unknown
Janak Pd. Adhikari	Kathmandu	State
Jayanti Thapa	Kathmandu	State
Kabir Kumar Shrestha	Kathmandu	Unknown
Kaji Nepal (Krishna Nepal)	Kathmandu	State
Kamal K.C	Kathmandu	
Karmawal Tamang	Kathmandu	Unknown
Kedar Prasad Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Kiran Gurung	Kathmandu	State
Krishna K.C	Kathmandu	State
Krishna Sen lechhuk	Kathmandu	State
Loknath Chauлагain	Kathmandu	State
Madav B. Ghimire	Kathmandu	State
Madav Dahal	Kathmandu	Unknown
Maha Prasad Amgain	Kathmandu	State
Mamraj Agrawal	Kathmandu	State
Maya Lama	Kathmandu	State
Mohammad Yunus Ansari	Kathmandu	State
Mukunda Prasad Phuyal	Kathmandu	State
Nanda Prasad Tiwari	Kathmandu	State
Nani Maiya Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Narayan Adhikari	Kathmandu	State
Narayan B. Thapa	Kathmandu	State
Narayan Khadka	Kathmandu	State
Naresht Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Nirmala Bhandari	Kathmandu	Unknown
Nischal Nakarmi	Kathmandu	Unknown
Prabesh B. Bista	Kathmandu	State
Pradip Karki	Kathmandu	State
Prakesh Khadka	Kathmandu	State
Pramid Kumar Baniya	Kathmandu	State
Prem Sagar Karmachrya	Kathmandu	State
Pro. Ram Chandra Bhandari	Kathmandu	State
Purushottam Sapkota	Kathmandu	State
Radhe Dangal	Kathmandu	State
Rai Prasad Karki	Kathmandu	State
Raj Kumar Karki	Kathmandu	State
Rajan Yongan (Tamang)	Kathmandu	State



In this installment of the memoirs of veteran Gurkhas we begin 89-year-old Bharati Gurung’s story this week. He fought in the Northwest Frontier Province in present day Pakistan and Afghanistan, and during World War II. His story is part of *Lahurey ko Katha* that records the lives of 13 retired Gurkha soldiers, most of them over 75 years old. Published by Himal Books, this fortnightly column has been translated from Nepali by Dev Bahadur Thapa for *Nepali Times*. Bharati Gurung (above) remembers fighting fearsome Afghans, daring German soldiers and how Gurkha soldiers were thought to eat the flesh of dead enemy soldiers.

“Man-eating Gurkhas!”

I arrived in Dehradun after my enlistment on 20 October 1932. In the course of our six-month training, war had broken out in Afghanistan but we hadn’t taken the oath of allegiance. There were strict orders from above not to send recruits to the front if they hadn’t sworn allegiance. so, a few days after that notice, we all took our oaths at Landikotal in Pakistan. The war lasted till 1934 and afterwards we were sent to Dehradun. In 1934-35 fierce fighting began again at Landikotal in Baluchistan, which is now in Pakistan. In that war Subedar Mehar Singh Gurung of Parbat was killed. His brother Prem Bahadur Gurung of the same regiment came through unscathed. In 1937, we were once again sent back to rest.

Three notorious countries of the world, Germany, Italy and Japan joined hands to crush England and America. Gradually, a full-scale world war started in 1939. Initially, it was just a propaganda war. Hitler made a propaganda film depicting the sky filled with their planes, every inch of the land filled with their tanks and the sea with their ships. This went to the extent that quite a few viewers could not bear to see the whole movie and left the cinema. For their counter- propaganda, the British made Gurkha soldiers shave their heads except for a tuft at the back to resemble a wireless antenna. They spread rumours that these soldiers ate the flesh of fallen enemies. There also was a regiment from Africa about whom similar lies were spread.

The Germans showered us with leaflets in Italy and Africa from their planes, telling our soldiers that their lives were worth only Rs 16 and called us to sit and eat with them. The

greatest battle was fought in Africa. In Tunisia we fought or three years against Hitler’s troops. His men were daredevils, brainwashed by Hitler.

The Germans did not marry short women and always looked out for tall, healthy mates. While it is customary among our men to select and seduce women, with them it was the opposite. The women folk looked out for men who were tall and young. In general, their men married by 35, the women by 25. The parents are happy with their daughters’ choice.

Only robust men were selected for the army. In this system the same person would, as the occasion arose, fight from the air, fight on land, work as a clerk and cook as and when necessary. In short, they were adept in all sorts of works and nothing remained undone.

Nobody can say exactly where and how many of the troops died in any war. The first war was in Afghanistan, and even today there is some unrest there. The Pathans resorted to guerrilla tactics. A few soldiers emerge, the bulk remain hiding. The women grazed cows in the ravines and the men had armed reconnaissance exercises in the mountains. They snatched weapons and rations from British troops and passed the loot on quickly through their women so none of us knew where it went. True, they had farms but the harvest was meagre. They carved out rocks to make dwellings. When sons separated from their parents, they carved out another cave. Donkeys and camels were the only animals they reared.

There was a United India when British ruled for 104 years. Sri Lanka, Burma, Maldives, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan were all part of United India. The



British had the notion that coloured people could not run such a vast subcontinent and so carved small states out of it.

Now we will talk about the fighting that took place at Landikotal. Altogether 22 regiments were stationed there. If the officer posted there was from Gurkha, they would establish Gorakhnath, Kalikamai and Manakamana temples (pickets we called them) inside the barrack compound and if he happened to be from Syangja, then the pickets bore the names of famous deities of that place. A picket was something like house made of stones that no bullet could pierce. However,

that too was attacked. There was a Jamdar called Kokale from a place called Gounda in Lamjung. He was a daring soldier who cut the ropes of enemy tents, entered it and killed them with a bayonet.

Once, Sergeant Mitralal Thapa from our company captured an enemy machine gun that could fire 22 rounds per second. He was promoted to Subedar Major. The fighting force was rotated every two years. One regiment relieved another. Our own Gurkha regiment had 20 battalions. They were granted leave from time to time but shorter leaves had to be spent in the unit. ♦



Rajendra Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Rajesh Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Rajesh Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Rajman Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Ram Krishan Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Ram Pd. Bhattarai	Kathmandu	Unknown
Ram Prasad Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Ramchandra Bhandari	Kathmandu	State
Ramesh Gautam	Kathmandu	State
R. Shomsher Rupakheti	Kathmandu	State
Ramhari Chaulagain	Kathmandu	State
Ratna Prasad Thapaliya	Kathmandu	State
Shanta Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Shanta Shrestha	Kathmandu	Unknown
Shanti Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Sharda Mahat	Kathmandu	State
Shiva Raj Gautam	Kathmandu	Unknown
Shiva Tiwari	Kathmandu	State
Shival Prasad Tiwari	Kathmandu	State
Shom Bahadur Tamang	Kathmandu	State
Shuva Shankar Kandel	Kathmandu	State
Shyam Bhatta	Kathmandu	Maoist
Shyam Kumar Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Sonam Tashi	Kathmandu	2002
Suchendra Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Sudindra Bhudamagar	Kathmandu	State
Sujindra Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Sumitra Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Sumpurna Adhikari	Kathmandu	State
Surendra Maharjan	Kathmandu	State
Suresh Shrestha	Kathmandu	State
Tejnarayan Sapkota	Kathmandu	State
Uday Prasad Wadal	Kathmandu	State
Udya Prasad Shah	Kathmandu	State
Udya Raj Gautam	Kathmandu	State
Upendra Timalisina	Kathmandu	State
Yub Raj Mainali	Kathmandu	State
Ashok Tamang	Kavre	
Bhem Prasad Chaulagain	Kavre	
Bhim Bd. Tamang	Kavre	Maoist
Chitram Lama	Kavre	State
Devi Pd. Bajgain	Kavre	Maoist
Kebhab Chaulagain	Kavre	State
Khadga Singh Tamang	Kavre	State
Kul Prasad Humagain	Kavre	State
Lok Pd. Bajgain	Kavre	Maoist
Man Bahadur Tamang	Kavre	State
Neema Dorje Lama	Kavre	State
Punya B. Lama Tamang	Kavre	State
Rajendra Gautam	Kavre	State
Ram Krishna Thapa Magar	Kavre	State
Remash Gautam	Kavre	State
Reshaya Bahadur Tamang	Kavre	State
Santa Bahadur Tamang	Kavre	Maoist
Sanu Maya Lama	Kavre	State
Shiva Prasad Gautam	Kavre	State
Subas Chandra Mainali	Kavre	State
Tanka Prasad Tripathi	Kavre	State
Tej Prasad Gautam	Kavre	State
Thakur Gautam	Kavre	State
Yaknath Chaulagain	Kavre	State
Yog Prasad Thapaliya	Kavre	State
Kumar Prasad Panta	Kavre	State
Yog Prasad Thapaliya	Kavre	State
Badri Rai	Kotang	State
Nabin Rai	Khotang	Maoist

Aasta Raj Bajracharya	Lalitpur	State
Ram Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Amir	Lalitpur	State
Amrit Man Shrestha	Lalitpur	State
Anuman Shrestha	Lalitpur	State
Dharma Raj Dongol	Lalitpur	State
Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari	Lalitpur	State
Gopal Nagarkoti	Lalitpur	State
Khadka B. Ghartimagar	Lalitpur	State
Krishna Dahal	Lalitpur	State
Krishna Man Shrestha	Lalitpur	State
Machhe Narayan Shrestha	Lalitpur	State
Padam Narayan Nakarmi	Lalitpur	State
Parsuram Thapa	Lalitpur	Unknown
Prem B. Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Rajendra Mali	Lalitpur	State
Ram Chandra Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Ram Khadgi	Lalitpur	State
Ram Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Rupa Raj Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Sita Karanjit	Lalitpur	State
Surendra Khadgi	Lalitpur	State
Suryaman Maharjan	Lalitpur	State
Thal Prasad Timalisina	Lalitpur	State
Ujjwal Jhukla	Lalitpur	State
Bal Krishna Shrestha	Lamjung	State
Bishnu Prasad Tiwari	Lamjung	State
Chandrakanta Poudel	Lamjung	State
Chelnath Ghimire	Lamjung	State
Krishna Neupane	Lamjung	State
Krishna Prasad Phokharel	Lamjung	State
Lilraj Kadal	Lamjung	State
Manoj Regmi	Lamjung	State
Padam Pd. Neupane	Lamjung	Unknown
Shaker Nath Ghimire	Lamjung	State
Shakernath Ghimira	Lamjung	State
Sundar Raj Poudyal	Lamjung	State
Chhabil Yadav	Mahottari	State
Chandeshwor Chaudhari	Mahottari	State
Jagadish Mahato	Mahottari	State
Kishori Raya Yadav	Mahottari	State
Manoj Kumar Shah	Mahottari	State
Pushkaraj Subedhi	Mahottari	State
Ram Shewok Shah Sonar	Mahottari	State
Ram Singh Shah	Mahottari	State
Ramadyra Yadav	Mahottari	State
Rambhis Shaha	Mahottari	State
Sailendra Kumar Rai	Mahottari	State
Sharan Mandal	Mahottari	State
Shyam Sundar Kushwaha	Mahottari	State
Sunil Yadav	Mahottari	State
Gyendra Kanakhati	Makawanpur	Unknown
Kumar Karki	Makawanpur	
Nobraj Dyal	Makawanpur	Maoist
Prabin Syatal	Makawanpur	Maoist
Santa Bahadur Baiba	Makawanpur	State
Dilli Pd. Dungal	Morang	State
Gopal Karki	Morang	Maoist
Hari Bahadur Karki	Morang	State
Hari Dungal	Morang	State
Kalpna	Morang	State
Kamala Dahal	Morang	State
Laxman Prasad Ghimire	Morang	State
Prakash Karki	Morang	State
Tek B. Bista	Morang	State
Durga Bahadur Nepali	Nawalparasi	State

Parishit Regmi	Nawalparasi	State
Sudersan Poudel	Nawalparasi	State
Arjan Khatiwada	Nuwakot	State
Arjun Pokharel	Nuwakot	State
Chola Prasad Dhakal	Nuwakot	State
Denesh Nepali	Nuwakot	State
Dhruva Prasad Mishra	Nuwakot	State
Dinesh Nepali	Nuwakot	State
Dipendra Nepal	Nuwakot	State
Hit B. Sudedi	Nuwakot	State
Janak Prasad Adhikari	Nuwakot	State
Keshab Prasad Bhatta	Nuwakot	State
Keshab Prasad Bhatta	Nuwakot	State
Kousalya Pokharel	Nuwakot	State
Laxman Neupane	Nuwakot	State
Malika Shrestha	Nuwakot	State
Meera Adhikari	Nuwakot	State
Nab Raj K.C	Nuwakot	State
Pasupati Dhungana	Nuwakot	State
Piman Singh Tamang	Nuwakot	State
Pradip Adhikari	Nuwakot	State
Raj Kumar Karki	Nuwakot	State
Rajan Bajgain	Nuwakot	State
Ramashower Dhungana	Nuwakot	State
Sankar Nepali	Nuwakot	State
Saroj Tamang	Nuwakot	State
Shyam Raj Acharya	Nuwakot	State
Tara Bhandari	Nuwakot	State
Tara Bhandari	Nuwakot	State
Tirtha Pande	Nuwakot	State
Bimal Kaji Karki	Okhaldhunga	State
Chakra B. Katuwal	Okhaldhunga	State
Deepak Pokharel	Okhaldhunga	Maoist
Deepak Pokharel	Okhaldhunga	Unknown
Dhro Prasad Bhattarai	Okhaldhunga	State
Dhron Prasad Bhattarai	Okhaldhunga	State
Haran Bhattarai	Okhaldhunga	State
Hom Prasad Gautam	Okhaldhunga	State
Mohan Lutail	Okhaldhunga	State
Om B. Thapa	Okhaldhunga	State
Padam Prasad Dahal.	Okhaldhunga	Unknown
Prachanda Katawal	Okhaldhunga	State
Rajan Dahal	Okhaldhunga	State
Shambhu Katuwal	Okhaldhunga	State
Thatriaj Wagla	Okhaldhunga	State
Bal Krishna Shrestha	Parsa	State
Bal Krishna Shrestha	Parsa	Maoist
Bimal P. Ghimire	Parsa	Maoist
Jagan Nath Nepal	Parsa	State
Purna Chandra Shrestha	Parsa	Maoist
Ramakant Giri	Parsa	Maoist
Rita Yadav	Parsa	State
Shobhit Pun	Parsa	State
Shyam Sundar Dhungana	Parsa	State
Biujla Kuwar	Parbat	Maoist
Sarita Devi Sharma	Parbat	State
Badri Khadka	Ramechhap	State
Binod K. Khadka	Ramechhap	Maoist
Denesh Chaulagain	Ramechhap	Unknown
Govinda Ghimire	Ramechhap	State
Gyan Bahadur Chhetri	Ramechhap	Maoist
Jeev Nath Gautam	Ramechhap	Maoist
Nar Bahadur Thapa	Ramechhap	State
Narayan Pathak	Ramechhap	Maoist
Nirmal Pathak	Ramechhap	Maoist
Nokhraj Gautam	Ramechhap	Maoist

Prasun Kandel	Unknown	
Ram Babu Gari	State	
Ramchandra Bhandari	State	
Puspa Kumar Giri	State	
Kemab Man Dangol	State	
Khuwa P. Acharya	State	
Raj Kumar Acharya	State	
Rajkumar Acharya	State	
Menuka Sapkota	State	
Mrs. Manesh Pokharel	State	
Ram Chandra Rawal Barai	State	
Ram Janna Rawot (Patel)	State	
Rupa Sapkota	State	
Somraj Timalisina	State	
Upendra Chaulagain	State	
Aalaram Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Amrita Shrestha	Rolpa	Maoist
Begam Rana	Rolpa	State
Bhaglal Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Bhagiman Budha	Rolpa	Maoist
Bijaya Gharti	Rolpa	Maoist
Budhiram B.K.	Rolpa	Maoist
Deepak Rokka	Rolpa	Maoist
Dor Bahadur Wali.	Rolpa	Maoist
Gajaman Kunwar	Rolpa	Maoist
Ghahendra Hamal	Rolpa	State r
Gorakh Bahadur Bista	Rolpa	Maoist
Gyan Bahadur Bista	Rolpa	Maoist
Ishwor Lal Budha	Rolpa	Maoist
Janak Oli	Rolpa	Maoist
Judda Bdr.Daugee	Rolpa	Maoist
Judda bir Rokka	Rolpa	Maoist
Kale Budha	Rolpa	Maoist
Kamal Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Kausala Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Khagendra Prakash Malla	Rolpa	Maoist
Khem Bdr. Khani	Rolpa	Maoist
Khim Bahadur Giri	Rolpa	Maoist
Kul Bahadur Dangi	Rolpa	Maoist
Madkali Khadka	Rolpa	Maoist
Mahendra Pun Magar	Rolpa	Maoist
Man Bahadur Budhathoki	Rolpa	Maoist
Naresh Bhuda Magar	Rolpa	State
Om Prakash Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Padam Bd. Malla	Rolpa	Maoist
Prem Prakash Acharya	Rolpa	State
Punaram Chand	Rolpa	Maoist
Punya Pun	Rolpa	State
Purna Bahadur Bista	Rolpa	Maoist
Purna Bahadur Shahi	Rolpa	Maoist
Purna Bahadur Thapamagar	Rolpa	Maoist
Ram Roka	Rolpa	Maoist
Ramu Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Rupa Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Sarita K.C.	Rolpa	Maoist
Shayam Lal B.K.	Rolpa	Maoist
Sun Kumari Rana	Rolpa	Maoist
Sumnaya Budha.	Rolpa	Maoist
Tara Pun	Rolpa	Maoist
Tek Bahadur B.K.	Rolpa	Maoist
Thanti Bista	Rolpa	Maoist
Thepchi Budha	Rolpa	Maoist
Tilak Ram Giri	Rolpa	Maoist
Tirtha Lal Thapa	Rolpa	Maoist
Ujar Sing Dangi	Rolpa	Maoist
Umesh Subedi	Rolpa	State

Villa K.C.	Rolpa	Maoist
Wife of Sunai Budha	Rolpa	Maoist
Devi Lal Khadka	Rukum	Maoist
Dilli Bahadur K.C	Rukum	Maoist
Rasuw	Rukum	Maoist
Gopal K.C.	Rukum	Maoist
Goverdam Rawot	Rukum	Maoist
Karna Bahadur Nepali	Rukum	Maoist
Lal Bahadur B.K.	Rukum	Maoist
Laxmi Garti	Rukum	Maoist
Lok Bahadur Bista	Rukum	Maoist
Mohanal B.K.	Rukum	Maoist
Narbir B.K.	Rukum	State
Toya Nath Poudel	Rukum	Maoist
Santosh Pandey	Kapilvastu	State
Tara Pd. Bhusal	Rupendehi	State
Bed B. Bhojara	Salyan	State
Dil Bahadur alis Dil R.Khatr	Salyan	State
Pokharraj Bhudhathoki	Salyan	State
Poshraj Budhathoki	Salyan	State
Pramod Kumar Shrestha	Salyan	State
Sangita Bista	Salyan	State
Devrag Gurung	Sankhuwasabha	State
Kadar Kumar Dhakal	Sankhuwasabha	State
Basu Shakyu	Sankhuwasabha	State
Bikash Sharma	Dang	State
Dhwarika Timalisina	Saptari	Unknown
Nar Singh Prasad Chaudhari	Saptari	State
Rajendra Prasad Shah	Saptari	State
Ram Bilash Sharan	Sarlahi	State
Badri Koirala	Sankhuwasabha	State
Matrika Timsina	Sankhuwasabha	State
Mohan Prasad Guragain	Sankhuwasabha	State
Yaj Bahadur Dhakal	Sankhuwasabha	State
Rajur Dhakal	Sankhuwasabha	State
Raj Kumar Dhakal	Sindupalchok	State
Krishna Pd. Kandel	Solukhumbu	State
Manoj Rai	Solukhumbu	State
Hari Prasad Khanal	Syangja	State
Basistha Koirala	Sindhuli	Maoist
Bharat Burjmagar	Sindhuli	State
Binod Dahal	Sindhuli	State
Devi Bhulon	Sindhuli	State
Loknath Adhikari (Ranu)	Sindhuli	Unknown
Ram Chandra Kapile	Sindhuli	State
Sanjya Kumar Sanjya	Sindhuli	State
Suresh Chandra Koirala	Sindhuli	Maoist
Uddab Prasad Ghimira	Sindhuli	State
Aakash Lama	Sindhupalchok	State
Basundhara Shrestha	Sindhupalchok	Unknown
Bishnu Khatri	Sindhupalchok	Maoist
Ghed B. Basnet	Sindhupalchok	State
Kaji Gurung	Sindhupalchok	tate
Lila Dahal (Nepi)	Sindhupalchok	State
Madha Nepal	Sindhupalchok	State
Nandira Sapkota	Sindhupalchok	State
Ram B. Basnet	Sindhupalchok	State
Reshab B. Karki	Sindhupalchok	State
Saraswati Sapkota	Sindhupalchok	State
Saraswati Khadka	Sindhupalchok	State
Subhash Shrestha	Sindhupalchok	State
Tilak Prasad Sapkota	Sindhupalchok	State
Topnath Sapkota	Sindhupalchok	State
Unknown	Sindhupalchok	State
Badri Kumar Thapa Magar	Siraha	State
Bishowendra Passwan	Siraha	State

Dependra Kumar Singh	Siraha	State
Gauri Shah	Siraha	State
Jokendra Kushait (yadav)	Siraha	State
Narayan Yadav	Siraha	State
Keshar B. Magar	Solukhumbu	Maoist
Krishna Prasad Kandel	Solukhumbu	Unknown
Padam B. Magar	Solukhumbu	Maoist
Padam B. Magar	Solukhumbu	Maoist
Prem Thapa Magar	Solukhumbu	Maoist
Chetnath Dhungana	Sunsari	State
Chiranjivi Gautam	Sunsari	State
Deepak Bishwakarma	Sunsari	State
Devhari Rijal	Sunsari	State
Kul Bahadur Khanal	Sunsari	State
Lochan Dhamala	Sunsari	State
Ratna Bahadur Rawal	Sunsari	Maoist
Santosh Kumar Rai	Sunsari	Maoist
Umesh Shah	Sunsari	State
Bir Bahadur B.K.	Surkhet	State
Ramesh Gautam	Surket	State
Upendra Budhamagar	Surkhet	Maoist
Bhabanath Dhama	Syangja	State
Maresh Kafle	Syangja	Maoist
Netra Narayan Bhandari	Syangja	Maoist
Rebkala Tiwari	Syangja	State
Atindra Neupane	Tanahu	State
Dhan Bd. Magar	Tanahu	State
Keshav Sing Thakuri	Tanahu	State
Lok Raj Joshi (Arjun)	Tanahu	State
Padam Bd Rana	Tanahu	State
Shankar Joshi	Tanahu	State
Ganesh Adhikari	Taplejung	State
Ramesh Kumar Adhikari	Taplejung	Unknown
Ganesh Dhakal	Terahthum	State
Raj Kumar Khadka	Terahthum	State
Shila Ram Bhandari	Udayapur	State
Sitaram Bhandari	Udayapur	State
Bam B. Adhikari	Birendra Multipal Campus	State
Bir Bahadur Bishwokarma	-	State
Bishnu Bhusal	Peoples' Front	State

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Divine light of Tibet** Photographs by Gabriela Mayorquín till 5 January at Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Reflections of Colour** Paintings by Susan Gillerman Boggs till 9 January at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 4218048
- ❖ **The Land I Love** Photographs Kim Hong Sung till 16 January at Gallery Nine, Lazimpat. 4428694
- ❖ **Photographs of working children by children** Exhibition from 27 December at Baggikhana, Patandhoka.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Sinners in Heaven** New Year Eve blast at the Yak & Yeti Hotel. Details: 4248999
- ❖ **Style Nepal** Fashion show by Sunimu Boutique and party, 6PM on 28 December at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. Details: 4441073, 4229123
- ❖ **The God's Dance of Kathmandu Valley** 7PM on Tuesdays. Tea+Ticket: Rs 400 at Hotel Vajra.

DRINK

- ❖ **Cosmic Cocktails** and chic home furnishings at Mitra Lounge Bar and Mausam homestyle boutique. Above Cafe Mitra, Thamel. 4259015
- ❖ **Fusion** at Dwarika's for over 100 cocktails, happy hour and Abhaya & The Steam Injuns every Friday. 4479488
- ❖ **Eggnog**, hot rum drinks, special wines with the best steaks at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4433043



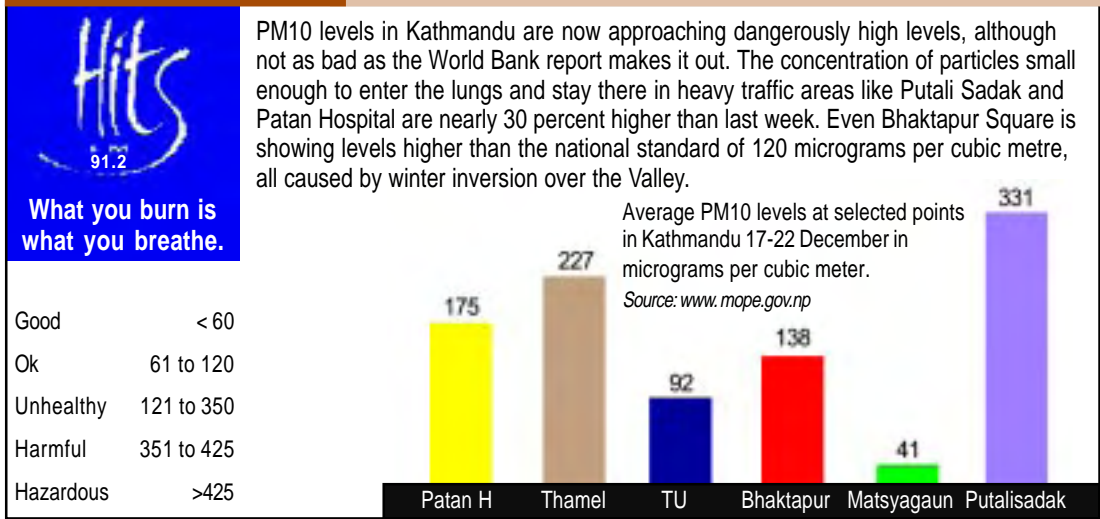
FOOD

- ❖ **Traditional cakes**, puddings, pralines and X-Mas specials at the Pastry Shop, Yak & Yeti Hotel. 4248999
- ❖ **New Years Eve Dinner** buffet for Rs 700 and **New Years Day Brunch** Rs 500 per person at Summit Hotel. 5521810
- ❖ **Nepali singers** and Chinese food for New Year Eve. Rs 2,000 per family (of four) at Tian Rui Chinese Restaurant & Bar, Thapathali. 4243078
- ❖ **Bring your wine** along every Thursday and Sunday and buy our dinner. Himalatte Café, Thamel.
- ❖ **Ring in the New Year** Dinner and live band Single Rs 1500, couples Rs 2500. Special overnight packages at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Celebrate at the Hyatt:** 31 December - buffet with live band at The Café, seafood dinner at Rox Restaurant, three DJs at Rox Bar with juggling bartenders. 4491234
- ❖ **Homestyle cooking** by Japanese chef at Dan Ran Japanese Restaurant, Jawalakhel. 5521027
- ❖ **Vegetarian specialties** at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha Stupa. 4480262
- ❖ **Café U** Japanese home-cooking, cakes and coffee. Opp British School, Sanepa. 5523263
- ❖ **Malay, Singapore food** at Singma, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur. 552004

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **New Year Chimes** overnight stay with dinner and dance featuring The Heartbreakers. Prior reservation recommended. Godavari Village Resort, 5560675
- ❖ **Golf** in the Valley's last pristine forest. Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa 4451212
- ❖ **Microlight flying adventures** with the Avia Club, Pokhara.
- ❖ **Shivapuri Heights Cottage** at the edge of Shivapuri. Email: info@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Weekend Special** for Rs 3000 per couple, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280
- ❖ **Magnificent mountains** and deluxe tents at Adventure Tented Camp & Country Kitchen. 4418992
- ❖ **Christmas in the jungle** at Jungle Base Camp. 061-532112 Email: junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
- ❖ **Shivapuri Cottage, Dadagaon** gourmet meals, board and transport. Highland Travel & Tours. 4253352, 4253053

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY



NEPALI WEATHER

VIS-25-12-2003 04:00 GMT

A notable event of this week's weather is the rapid growth of the winter fog cover in northwest Indian plain and Nepal's western tarai. This annual phenomenon is caused by the infusion of cold dry air from the northwest over the river basin. But a high pressure zone is keeping fog conditions away from the central and eastern tarai for now. There is no respite from the two-month-long winter drought with no major westerly system sighted on the horizon. This means continued morning smog in Kathmandu with sunny and breezy afternoons. The first night frost will be seen on the Valley outskirts.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

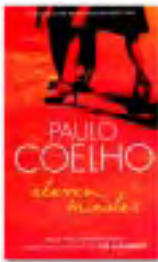
Day	Weather	Date
Fri	Sunny	19-03
Sat	Sunny	20-02
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BOOKWORM

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JP Dutta's *LoC Kargil* is based on the lives of those who fought in the 1999 Kargil War between India and Pakistan. With lyrics by Javed Akhtar and stirring music from Anu Malik, who seems to have shed his copycat image, *LoC* will probably raise patriotic fervour in India to unprecedented heights by their Republic Day in January. Here in Nepal, most of us are probably going to admire the cinematography, weep when the soldiers fall and marvel at the unwieldy star cast—so many characters to keep track of—that is rivalled only by the numbers of the production team.



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Full circle

Ancient Himalayan Buddhist art is the hot new attraction in Los Angeles this new year.



Almost four decades after the last travelling Nepali art exhibition to the west, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* is on display at Los Angeles. This unparalleled collection of almost 160 Nepali, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian masterpieces, some dating back 13 centuries, has been well received by media critics and some 20,000 visitors have thronged to the museum.

Co-curator Dina Bangdel, assistant professor at Ohio State University, is ecstatic. "Given the political situation here, I feel that this exhibition has established for Nepal a much needed positive presence in the US with a very favourable response," she told us. "With Nepal so much in the forefront in the US, we should take pride in our cultural heritage."

The exhibition focuses on the context of the art and translates Himalayan Buddhist practices into physical form. Bangdel and colleague John C Huntington have also published a catalogue *Circle of Bliss* that helps visitors understand the artwork that flow from the Himalayan Buddhist tradition.

Modern art museums almost always leave interpretation—whether we invest art with meaning or not—to the viewer, so this guided exhibition to an understanding of the display is a rarity. Meditational art is both meaningful and with purpose: their creators knew the function of each piece was solely to aid the practitioner to attain enlightenment through meditation.

Currently on display at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the exhibition focuses on Chakrasamvara and Vajravarahi, regarded by some as key Tantric mediation practices. The artwork is exquisite and esoteric. Using graphic and explanatory panels, the organisers have made accessible an art form that has only been studied for the past 60 years.

The Circle of Bliss offers a historical scholarship of Tantra, in particular Chakrasamvara Tantra. Though the texts have been around, offering meditation technique for centuries, co-authors Bangdel and Huntington have placed the art in their religious and social context, emphasising their symbolic visual language.

While tracing the geographic and cultural development of Himalayan Buddhism across Asia, the authors examine the role of the Newar Buddhist community in Nepal as transmitters and interpreters of tantric teachings. The Newars are reintroduced as a catalyst in the development of Buddhism. The links are apparent in the 13 works of art that have travelled to LA from Nepal's national collection. All told, 40 international museums and private collectors from Nepal, North America, Great Britain and Europe have loaned art pieces: sculptures, thangkas, books, ritual instruments—it's all there.

Reliefs of Buddha's birth dating to the 5th or 6th century, lent by the National Museum in Chhauni, is one of the oldest works on display. At the core of the exhibition, are various examples of the two deities Chakrasamvara (which translates as 'circle of bliss') and his consort Vajravarahi entwined in a love embrace.

Aside from paintings and sculptures, the exhibit's chief attraction is the on-site creation of the Circle of Bliss sand mandala being made by Tibetan monks from the Ganden monastery in India. The 8m diameter sand mandala will be completed this week and then destroyed, its constituents sprinkled over the Pacific Ocean. ♦

The Circle of Bliss will leave Los Angeles County Museum of Art on 4 January and travel to Ohio.

DAVID CLOUD

The following are traffic rules for Kathmandu Valley updated in December 2003. The following rules shall remain valid for the next six months, unless otherwise notified by the authorities. Violators will be violated.

1. The biggest vehicle has the right of way.
2. The craziest driver has the right of way.
3. The driver looking the other way has the right of way.
4. Cows have the right of way.
5. Pedestrians running flat out across the road have the right of way.
6. The motorcycle driver that goes the farthest way across the solid white line has the right of way.
7. A taxi making a U-turn from the extreme right hand lane to the extreme left hand lane has the right of way.
8. On Ring Road, a vehicle coming around a blind curve on the wrong side of the road has the right of way.
9. People walking down the middle of the lane with their backs to the traffic have the right of way.
10. Motorcycles heading the wrong way have the right of way.
11. Pedestrians walking casually across the road looking the other way have the right of way.
12. Buses pulling out have the right of way.
13. Buses pulling in have the right of way.
14. Buses going the wrong way have

Trafficking in Kathmandu

Updated Kathmandu Traffic Rules.



MIN BAIRACHARYA

the right of way.

15. Buses backing up have the right of way—unless they meet a crazy driver or a driver looking the other way or a cow or a pedestrian running flat out or a driver going the farthest way across the solid white line or a taxi making a U-turn or a vehicle coming around a blind curve on the wrong side of the road or people walking down the middle of the lane with their backs to the traffic or a motorcycle heading the wrong way or pedestrians walking casually across the road looking the other way. ♦

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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

BEEEEEEEEEP

What is this country coming to? Do I now have to bribe you to read this column, or what?

However, since it has now been established through several readership polls that no one is actually reading this stuff, guess I can get away with writing the most outrageous stuff about the pillars of our society, of which at last count there were four. So here goes: BEEEEEP is a monkey, the BEEEEEP is an ass and so are the other BEEEEEPs in the BEEEEEP, the LONG BEEEEEEP and ANOTHER EVEN LONGER BEEP are a bunch of @\$%*/+&cs.

Thank Pashupatinath that the press is still independent in this country and freedom of expressionism is guaranteed by our constitution, otherwise I would not be allowed to make the aforementioned x-rated comments in full view of all you underage readers out there. It is a matter of national pride that the Nepali press can get away with such slanderous libel without denting its credit rating. This is proof, if proof is still required by the international community,

that democracy in Nepal is still, if not alive and kicking, then at least crawling around on all fours with its tail wagging between its legs.

With those formalities now out of the way, and with permission from Madam Chairperson, I would now like to turn to the next item on the agenda, which is the economic crisis triggered by a joint pledge made by top Nepali businessmen last week in which they solemnly swore (in language that is unprintable in a newspaper that is also read by minors) that, as a part of their belt-tightening and cost-cutting efforts, companies will henceforth not be able to offer any more bribes to government officials and politicians.

An emergency meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday looked at various ways in which the government could deal with this unexpected development that removes one of the most efficient methods so far devised to spread the wealth around. The no-bribe policy by business has already lead to a serious shortfall in revenue for officials, and has set off a snowball effect on consumer spending, forcing the Finance Ministry to revise its premature announcement of an annual GDP growth rate of 4 percent drastically downwards.

Officialdom now has no recourse but to announce an escalating agitation beginning in the new year starting with a dot pen-down strike at all offices, a sit-down strike at the gates of FNCCI, culminating on a relay hunger strike at their places of work which will entail officials foregoing their afternoon tea break on alternate working days. If that doesn't prompt businessmen from lifting their ban on bribes, then may Pashupatinath save us all.

What? The *bhattas* are on strike?

**NEPALI SOCIETY****Ms Engineer**

Pushpanjali Khanal proves that it's not just a man's world. Without even trying to be a symbol for the sisterhood, this 34-year-old is the only female engineer at the Department of Roads (DOR). There are about 200 female engineers in Nepal, but most hold desk jobs, draft designs or are academics. Pushpanjali, however, chose to work in mainstream engineering. "Women tend to think that this is man's work and it's tough being a real engineer at construction sites in remote areas, but this is what I enjoy most," she says.

A decade ago when she joined DOR as one of its youngest engineers, Pushpanjali recalls receiving utmost respect for her professionalism from male colleagues. Pushpanjali didn't have to battle a glass ceiling—there wasn't one.

Her suggestions and ideas

were encouraged and accepted by her male colleagues and senior officers. Five years ago she bested her male peers to win a scholarship for a master's degree from the University of Surrey in England. Pushpanjali's next aim is a PhD, which will make her one of the highest qualified engineers in Nepal.

"It's sad that there isn't enough encouragement for engineers in the country," says Pushpanjali, lamenting a tight job market. She is undoubtedly the most famous daughter of her village of Gaikhur in

Gorkha. She was the only girl to pass the SLC while most of her friends dropped out of school in grade five. When she moved to Kathmandu and joined Pulchok Engineering Campus, there were only two girl students. After graduation, when her friend chose to become a lecturer, Pushpanjali decided to become an engineer. Pushpanjali hasn't been home to Gaikhur in five years, and plans to visit soon.

Says Pushpanjali: "As long as you can prove yourself, work hard and not show your weakness, no one can ever look down on you as a woman."

◆ (Naresh Newar)



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