

insure

That's how our Customers see us
Everest Insurance. Keeping You Secure.



Everest Insurance Co. Ltd.

Hattisar, P.O. Box: 10675, Kathandu, Nepal

Tel: 4425758, 4444717, 4444718 Fax: 977-1-4444366 Email: evinsco@mos.com.np

01E1C/Outreach Nepal

Confused comrades

Contradicting claims by rival Maoists about a 'blockade' of Kathmandu Valley next week has confused the capital. On Tuesday, the Rasua, Dhading and Nuwakot Maoist Command issued a statement announcing an indefinite blockade of the Valley's entry points. Later reports said it was only for three weeks. But on Thursday morning, radio and tv stations quoted rebel leader Abhash saying there was no blockade. Then came news that the original statement may have been true after all. Valley citizens have started panic buying, just to be on the safe side.

10,000+

NOT JUST A STATISTIC: Parbati Duwadi of Thanti in Lamjung lies in a pool of blood while her brother-in-law holds her infant son. She was killed in crossfire between police and Maoists two years ago, and is among the 4,141 civilians who have died in the past eight years.



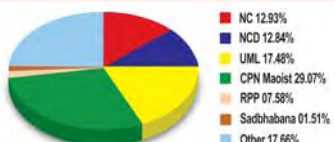
SAGAR SHRESTHA

Times

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 149

Q. If the Maoists renounce violence and free, fair elections are announced, which party will you vote for?



Total votes: 1,121

Weekly Internet Poll # 150. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Should the Maoists give up violence and join mainstream politics?

ARISTON

Europe's No. 1 selling Water Heater



HOME FURNISHERS

Tripureshwor (way to Thapathali), Kathmandu
Ph: 4254601, 4262240

Conference at Godavari
Village Resort
Kathmandu • Nepal

is not just a business affair.....



We provide high quality performance and support facilities, in a perfect ambience and setting, to create an environment that helps you to achieve the goals and deliberations for your conference.
Tel: 977-1-5560675, 5560775 - E-mail: gvsales@mail.com.np

This month, the number of Nepalis killed by fellow-Nepalis since the Maoist war began eight years ago crossed the 10,000 mark.

The human rights organisation, INSEC, is the only independent organisation counting. But it lists only verified deaths, and there are thousands more undocumented cases. On 28 July, the count reached 9,996. A week later, it was 10,112. Of those killed, 268 are children under 17.

In 1996, when a total of 81 people were killed, the nation was shocked. The death toll rose exponentially after the army entered the fray in November 2001, as the Maoists started using heavy weapons they captured. Non-combatant casualties soared as counter-insurgency operations resulted in disappearances, extra-judicial killings and deaths in crossfire.

The worst total was in 2002,

when 4,648 people were killed, nearly one-fourth of them in the bloody month of May alone.

The Maoists targeted civilians, grassroot politicians, social workers, businessmen and those accused of spying. INSEC says the Maoists have killed 3,469 people, while 6,643 have died at the hands of the security forces. Of the total, 4,141 were civilians, 1,478 were security personnel, about 400 were political workers and over 4,000 were Maoists.

The army admits 500 soldiers have died in the past eight years, and that 1,300 police have been killed. It says it has counted over 6,000 Maoist casualties in the past two years alone, not including an estimated 1,500 rebel dead carried away after major battles.

INSEC's figures show that nearly half the people killed since 1996 have died in the past two years, and most of them after

the breakdown of the second ceasefire last August. At this rate the total number of those killed is expected to reach 15,000 by this time next year.

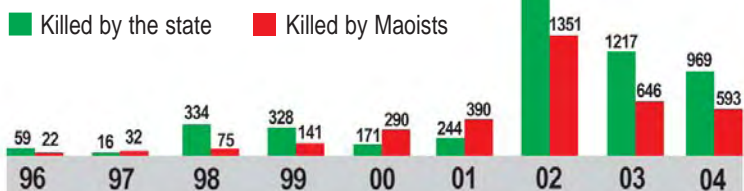
In the past five months, 608 people have already died, 341 of them since the formation of the four-party coalition on 2 June. Jagadish Dahal of INSEC quotes field reports as saying that the army now has a take-no-prisoners policy. "Maoists and suspected Maoists are usually shot on the spot," he says.

INSEC's Human Rights Yearbook 2004 also contained graphic details of Maoist brutality: victims tortured, beheaded, dismembered, bones

crushed and axed. Lately, the Maoists have started threatening and abducting some human rights activists and journalists in the midwest.

Editorial p2
Ring the valley

These tallies don't give the numbers of those maimed, disabled or hospitalised. They do not count the hundreds of thousands of Nepali who have lost loved ones. No one has an estimate on how many millions have been forced to leave their homes. ●



BUY ONE... GET ONE FREE

To the most exotic locations on earth.

Fly **Royal First Class** or **Royal Executive Class** and bring a companion for **FREE**.

THAI is proud to invite customers to experience its premium class hospitality. THAI is delighted to welcome you to the sumptuous luxury of premium class travel with an extraordinary offer. Simply buy one THAI Royal First Class or Royal Executive Class ticket to the destination of your choice* and receive a second ticket, for the same class of travel, completely FREE.

THAI, Smooth as silk

*Limited Destinations. Conditions Apply. Offer valid till 31st August, 2004.

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



LINE27004



RINGING THE VALLEY

From Singha Darbar, it is only 300 metres to the Royal Nepali Army headquarters in Bhadrakali. But they may as well be poles apart. It is pretty clear where decisions are made these days on security matters, on victims of human rights violations, about war and peace. The army, quite literally, calls the shots.

There is really no point, therefore, for civil society representatives to blame this hapless government for dragging its feet on talks, or for the UML to say that its peace agenda is being ignored by the prime minister, or for the international community to fault the coalition government for sidelining negotiations. The decisions are taken elsewhere.

Where this government could do more is rush to deliver priority services to priority areas, shortlist the hotspots for immediate relief and rehabilitation, and maybe start by helping at least those it has promised to compensate: the victims of Maoist violence. But in this vacuous state, where no one seems to know who is in charge, when even the simplest decisions are taken in excruciating slow motion, we are not so hopeful.

The incredibly rapid spread of the Maoist revolution in Nepal is not because it is a particularly brilliant idea whose time has come, or that it is a militarily strong force. It is because successive governments in Kathmandu have been so inert. That is why we have a situation where the government simply does not exist in about 80 percent of the country it governs. That doesn't mean the Maoists are there either, but they effectively fill the vacuum. This is also why they dare to call for a blockade of the Valley, hoping to test whether the time is ripe to bring the battle to the capital. How the government responds to this direct threat, what it does to assuage the citizens will be closely watched.

In a kingdom of mediocrity, it seems even our revolutionaries suffer the curse. Instead of building on their early support, this uprising is spinning out of control and into the hands of rampaging warlords.

When Mao Zedong said "political power comes out of the barrel of a gun" he probably didn't mean it to be taken so literally—you don't win people over by holding a gun to their temples. People may broadly support many of the Maoists' goals, but few agree with their methods. It may be wiser for them to make the jump to mainstream politics, while there is still a country worth saving.

Regression analysis

Statistical insignificance in a single variable regression

Despite the public awareness that the anti-'regression' movement has generated, it has undermined larger issues by encouraging a limited interpretation of what is perceived as regressive.

Regression is defined as 'a trend or shift toward a lower or less perfect state'. Any deviation from the eventual

GUEST COLUMN
Dipta Shah



attainment or consolidation of a superior form of democracy, therefore, qualifies as regression.

Although the cause of 'regression' has universal accord across political boundaries, proposed resolutions to it do not. The source of perceived

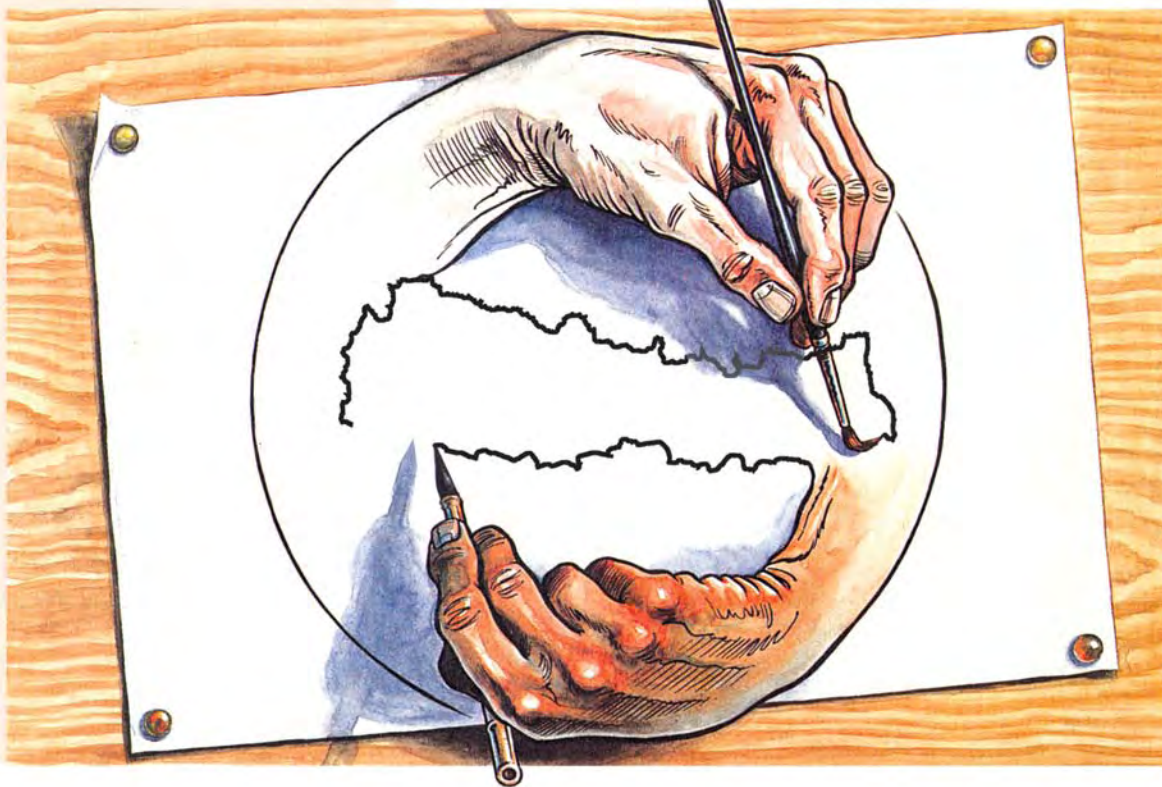
regression in Nepal is an interpretation of Article 127, which allowed for Sher Bahadur Deuba's dismissal and the nomination of prime ministers at the king's discretion. To the casual observer, Deuba's reinstatement two months ago would amount to a reversal of this 'regression'. But, according to the alliance headed by the NC-G, the casual observer is wrong.

Depending on who one engages, there are different definitions of regression. Although the dissolution of parliament was not an extra-constitutional move, some previous parliamentarians maintain that its re-instatement is the only way to

end the 'regression'. For Girija Koirala and his coalition of four, it appears that 'regression' will continue until he himself becomes the prime minister. Despite the anti-'regression' rhetoric, this predisposition towards power-mongering is hardly progressive itself.

Democracy is easily manipulated by those with ambition for power and political office, especially in the presence of a complacent, silent majority. To express discontent over dinner and cocktails is of marginal value. To effectively voice dissatisfaction and enact a system of checks and balances, is where real value lies. Harnessing this value is not just a democratic option, it is every Nepali citizen's civic duty. The failure on our part as responsible citizens to challenge questionable motives also qualifies as a form of regression.

Yet another regressive attitude is our innate tendency to blame others rather than accept responsibility ourselves. The political parties seem to find great comfort in blaming the palace for 'regression'. They also find it convenient to sideline the issues that allowed for (or forced, some would say), a constitutional monarch to assume a politically assertive role. All the political forces in the country blame each other for the Maoist uprising. Meanwhile, the Maoists extracted most of their power base by capitalising on the



LETTERS

CORRUPTION CORRECTION

Re: CK Lal's 'Absolute poverty corrupts absolutely' (State of the State, #208). That absolute poverty corrupts absolutely is a half-baked truth. The fact is that it is absolute corruption that breeds absolute poverty. Lal has got it the wrong way around. Had poverty been the cause of corruption, all (or a majority of) poor people must be corrupt. But we know that corruption is the privilege of the few rich and powerful people. As long as we are quoting Samuel Huntington, he also said that when economic opportunities are low, people use power to grab wealth, and when political opportunities are low, people use wealth to grab power. As for Lal's suggestion on raising the salary of civil servants, one must be aware that low salary may actually be the cause of corruption. High salaries are in no way a guarantee that corruption is removed. Simply taking away the 'cause' is not an answer to the problem. What happened to our corruption level after the 40 percent salary hike government introduced, under ADB pressure, a couple of years ago? Moreover, what would you

do with 30,000 or so peons working in the government?

Narayan Manandhar,
Kumaripati

We've had to read over 100 issues of *Nepali Times* before getting an article from CK Lal ('Absolute poverty corrupts absolutely', #208) that actually sheds coherent light on an endemic problem in the 'State of the State'. A refreshing change from waffling, conjured, purposefully inflammatory opinions. Was it worth the wait? Absolutely yes! Now that we know Mr Lal can present facts with reasoned opinion, we look forward to more of the same.

Name withheld, email

PERTURBED

I am extremely perturbed when I witness the leaders of both the army and the Maoists sacrificing their youth to fight a war without a plan to win the peace ('Gun men', #207). I even marvel at the blind faith of these brave soldiers. The mindset that believes in a military solution is dangerously obsolete. It would be more patriotic to question the authorities about the root causes of Nepal's evils. Instead of being mere puppets to

those incumbent leaders who are incapable of coming up with peace plans, engulfed with defective strategies to serve their own purpose, it is time to stand against them till they put the country's interest ahead of their personal ones. While I was in Nepal, I believed that the Nepali army was the best in the world. I still believe that is true. Coming from a family that has time and again served the nation, it is upsetting to witness the current mistrust and apprehension the nation is showing towards its soldiers. The very army which

every young Nepali boy would strive to join is being scrutinised with fear and even contempt. The Royal Nepali Army needs to regain the glory bequeathed to it by its forbears.

S Parul, email

DEAR BABURAM

After reading 'Gun men' (#207) and the web exclusive photos in your online edition, I would like to address this letter to Maoist leaders Baburam and Prachanda. It is clear that your movement in Achham is getting closer to its goals. Your 'People's Liberation Army' and

'People's Government' control the rural countryside in spite of the government's assertions to the contrary. Now that you say you are moving to choke or capture the urban areas, your fellow Nepalis would like to know more about your vision for Nepal:

1. How do you aim to tackle inequality in social and political terms?

After all, your own organisational hierarchy seems unrepresentational of the Nepali social structure. CK Lal in the same issue 'The middle Path' (State of the State, #207) cites that both the Kirat Workers' Party and the Madhesi National Front disassociated themselves from your party due to internal non-acceptance.

2. How are you going to eradicate poverty? Are you planning to tax the rich, nationalise corporations or have worker/peasant communes? What is going to happen to private property of farmers, merchants and workers? How will development work be done without international aid?

3. How are you going to control the overpopulation problem? Are we going to follow the



MIN BAJRACHARYA

blame levied on former governments for their dereliction of civic duty.

This blame game has all the elements of a vicious cycle that only a collective consensus can break. Perhaps a radically induced change in the attitudes of our leadership is required, followed by an immediate adoption and implementation of similar changes at all levels of societal strata. The sooner we are able to come to terms with our own misdemeanours the sooner this form of ‘regression’ will end.

Ironically, in the midst of all this confusion and chaos, the Maoists appear to be the only actors who practice a literal interpretation of societal progressiveness. Sadly, though, when this test is expanded to include the means used by the Maoists to accomplish their ends then it is not progressive anymore.

To err it is said, is the human condition, to forgive, the most noble of virtues. But what if one continually errs? And does bestowing forgiveness upon those who repeatedly equivocate and engage in Machiavellian conspiracies constitute a virtue or a sign of weakness?

For the sake of peace and that of future generations, one can only hope that more of us will have the courage to choose virtuosity over aggression and by default, progression over regression. The current interpretation of ‘regression’ as that which can only be accomplished by royal decree offers what is in statistical parlance, a ‘weak model’. There are simply too many dependent variables in the equation for ‘regression’ to be explained by one factor alone. ●

Courting controversy

The law must take its own course without meddling from self-declared protectors of the public interest

In the absence of a functioning legislature, royal ordinances have become the only way to make or amend laws. The executive hangs by the thread of Clause 127 of a comatose constitution and is dependent upon royal mercy for survival. The fourth estate is trapped



STATE OF THE STATE
CK Lal

between the state and the insurgents.

Civil society is sometimes called the ‘Fifth Estate’ but has become the playing field of vested interests. In the resulting anarchy, the courts could have been the hope of last resort. But the judiciary is itself mired in an unprecedented crisis. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has finally succeeded in getting an insider appointed attorney general by the king, but a bigger battle looms to select competent and impartial judges for 16 courts of appeal.

The positions of more than three dozen justices will fall vacant in the coming months. The sort of people appointed will affect the image of the judiciary. Mud slinging between the bar and the bench in the past have dragged the judiciary through the streets. The resulting spectacle has damaged the people’s faith in the courts. The judiciary is the guardian of the rule of law in any modern state, and we need to protect it from becoming the tool of those in power.

The courts of Nepal have been hamstrung from the beginning. After the Shah Restoration in the 1950s, courts were named *nyayalaya*, the Sanskrit term meaning ‘house of justice’. Royal preceptors weren’t happy with the term, since their interpretation of Hindu scriptures made justice the prerogative of the crown. The function of the courts under an active monarchy was to merely to pass on the orders of the divine ruler.

Preceptors prevailed over politicians, and the courts of Nepal were renamed *adalat*—a word of Persian origin meaning an office of the state that settled disputes. Thus, the agenda for the third estate was decided by semantics between the players of power politics.

The 1990 constitution left the institution of monarchy outside the preview of the judiciary. The supreme court remained an *adalat*—not a court of justice, but a court of law. (US supreme court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr once reprimanded an unsatisfied litigant: “This is a court of law, young man, not a court of justice.”)

For a court of law, procedure is the primary consideration and the notion of justice is secondary. It is assumed that if procedural features are closely scrutinised, the resulting decision of the court would somehow satisfy the justice criteria as well.

A court of law functions on

the presumption of innocence which holds that a) everyone charged with a crime shall be considered not guilty until his or her guilt has been proven in conformity with the procedures stipulated by the law and established by the verdict of a court of law, b) the defendant shall not be obliged to prove his or her innocence, and c) the benefit of doubt shall be interpreted in favour of the defendant.

It is therefore not the function of the court to catch the culprit. It is there to ensure that the law’s dragnet doesn’t catch any innocents. That is why court procedures sometimes drive litigants to exasperation. One of the perils of the 24/7 television and saturation coverage in the print is trial by media. Live reporting, instant analysis, and sound-bite opinion-on-demand leave nothing to the nuances of the law. The public therefore demands the instant justice of kangaroo courts. Such certitude undermines the very concept of the court of law.

It is normal in a democracy to publicly discuss the merits of judicial decisions, but the institution of court and the character of judges should never be ridiculed. Politicians derive legitimacy from the people, and are therefore fair game. Judges need to be trusted as they have no recourse to face the public to clear their name. Smearing judges with the brush used to tarnish politicians strengthens the



insurgents who question the very system of governance and are using guns to bring it down.

The unseemly controversy over the court decision about the alleged drug lord William Gordon Robinson, a British national, (see ‘Nepal thrives as regional drug hub’ #198) irreparably damaged the judiciary. In such cases, it’s best to let the law take its own course without undue meddling from the self-declared protectors of the public interest. In addition, choosing justices of impeccable character would keep the courts beyond reproach. ●

Chinese One Child policy to solve this problem?

4. You advocate for a classless society, yet, stress that dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants is necessary for transformation of a society. In essence your ideology justifies the need for the Communist Party’s political control over society. However, history is witness to the failures of this model in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and N Korea, where the parties have themselves become a class unto themselves and sometimes even spawned dynasties.

5. Admit it, communism has failed or reformed itself. The Soviet Union has disintegrated. Mao’s China is now a showpiece of capitalism. Are you going to follow a more pragmatic political philosophy?

6. What happens to people who do not agree with your view point? Is there going to be a freedom of expression, press and basic rights granted to the people? Do you believe in democracy?

7. What happens to peoples’ religion and belief systems?

There is no room for religion (‘opiate of the masses’) in your ideology. Can we still practice or not?

8. Right now you are on the opposing side, so it is easier for you to criticise and analyze the problems facing Nepal. If you become the rulers, you are going to have show results. How are you going to achieve that—through the barrel of the gun or through democratic political persuasion? In other words, how are you going to provide good governance?

We have read or are already familiar with the Red Book, so please give us real answers. Who knows, if your agenda is sound, practical, and ‘mato suhando’ many people like me and others may come to your fold.

SN Singh, email

NAILED

Re: Ajaya Dixit’s ‘Greed, Inc’ (Nepali Pan, #206). When the Enron scandal broke here in the US a few years ago, I was working in Nepal and observing an unfolding array of corporate crimes and greed that embarrassed me greatly, especially give the efforts underway in

Nepal to stem corruption in government. A Nepali colleague, one of a growing cadre of Supreme Court advocates, observed wryly, “We have plenty of this corruption here in business and government here in Nepal, too. But the difference is that in the US those guys will go to jail.” It was heartening to see the news of Enron, Adelphia, Tyco executives, and Martha Stewart being nailed for their greed and criminal actions. I only hope that the wheels of justice will soon do the same for those in the Bush Administration responsible for the shameful actions that have done so much damage to US standing around the world. And I also hope that these examples encourage you in the Nepali press and the NGO sector to keep battling corruption and mismanagement in Nepal. The truth will set us free.

Malcolm Odell
South Hampton, NH, USA

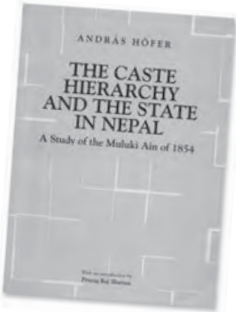
CORRECTION

The review of Fahrenheit 9/11 in #208 was by Richard A. Zwelling.

IN BOOKSTORES NOW

The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854

by András Höfer
with an introduction by
Prayag Raj Sharma
Himal Books, 2004, pp. xxxviii + 240
ISBN 99933 43 58 7, Rs 650



Finally available in Nepal. The classic analysis of the Old Muluki Ain.

‘Barring a couple of articles in the 1960s and the 70s, which amounted to no more than scratching its surface, no scholar before Höfer had turned his attention to tap the wealth of social and cultural material contained in the Muluki Ain in an exhaustive manner. Höfer’s book is the first-ever attempt by anyone to study the ‘anthropology of caste’ in Nepal ... It is obvious that no one else has studied the Muluki Ain either before or since Höfer at such length and in such depth. This alone is enough to make the present book a landmark research with whose help alone we are able to know the structure of the macro-Nepali society of 19th-century vintage, its legacy running down to our own times still very strongly in many respects.’

—From the ‘Introduction’ by Prayag Raj Sharma

Besides the physical cost of the conflict, many Nepalis are suffering hidden psychological trauma

A traumatised

NARESH NEWAR

Prem Giri was only six years old when he saw the mutilated body of his father, who was killed by the Maoists in Dhangadi. His state of mind deteriorated. Generally a jolly boy, he changed into a quiet and aloof person who refused to talk even with his mother. He didn't have an appetite and was haunted by nightmares. At night, he paced up and down the house because he couldn't sleep.

His mother started to worry that her son was losing his mind and thought his condition would improve if she sent him away from the village. She reluctantly sent her youngest child to Kathmandu with help of a local social worker. Today,

population is on the rise, yet they don't consider it a serious health concern. Donor agencies, international charities and local child-help groups seem to think that the Nepali people are resilient and have the inner strength and family support to endure emotional hardships. But with killings and torture being everyday events in the news, many Nepalis appear to be numbed by the shock.

This is worrying. "When people become desensitised about news of killing and start to accept that violence is part of life and society, it is a very dangerous sign," says Bhogendra Sharma, director of Centre for Victims of Torture, Nepal (CVICT), which specialises in

Prem is eight but he still has nightmares. With help of counsellors at a shelter in the capital, the boy has started to speak more but he still has problems mixing with other children. He suffers bouts of violence and ends up beating up children who try to make friends with him.

Psychologists and social counsellors are worried that Nepal's trauma-exposed

rehabilitating children and women traumatised by violence and bereavement.

Identifying and dealing with trauma victims is quite new for Nepal's few psychiatrists and psychologists, who tend to use textbook knowledge of clinical practices to treat traumatic stress. "I learnt more in Nepali villages than what I was taught in the universities abroad," says eminent psychiatrist Vidya Dev

KIRAN PANDAY

There is a house in Washington DC

The sad wreck of the Nepali ambassador's residence in the US capital resembles the decline of the nation it represents

On a quiet, leafy street in northwest Washington DC sits a shabby decaying house with a gold plaque on its door. The grass in the garden hasn't been cut for weeks, garbage is strewn in the backyard, the paint around the windows is cracked and peeling. The plaque sign reads 'Royal Nepalese Embassy'.

I stumbled upon this sad little scene walking back from the nearby National

HERE AND THERE
Daniel Lak



Cathedral to my temporary home

downtown. As I walked down the street towards the house, it was obvious that something was wrong. A shaggy fringe of weeds and long grass protruded onto the sidewalk. Silence reigned behind the untrimmed hedge. Windows were shuttered. All around are well kept family homes with childrens' swing sets and toys on the lawn. It was a sunny Saturday afternoon, so parents and kids were out enjoying themselves.

Poor countries face big financial challenges maintaining a diplomatic presence in expensive places, and Washington DC is certainly one of them. The salary of an ambassador from a small,

developing country would not tempt an American factory worker or landscape gardener. Just paying the monthly bills is often a challenge.

In Islamabad, where I lived for four years in the 1990s, diplomatic staff from African countries often supplemented their paltry recompense by selling contraband whisky to thirsty foreigners like me who didn't have official permission to buy alcohol in the Islamic republic. A prominent South Asian ambassador in London once had to sell valuable paintings inside his embassy to pay for some roof repairs. His successor later accused him of stealing rare works of art.

I have a lot of sympathy for people in this position, but the state of the Nepal ambassador's residence in Washington is a disgrace. It reflects badly on a country far away that needs more friends and support, not the contempt of strangers. The American capital is one of Nepal's two most important diplomatic postings (the other is New Delhi) and keeping up appearances is part of the job.

There are excuses to be made. His excellency, the late Jaya Pratap Rana, passed on a few months ago after a long illness which meant he was never really

able to take up his post. He was well and lively when I met him at a conference of Nepalis in America two years ago. His successor has been appointed but evidently has not yet arrived, or hasn't gotten around to issuing orders for maintenance.

Nonetheless, it all begs the question: what is the staff of the Royal Nepali

Embassy doing on a day-to-day basis? They have, I'm sure, the usual duties of the diplomat: networking, reading newspapers, searching for American investment in Nepal. I'm sure they could spare a little time to trim the grass around the ambassador's residence and pick up some of the rubbish in the backyard.

Diplomacy, ultimately, is about appearances, and in Washington that is being allowed to slip badly. It's been a long time since a happy crowd of power brokers and influential Americans toasted the kingdom in the garden while succulent *sekuwa* sizzled on the barbecue.

It's hard to avoid linking the decline of the house and the nation it represents. Nepal's elite has been absent without leave, or neglectful, or simply not paying attention. The garden (the country's hinterland) is unkempt, dangerous and depopulated. The house (the state) is a sad wreck, dry rot in all of the beams and corruption from the attic to the basement.

If someone, anyone, doesn't do something soon, the whole structure could collapse and make things even worse in the neighbourhood. And I'm not talking about a house here. ●



nation

Menuka is coping

Menuka Koirala does not regret losing all her property in Gorkha. The only thing she is sorry about is losing her husband.

He joined the Maoists and used to torture her constantly. He often threatened to kill her if she refused to work with the rebels, but she never thought he would actually do it. But after he started making serious threats, she decided to leave. Staying with her family in Gorkha was not safe either, so she came to Kathmandu. But even here, Menuka constantly lives in fear that her husband will track her down. "I was so mentally tortured that I did not even have the strength to live," recalls Menuka, trying hard to control her tears. Although impoverished, counselling has taught her how to cope with the pain.



Sharma, chief of the Department of Psychiatry at Kathmandu's Teaching Hospital.

There are no more than 50 psychologists in Nepal, out of which only six are qualified clinical psychologists. Every year, less than 10 students pass with a master's degree in psychology from Tribhuban University (TU) and most of them end up working in non-related commercial jobs. Only a handful actually focus on conflict-related trauma.

"One way to start addressing trauma is by producing more psychologists. This is possible only when the government and non-governmental organisations create more jobs for them," says Rebekah Bajracharya, who recently completed her master's in psychology from TU.

CVICT and a few other groups are training social workers to be psychosocial counsellors, and their numbers have grown. Their role is to identify people affected with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and give them basic counselling and refer them to counselling service centres run by non-government groups. Most government-run clinics deal only with mentally handicapped patients with severe brain disorders and epilepsy cases.

Social counsellors have been playing a key role in Nepal to help traumatised individuals get out of depression. "I was always obsessed with revenge but now I realise that will not

benefit me," says Nirmal Bista from Kalikot. He was only 18 when he saw his friends killed by the police during the government's Kilo Sierra II operation in 1997. But Nirmal's mental state worsened after the Maoists brutally beat up his uncle and abducted his father. His family sent him to Kathmandu when they realised Nirmal was determined to take revenge on the Maoists in his village. He received counselling at the activist group, Nagarik Awaj, and today he helps other victims of psychosocial trauma.

"Counselling helps a lot, not only by talking sense but also through the care and support of other people," says Min Bahadur Raoul, also from Kalikot. The 18-year-old was abducted twice and forced to attend Maoist trainings, but managed to escape the second time. Today, with help from Nagarik Awaj, Raoul is more at ease and wants to help others like him through a new organisation called Orphanage for Terror Victims in Nepal.

Small initiatives like these fill a gap left by the government's neglect of the issue, but the need is much greater than what individual groups can do. In conflict regions, hundreds of thousands of Nepalis are coping with a level of violence that they have never been used to. And while the stress is on the physical harm caused by war, there is less attention paid to the

psychological after-effects.

"The women and children are most vulnerable. They don't know anything about trauma affecting their lives or about the psychosocial treatment available," says Sushma Regmi, a psychologist.

If trauma is treated, there are serious physical health consequences as well. There may be loss of appetite, sleeplessness and sometimes even suicide attempts. "Timely orientation reduces the level of trauma and helps to lessen physical symptoms as well," says Bidur Osti, a medical doctor who heads the rehabilitation section of CVICT.

Unexplained somatic complaints are quite common but medical workers end up giving sleeping pills and pain killers without properly investigating the history of the patients. "The problem is that our health system is curative oriented and most of the health professionals can't link the aches and pains with mental illness. The patient won't say he is traumatised," says Sharma.

Sharma and his team at the psychiatry department developed a Nepali model for community counselling, in which grassroots social mobilisers, teachers, community medical auxiliary workers and health assistants would be trained in 'first-aid' psychological care and would then refer patients to counsellors at district hospitals. This model worked effectively in treating teachers and students of the Sharada Secondary School in Doti, where several children were killed and wounded in crossfire during a skirmish last year. ('This is not a school. It is a cemetery, Nepali Times,' #169).

When Sharma proposed the idea of an integrated program to several donor agencies, it was turned down.

Psychologists accept that psychosocial intervention is more effective if community counselling and support to form a stable social environment is made. In Nepal's case, there are already examples of teachers, traditional healers and local village leaders coming together to address the problem jointly. Says Dutch psychologist Mark Jordan: "The great thing about Nepal is that there is a culture of helping each other and we should take the strength of the community into account." ●

(Names of some patients have been changed on request.)

Nirmal Bista (l) and Min Bahadur Raoul (r) at Nagarik Awaj, an activist group that helps counsel trauma victims. A young Maoist militant poses with his gun in Makwanpur (top, facing page)



OPEN NOW

Happy News for Budhanilkantha Neighborhood


Park Salon

By Sunita Balami & her experienced crew

also available herbal massage, swimming, jacuzzi, steam, sauna, full fledged gymnasium & spa
(Special rate available for Club Members)


Park Village
Kathmandu's Nature Paradise

Budhanilkantha; Ph: 4375280



get the look
discover a glamorous new you

With HABIBS
Hair & Beauty Salon



"A Modern Haircut is an extension of the wearer's personality. It should be versatile, easy-care and uncontrived. Above all, it should make the person look and feel confident and stylish."

Kasthamandap Bazaar Building, 2nd Floor, Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Ph: 4240431, 2004045

NEPALI
Times

Shopping Sree at Metro Mall
15% discount on all items (excluding food & drink)

Head hunt

Nepal's top newspaper needs journalists

The paper that Nepal's business and political elite turns to every week for clear, credible and sharp reporting and analysis. The most-trusted name in English language journalism, and one of the most-accessed online news sites from Nepal. Every Friday morning: contemporary Nepal at your finger tips with accurate and lively coverage.

Nepali Times has openings for keen and committed journalists with high personal standards for originality and integrity who want a head-start in their media career.

- Written and spoken Nepali, with first-language English
- Journalism experience preferred
- Flair for photography and page design
- Courtesy, tact and teamwork
- Positions are fulltime
- Women candidates are encouraged to apply

Send cv only by email to editors@nepalitimes.com with a 150 word write-up on why you think you are the person we are looking for. Subject line should read: 'Head hunting'.

All candidates will be notified of receipt of application, and those short-listed may be interviewed.

www.nepalitimes.com



A new radiance

A centre for the intellectually handicapped in Kathmandu strives to make children independent and happy

Bibek’s maroon eyes search blankly for something, an identity perhaps. He is wearing his pants back-to-front, saliva dripping down his shirt. With great difficulty, he scribbles ‘A’ on a piece of paper. At 13, Bibek can neither hear nor speak properly, and when he tries to stand up, he falls down. Holding on to his teacher’s hands, he stands up again and the teacher leads him to the bathroom.

NEPALI PAN

Deepti Sharma

Bibek is an intellectually handicapped child, one of the many who attend the Navajyoti Kendra, a daycare centre for

mentally handicapped children at Baluwatar. Intellectual disabilities can be caused if the mother falls ill, takes too much alcohol or medications or suffers from a lack of iodine or other vitamins and minerals during pregnancy.

Mental disability is not mental illness. Mentally handicapped children are not ill, they just develop and learn at a much slower pace than normal children. Mild and moderately affected children can be educated to a certain extent.

Traditionally, Nepalis believe that mental disability is a curse of the gods and parents feel ashamed, hiding their handicapped children and restricting their opportunity to explore, understand and learn what they can.

What later became Navajyoti Kendra was opened by an American social worker in 1978 with three boys and two girls. Parents and guardians who felt embarrassed and fearful of their children’s condition finally had a daycare centre providing training and guidance. The centre is now run by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth with the mission to educate mentally handicapped children in Nepal so they can be independent and happy.

Sixty-five youngsters, ages six to 23, are currently attending Navajyoti. The students are divided into seven groups according to their degree of disability, with each class having 8-10 students. Specialised teachers provide physical and mental exercises to the children who stay at the school from 10AM to 3PM. They are taught to manage their own personal hygiene, household duties and social property.

Classes also focus on language and communication skills, story telling, painting, dancing, yoga, speech therapy and vocational training. In addition, there are health education classes for parents and students, weekly medical checkups, educational tours and picnics.

In spite of everything, parents, guardians and teachers understand that it is not reasonable to expect mentally disabled children to become and behave ‘normally’. But Navajyoti believes they can be made more independent and responsible.

“We help the children reach the best of their ability. When they come here and work with other children like themselves, it builds up their confidence and they learn to be more independent,” says Bishnu KC, a teacher who has been working at Navajyoti since 1978.

Most of the children at the centre were initially dependent on others even for minor things but, amidst compassionate teachers equipped with effective learning strategies, they learn to understand and follow instructions, take care of personal belongings and express themselves.

Navajyoti children have won medals in International Special Olympics. Other alumni of the centre are now able to support themselves, and some even have part time jobs in offices and agencies in Kathmandu. One is currently working at Bhat Bhateni Supermarket, another is running a small shop near Sundhara. A lot of this is due to the dedication and commitment of the staff at Navajyoti who have persevered despite many challenges and stuck to their motto: ‘Handicapped children may be victims of fate, but they shall not be a victim of our neglect.’ ●

Deepti Sharma has just finished Grade 11 at Lincoln School and worked as a summer volunteer at Navajyoti Kendra this year.

Nepali women by Nepali women

Emma Raynes was studying Nepali and anthropology in Nepal during the spring of 2003, when she hit upon the idea of giving point-and-shoot cameras to Nepali women to help her see things she couldn’t.

Raynes says she chose Nepali women for her project because she found that women’s voices were rarely acknowledged here. “I was searching for more knowledge about Nepali culture but also because I wanted to empower my subjects by giving them a way to speak about their lives with images,” she says.

The women that she decided to work with were friends, neighbours or people she met while traveling in Nepal. They were of various ages, castes, classes and places. Most of the women are from Kathmandu and the village of Tangting near Pokhara. She gave each subject a camera, showed them how to use the viewfinder and the flash. She then asked them to photograph things that were important to them and things that they thought Americans did not understand about their lives.



The exhibition at Buckingham Browne and Nichols school in Cambridge Massachusetts.

A few days later, Raynes would retrieve the cameras and make double prints at a local photo shop. Finally, she returned to the women’s homes, gave them copies of their photos and discussed what they photographed. She told them she would take their pictures back to America to show them to family and friends. Some said: “*Lau ta, tapai American haru lai sab kura bujhaidinus.*”

Rayne’s exhibition of Collaborative Portraits include both her black-and-white photographs and colour pictures taken by Nepali women. The portraits have captions with words that Raynes translated from Nepali. They were exhibited in three locations in the US during the past year: Bowdoin College in Brunswick in Maine, Buckingham Brown and Nichols School in Cambridge Massachusetts, and Soundtrack Studio in Boston. The project was funded by a fellowship from Bowdoin College and earned the Martel Prize from the Bowdoin College Art Department. ●

eraynes@alumni.bowdoin.edu.

Bijaya Laxmi Gurung

11 years old

Bijaya lives in Tangting, a hill village near Pokhara. She is the daughter of Tangting’s midwife. She says that when she grows up, she wants to study in Pokhara and become a nurse like her mother. These are the photographs that she took.

“The mountains are very important to me because they bring water to the people in my village...and water brings us life.”

“I took this picture of my school book because school is the most important part of my life. I want to be a nurse like my mother. Her hands are also in this picture.”

Sumita Magar

18 years old

Sumita works at the lodge for trekkers that her father owns in Gorepani. Her father owns a lodge for trekkers. Sumita cooks in the kitchen during trekking season and goes to school in the nearest town during the rest of the year.

“I taught myself how to cook American food because that is what the tourists like to eat.”

“This where my mother does puja. I don’t do puja but I still believe.”

Nita Rai

25 years old

Nita Rai is my Nepali sister. When I was not in class, studying Nepali language, Nita and I washed clothes and watched TV together. She really liked to watch WWF wrestling and Hindi soap operas. These are Nita’s photographs.

“My mother made me marry young so that my grandmother could live to see my sons.”

“This is a Nepali washing machine.”

Advising caution

International travel advisories could affect the healthy forecasts for tourism this autumn season

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

Just when tourist bookings were looking good for this autumn season, news came this week of a strict travel advisory from Japan to its citizens wishing to visit Nepal. Combined with similar advisories from the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, it has sent a pall of gloom over the industry.

The Japanese Embassy in Kathmandu updated its travel advisory, and now recommends prospective Japanese visitors to Nepal reconsider travelling to Kathmandu, Chitwan and Kaski districts. These were the places that were earlier put in Category Two, which meant ‘travel with caution’.

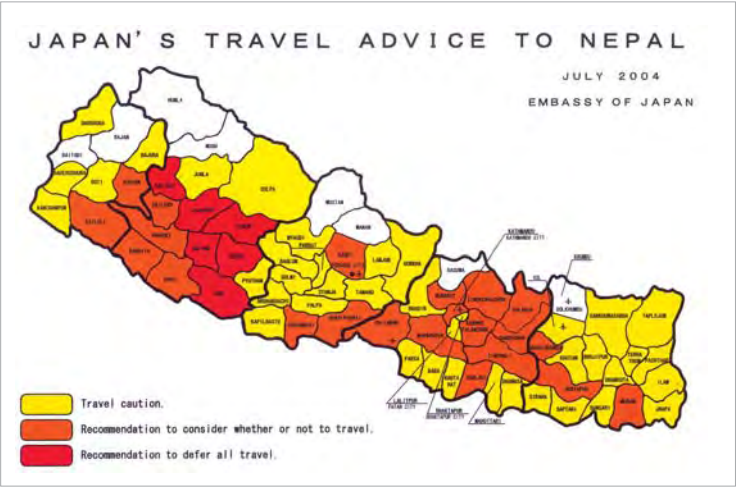
The Japanese Embassy has included 19 other districts, most of them in the eastern and far western regions, as places that Japanese tourists should think carefully about before travelling to. It has recommended that all travel plans to six Maoist stronghold districts in the far west should be deferred.

Even though the travel advisories of the US, Australia and the UK are more strongly worded than the Japanese one, travel traders are concerned because they fear Japanese tourists might take it more seriously than has been the case with western countries, whose citizens continue to come to Nepal despite the cautions.

“We are worried because this is the first time the Japanese government has taken its advisory to such an alarming level,” said Deepak Mahat, president of Trekking Agents Association of Nepal. “The notice may also make adverse impact in other markets.”

Of the roughly 270,000 tourists who came to Nepal by air last year, 20,000 were Japanese—the third largest national group. Worried, travel entrepreneurs got Tourism Minister Deep Kumar Upadhyay to speak to Japanese Ambassador Zenji Kaminaga to see if he could tone down the advisory, but it didn’t work. “There is not going to be any change immediately,” Shota Kamishima, second secretary at the Japanese Embassy, told us. “We believe that the advisory reflects the situation in different places in Nepal.”

Independent observers are puzzled by this sudden Japanese decision, since Japanese nationals have not been singled out by the Maoists as the Americans have. An



updated US travel advisory reads: ‘The Department of State urges US citizens to defer non-essential travel to Nepal. Maoist supreme commander Prachanda issued a press statement on 1 July, 2004, threatening to use “more violent means” if peace talks with the Government of Nepal are not forthcoming or are unsuccessful. The Embassy has received information that the Maoists may attempt to attack or take actions specifically against US citizens as part of that contingency, particularly in regions of the country under Maoist control.’

The Australian government’s notice is almost as bad: ‘Australians are advised to defer non-essential travel to Nepal. There is an on-going Maoist insurgency in Nepal. Maoists are present in all districts and violent clashes between government forces and insurgents occur across the country, including in popular trekking and tourist areas. Maoists and political parties call frequent national and local strikes (bandhs), during which most businesses are closed. The lack of transport during bandhs can make travel very difficult, including to and from airports.’

While the foreign missions in Kathmandu say that issuing notices to inform their citizens of what is happening is their duty, tour operators say advisories blow the situation out of proportion. “If you read the US travel advisory, you get the impression that one cannot even walk in the streets in Kathmandu,” says Nepal Association of Tour Operators president, Basanta Raj Mishra. “They never mention that not a single tourist has been intentionally targeted in Nepal.” In addition, there are many parts of

Nepal that are still insurgency-free.

One embassy official told us off the record that there are legal reasons why they have to issue advisories to prevent law suits in case someone somewhere gets caught in conflict. “It is basically to cover our own backsides,” he said. Even so, travel experts say the ‘objective dangers’ of travelling within Nepal have increased because of the indiscriminate use of landmines by both sides and the danger of being caught in crossfire near security bases.

Clearly this is a tricky business for foreign missions. Junior diplomats in some western embassies said that they are supposed to report each and every incident back to their capitals. “For instance, if we update our travel advisory now, we will have to consider the economic blockade the Maoists have announced around the Kathmandu Valley, and we know that it would not do good for the national tourism industry,” one embassy official said.

Tourism entrepreneurs say even international tour operators have complaints that the travel advisories are too negative. “British tour operators complained to their government and got the British travel advisory on the web revised,” says Mishra.

Interestingly, not all western foreign missions in Kathmandu have sounded the alarm bells warning their citizens not to visit Nepal. The French, always slightly more audacious than the rest, have not issued any such notice. Purushottam Sigdel at the French Embassy told us: “If French people wish to travel to Nepal, we don’t tell them not to come. There is no restriction from our side.” ●

Cairn strikes it big



EDINBURGH — The British firm, Cairn Energy plc Wednesday signed an agreement with HMG to explore five blocks for oil in the Chure hills and tarai in mid-western Nepal. Cairn Energy has permission to explore for four years initially and it will be granted another four years if it needs an extension. Department of Mines and Geology says the British company will invest a minimum of \$60 million during exploration.

An official company statement in Edinburgh Thursday said Cairn is relinquishing rights to explore in designated national parks and wildlife areas. But the Worldwide Fund for Nature still says the prospecting could affect jungle corridors of the India-Nepal Tarai Arc Project set aside for migrating wildlife.

The Nepal agreement follows an announcement on Monday of a fourth huge find in Rajasthan in six months by Cairn. The company is now valued at more than £2bn on the London stock market. Chief executive, Bill Gammell, is a friend of President George Bush and went to Fettes College the exclusive Edinburgh private school with Tony Blair.

Trans-sexuals harassed

As part of a police campaign to purge the Valley of the commercial sex trade, on 9 August the police arrested 39 members of Blue Diamond Society (BDS)—an organisation that advocates the rights of sexual minorities. Members complained that they were not given food and beaten up while in police custody. Many sex workers and clients were also arrested the same day from massage parlours. There is no clear law against prostitution and the only penalty, as per the civil act, is that the accused will have to pay between



Rs 5,000-10,000 and serve three months imprisonment as penalty. The BDS members were not caught engaged in any form of sex work, but were still arrested by police. “The police discrimination against the sexual minorities is evident and we strongly condemn the police violation of their human rights,” says Sunil Pant, director of BDS. In a bid to get public support and to pressure the government against the discriminatory attitude, BDS organised a peaceful rally in Ratna Park on Tuesday. Amnesty International sent out a circular to member organisations this week to urge the government and police to stop the harassment of trans-sexuals.

VDC secretaries resign

Under pressure from the Maoists, three dozen VDC secretaries have resigned in Dhading district. One of the secretaries, Thakur Prasad Sinkhada, said they had no choice because of death threats. Of the roughly 50 VDCs in the district, nearly 40 have been burnt down. Secretaries of all village councils worked at the same office in the district headquarters until recently, but even there they faced Maoist threats. Elsewhere, more than two dozen VDC secretaries have urged the government not to give them the responsibility of running the local bodies. In a letter sent to the Local Development Ministry, VDC secretaries in Dang stated that the government was putting their lives at risks by giving them the authority to run the local bodies. After the government’s coalition partners couldn’t reach an agreement on the reinstatement of elected village councils, the government had recently instructed secretaries to run the councils.

EU peace call

The European Union has called on both sides in Nepal’s conflict to end violence, agree on a ceasefire as soon as possible and look for practical measures to build confidence and create a climate for meaningful and sustainable peace processes. It has pledged full support to what it said was the ‘the new coalition government’s efforts to resolve the crisis in the country’. The statement urged the government to implement its human rights commitment ‘without unnecessary delay’ of the Memorandum of Understanding with the UNHCR.

The declaration was submitted to the Foreign Ministry on Monday. In it, the EU expressed its particular concerns, this time about Maoist violence and other practices, including terrorist attacks, the use of child soldiers, extortion, abduction and forced indoctrination. ‘It has called upon the Maoists to cease these activities,’ the declaration says. ‘The EU will monitor the situation closely and will calibrate its policies according to developments.’ Sources told us the EU has also used back channels to warn the Maoists that if they don’t stop those activities, they run the risk of being put on a terror watch list.

There are many elements of indulgence...
It's how you bring them together that matters!

KIDZ

The Food Station



Sanepa-Kupondole Road,
I/F Campion College, Lalitpur, Ph: 5525749

Foreign aid to Nepal used to be confined to infrastructure projects, and Nepal's rulers played off regional rivals India and China or superpowers the US and USSR to extract assistance for highways, dams and even cigarette factories. Later, aid was channelled more towards poverty alleviation and projects designed to lift living standards.

But Indian aid for large infrastructure projects diminished as European, Japanese and American donors dominated foreign aid to Nepal. By the late 80s and into the 90s, India hardly figured at all on the list of donor countries. But recently there has been a sharp upswing in Indian grants and aid projects to Nepal. With the Maoist insurgency and the danger of its spillover into India, Nepal's development has become a strategic issue for India.

India is still investing in big projects: there are polytechnic institutes being set up in Hetauda and Morang, a project to upgrade feeder roads in the tarai, four border checkpoints at Birgunj, Bhairawa, Biratnagar and Nepalganj are being upgraded, the BP Koirala Institute of Health and Science in Dharan and Bir Hospital Trauma Centre are being expanded and a fibre-optic backbone along the tarai is nearing completion.

India is already Nepal's biggest donor of military hardware to the Royal Nepali Army, with six helicopters, mine-protected vehicles, assault rifles and large quantities of ammunition. Even with joint venture investments in telecom, transportation or hydropower, there are indications that New Delhi favours Indian public sector corporations to be involved rather than private Indian companies.

New Delhi put economic

Indian handshake

After years of decline, Indian development assistance to Nepal is increasing again

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA



Koshi barrage

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

cooperation with Nepal on a formalised footing with the establishment of the India Cooperation Mission, and also drifted away from large projects. It has increased its development cooperation assistance to Nepal in recent years to Rs 1.6 billion per year.

"In the mid-90s, efforts began to streamline this cooperation and focus not only on big landmark projects, but also ones that ensure that economic cooperation directly reaches the people of Nepal at a grassroots level through community development projects," one embassy official told us.

In the past, India helped in building hydropower plants like Trisuli, the Tribhuban Highway and sections of the Mahendra Highway, most of the airports

along the tarai and major hospitals. Now, the focus seems to be more on helping district and village level schools and even hospitals by gifting ambulances.

All aid comes with strings attached, it's just that some countries are better at hiding it. "Indian aid comes under India's strategy to maximise benefits from Nepal's natural resources," says foreign aid expert Keshav Acharya. "This has been seen in the past and it is still valid." Past projects to build barrages along the border on the Kosi and Gandaki have become symbols of this attitude in Nepali public perception, and this is why there are misgivings about letting India get involved in Upper Karnali, Budi Gandaki or the Kosi High Dam proposals.

Embassy officials confirm that India is interested in taking up several major hydroelectric projects. Money has also been set aside for maintenance of embankments and other schemes like the Sapta Kosi-Sun Kosi Multipurpose Project. There are even bilateral efforts underway to revive political hot potatoes like the Pancheswor irrigation and power project, which is still stuck a decade after the signing of the Mahakali Treaty.

Aid pundits say initial Indian aid, like any other aid, used to be project-tied, but that today it is policy-tied. "The aid we receive from India reflects its foreign policy doctrine towards Nepal," says Gunanidhi Sharma, a professor at Tribhuban University. "These policies follow various treaties Nepal has

signed with India over the years."

Indian officials, however, say their aid is driven by the need to look at mutual benefit and cooperation. "The emphasis has always been on core sectors such as education, health and development of infrastructure because we believe that cooperation in these fields will contribute to economic and social stability which will be mutually beneficial," said an official.

Even so, as a neighbour that shares an open border with Nepal, India has often looked at Nepal through a strategic geopolitical lens. In his book *Foreign Aid and Politics in Nepal*, first published in 1965, Eugene Bramer Mihaly wrote: 'India planned to build more roads from the Indian plains into Nepal, to construct all-weather airfields in the vital Nepal plains (the only part of Nepal which could serve as a staging area for a force intending to attack India), and to carry out projects which could win support among the inhabitants of the plains.'

In that sense, experts say India's aid strategy towards Nepal hasn't changed. Much of Indian assistance still goes to the tarai, offsetting some of the neglect that Kathmandu has shown in the past to the region. One foreign aid expert told us: "It is a sort of buffer zone protection, they want the areas in their immediate vicinity to be developed."

If it was geopolitics that drove aid in the past, the Maoist insurgency in Nepal and its links to Naxalites across the border mean that for New Delhi peace, stability and development in Nepal have become strategic points. For this, experts note, a developed and prosperous Nepal should be as much in India's interest as Nepal's own. ●

thick & silky hair....
skin that's glowing and fair....

**"WOW,
WOW,
Vatika !"**

NEW PACK

FREE*

Get a **Vatika Fairness Face Pack** with every pack of Vatika Henna Conditioning Shampoo. Saffron and Sandalwood to make you naturally fair... Henna Conditioning for beautiful hair!

* 30gm Pack with 200ml Vatika Henna Shampoo. 15gm Pack with 100ml Vatika Henna Shampoo

BIZ NEWS

Air Tibet

Air China is to launch a Tibetan subsidiary by the end of 2004 to connect Lhasa to points in China, within Tibet and to Kathmandu, according to Xinhua news agency. Tentatively called Air China Tibetan Subsidiary Company, the new airline will use Airbus 319s and 757s currently operated by Air China. Besides existing flights from Lhasa to Chengdu, Beijing and Kathmandu, the new airline will also fly to three additional Tibetan cities: Lizhi, Qamdo and Ngari.

Air Sahara

India's second private airline to fly to Nepal has announced it is to begin daily Kathmandu-New Delhi flights from 1 September. This will bring the number of flights every day between the two capitals to four. Air Sahara will use 737-800 aircraft and has chosen a 4PM departure slot from Kathmandu. The new air link is expected to augment arrival of Indian visitors to Nepal as well as bring down prices for Indian and Nepali passengers to New Delhi and other connections in India.



Big banking

Nepal's first joint venture bank, Nabil Bank, has earned a record operating profit of Rs 814 million in the fiscal year 2003/4. The figure is up by around 12 percent compared to that of the last fiscal year. 'The unprecedented profit has been generated through the implementation of the bank's strategy of cost management, income enhancement and focus on quality credit,' says a bank press statement. 'We have invested in technology and human resources, two key drivers of sustainable success.'

The bank has a paid up capital of Rs 492 million and general reserves of Rs 652 million and has recently completed 20 years of operation in Nepal.

Civil living

For generation readymade, things have never been better, especially with Civil Homes entering its third phase with a new set of homes available at Sunakothi in southern Lalitpur. Complete with individual plots located around community facilities like a health club, school and grocery store, the houses come in six different models, ranging from Rs 2,875,000 to Rs 7,215,000.



Beautiful business opportunities

Marketing the fact that we do care how people look

All through the past three weeks, some vocal members of the Nepali left led a public campaign against the Dabur Vatika Miss Nepal Beauty Pageant, which was held last Saturday. Two of their various charges were directly against the market. First, they claimed that such a pageant discriminates against

STRICTLY BUSINESS

Ashutosh Tiwari



a large swath of the Nepali female population, and second, it is nothing more than a capitalist set-up to lure so-called "beautiful" women to literally dance to the tune of multinationals for a year or more. Both of these charges are correct, but not for the reasons the left is so fond of trotting out.

Nowadays, thanks to competition, private companies have come to see beauty as an attribute that gives them an edge in the marketplace—both in terms of their products and people. Competition is the reason why this newspaper, for one, takes layout, design and photographs (all attributes of beauty) as seriously as it takes the written word. It is also the reason why Nepali firms—as in the case of carpet companies—are finally starting to spend a fortune hiring designers to package, place and market their products in an attractive manner. It further explains why newscasters working for private Nepali tv channels are younger and better-looking than the ones on state-run Nepal Television who uniformly look as though they have just come back from a funeral.

To quote the words of economist Virginia Postrel, who seems to reveal an embarrassing truth about us all: "Not only do human beings make judgements about how other people look, we enjoy doing so. In an age where we see more and more good-looking people, either directly or through the media, we are getting more and more judgmental. It would be better for our public discussions and for our mental health, if we simply admitted that we care about how other people look."

Viewed this way, beauty, regardless of whether it's natural or artificial, does become a discriminating factor in both our eyes and in the marketplace. In fact, in a widely cited study, economists Daniel Hamermash and Jeff Biddle reported 10 years ago that if a working woman is perceived to be beautiful, then, all things being equal, she will probably earn 5 percent more than her ordinary looking co-workers. Put another way, the market rewards beauty with the same logic that it rewards, say, Sangina Baidya's athleticism—that is, by paying more for a unique attribute that it values.

All this probably made intuitive sense to self-selected ambitious young adults who lined up—voluntarily and with eyes wide open—to take part in the Miss Nepal Pageant. They know that in these times, with more and more educated men and women entering the labour force, when there are fewer jobs to go around, the competition to do well as a professional is getting fiercer than what it was before.



ANUP PRAKASH

In this context, the pageant's allure was that it marketed itself as a *bona fide* legal shortcut to lucrative and visible employment opportunities. Who knows, the participants may never use Dabur Vatika shampoo again, but they were smart enough to seize the opportunity for themselves to boost their own career prospects in these competitive times. After all, it is such opportunities that make it possible for, again in Postrel's words, "attractive women [to] make a living from their looks—whether directly as models [with legally valid contracts] or indirectly as saleswomen or [TV newscasters and hosts]—without trading sexual favours". Surely that's the kind of women's independence that even the Nepali left, in its admirable quest to expand the degrees of freedom for all, can appreciate. ●

Proud to fly the flag

There is a way to make Royal Nepal Airlines airworthy again

There are three years to go for the golden jubilee of Royal Nepal Airlines, but it seems doubtful whether the flag carrier will even be around to celebrate it.

The airline suffers an image problem caused by unreliable service. It does not compete in the domestic market, much of its potential earnings from the Gulf and East Asian routes have been gifted to others and there is scant long-term analysis of international and domestic opportunities, on the basis of which, the airline can set out a coherent marketing strategy. This gap affects route planning, fleet structure, pricing and promotion, staffing and terms of service.

To be sure, the airline has also been hindered by external factors like political interference and restrictive legislation. Successive boards of directors were unsuited to the task of running a modern airline in a deregulated environment.

COMMENT

Kul B Limbu



Royal Nepal Airlines should be the leading domestic carrier and the preferred airline for people traveling in and out of Nepal. It is neither. Lucrative domestic routes have been lost to private operators and there are price constraints on remote area destinations it is forced to fly to. International fifth freedom rights have been given away without normal compensation for the national carrier.

International routes from Kathmandu are now dominated by foreign airlines. Even loyal Nepali passengers are switching to other airlines rather than risk delays. The two Boeing 757s are getting old and need expensive maintenance but procurement of spares is made worse by stiff import tariffs. On domestic routes, some of the de Havilland Twin Otters are more than 30 years old and there is an urgent need to replace equipment and augment capacity.

Kathmandu is unsuitable for long-range flights because of the runway length and altitude. Noise pollution and poor visibility caused by urban haze are becoming major problems. There is an urgent need to plan now for an alternative international airport.

The airline also has a broader social service function on domestic routes where community development and national inclusion can only be fostered by access. The creation of these transport links are not a cost,

but an investment. Since they are not yet profitable, they must be subsidised. This can't come from the over-burdened Nepali tax payer but it can be cross-subsidised by viable domestic and international routes.

The remedy, some believe, lies in leasing aircraft to give Royal Nepal Airlines capacity and reliability again and to use the time of the lease to develop a workable longterm operating plan. Leasing has merits but must be planned with care.

The plan ought to be to force reform, with the objective of selling ownership to the public within five years. This would entail some progressive recapitalisation to allow the airline to replace domestic and international fleets with a five-year rolling corporate plan measured by impartial assessors.

Recapitalisation would be conditional upon acceptance of change by owners and employees. The board of directors must be replaced by a management board, made up



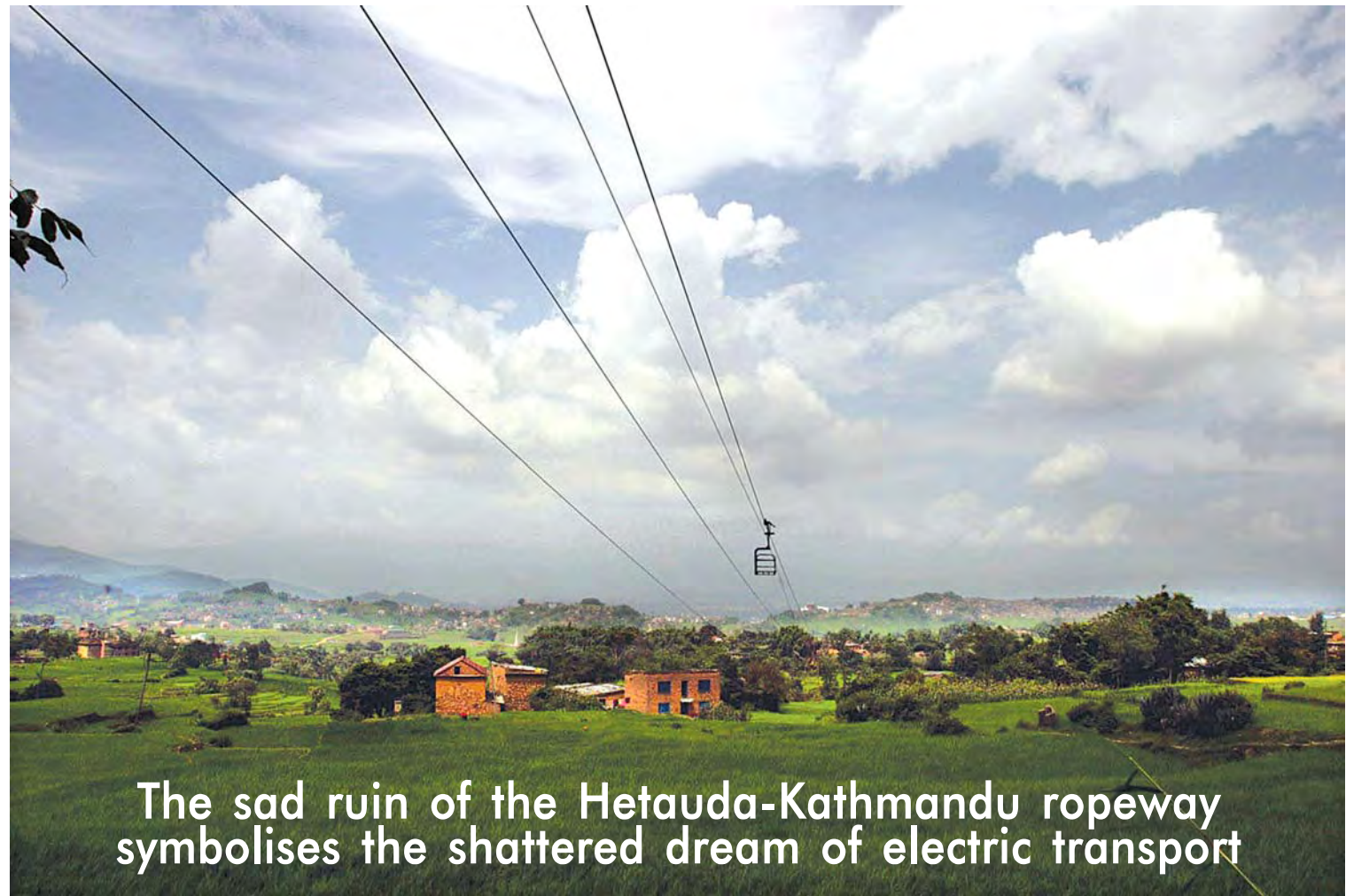
of airline management, staff representation and outside expertise with significant discretionary powers for making business decisions without reference to the government. Right-sizing management and the workforce with new service terms and conditions must be directed to achieve three key reforms:

- Real productivity, with performance assessment against quantitative targets based on an annual business plan monitored independently
- Performance based remuneration with profit sharing incentives as a high proportion of salary packages. Failure to meet agreed performance targets excludes an employee from profit share
- Greater flexibility in hiring and release of personnel, with proper checks against arbitrariness and prejudice

Initial recapitalisation can be achieved by government guarantees for lease purchase of new aircraft. The guarantee would be conditional on the airline submitting a detailed five-year rolling corporate plan which fully analyses markets, identifies target segments, the demand in them, sets out its market and operating strategies, declares intentions for restructuring and its operating practices, and presents financial forecasts that support and justify business choices. It will also establish that the airline will be attractive to private investors at the end of the restructuring period.

The corporate plan would also have a detailed timeline for implementation of the restructuring with sections on preparatory reform like renegotiating bilateral air agreements, fifth freedom rights and traffic compensation through viable reciprocity. Nepali airlines, including Royal Nepal, must be given room to grow, rather than allowing foreign airlines to grow at our expense. ●

Capt Kul B Limbu is president of the Nepal Airline Pilots' Association (NAPA) which celebrated its 14th anniversary on 10 August. kulkunga@csl.com.np



The sad ruin of the Hetauda-Kathmandu ropeway symbolises the shattered dream of electric transport



Crossing Chitlang Pass to get to Kathmandu from the tarai in 1950, French mountaineer Maurice Herzog looked up in surprise. ‘I saw huge cables going right across a valley,’ he wrote in his epic adventure book, *Annapurna*. ‘I wondered if it could be a cable railway. Indeed it was, the longest in the world, measuring nearly 19 miles. It provisioned Kathmandu and the surrounding neighbourhood, a population of some 150,000 people.’

Herzog was wrong about the world record. In 1919, Ropeways Ltd London had already constructed a 73.3km ropeway in Colombia. Still, the nearly 31km long Dhorsing-Matatirtha ropeway was an impressive piece of engineering, and it was the second ropeway built in Nepal. The first was the Swayambhunath Ropeway, a 4km cable system from a mine in Halchowk to Lainchaur. Rana Prime Minister Chandra Sumshere commissioned it in 1924 to cater to Kathmandu’s palace-building spree that was in full swing at the time.

The ropeway from Dhorsing near Bhimphedi to Matatirtha in the Valley had to cross two passes over 2,600m. During construction, English engineers found villages fleeing because rumours spread that children would be sacrificed at the foot of the trestles before it went into operation. The Tri Chandra Nepal Tara Ropeway was finally

opened in 1927 with a capacity of eight tons per hour. Indian freight was transported from Raxaul to Amlekhgunj by train—that 48km railway was another one Chandra Sumshere’s ideas. Cargo was taken to Dhorsing by lorry and then the ropeway hauled it to Matatirtha.

“I remember it going up,” says Krishna Prasad Paniru in Dhorsing. “We became a bustling village after that.” He shows us the remnants of the foundation of the ropeway’s very first tower in the middle of a corn field.

Two Rana-era godowns still remain, half-buried by the flashfloods that swept away the bazar. After the Dhorsing ropeway decayed and died, the Americans built an even longer one (*see review, p12*). Krishna Prasad worked on that ropeway construction and was paid Rs 3 a day. “We carried up all the steel parts and assembled the towers and terminals on the spot,” he recalls. “We had to climb up and down steep ridges in a long line to haul the cable in position,” he adds, pointing to a question-mark shaped carrier still hanging on cables traversing the high above the valley.

The American-built 42.3km Nepal Ropeway started in Hetauda and ferried material to Teku, crossing what is now the Ring Road at Balkhu. Although the Tribhuban Highway opened for traffic in 1956, the Americans helped the Nepali government

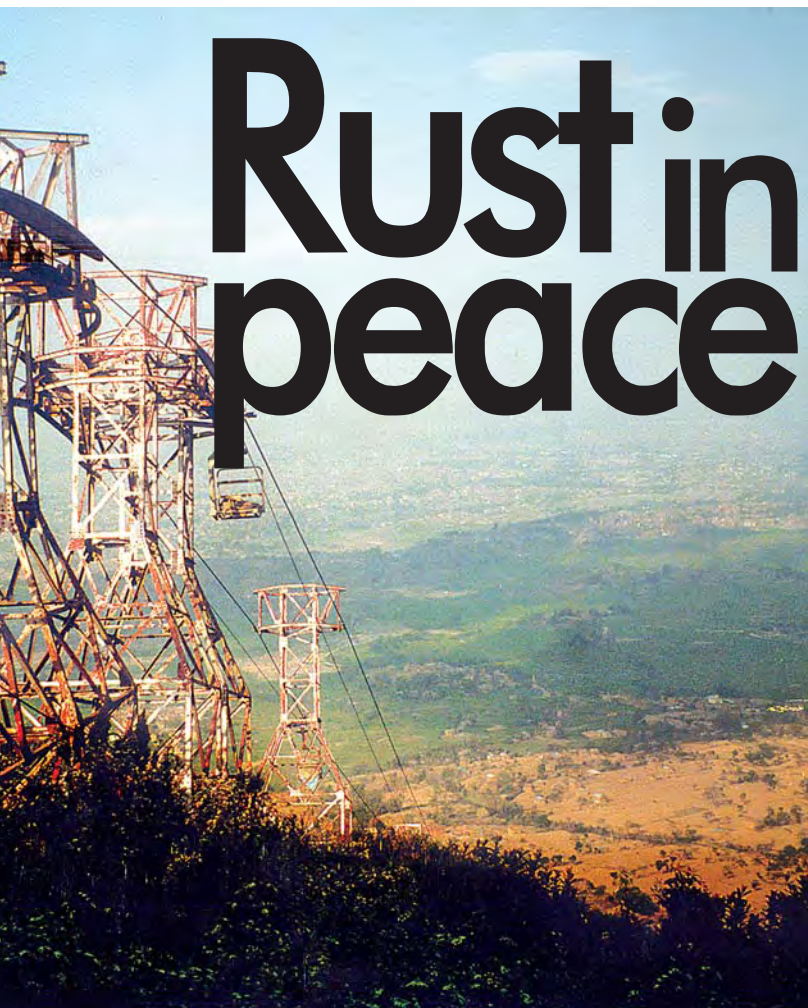
with the \$6.4 million project because it would slash transport time, save cost and not be affected by the monsoon.

The bi-cable system (two continuous stationary track cables and two hauling ropes) was supported by 280 steel towers. It consisted of seven sections, with big terminals on each end to regulate carrier movement. Carriers could make the roundtrip from Hetauda to Kathmandu and back in 4 hours and 12 minutes, hauling 22 tons of cargo a day.

“It was a great system, but difficult to operate,” recalls Krishna Prasad, who continued to work for the ropeways for 14 years. “My terminal had 25 staff to push the incoming carriers to the traction rope of the next section. Every 90 seconds a carrier would arrive. It was extremely important to have good communication. If a section broke down we had to shut down the other ones immediately to prevent massive collisions.”

After the Hetauda-Kathmandu leg was completed, almost two decades passed before private groups and the European Union introduced new cable railway systems in Nepal. The Manakamana Cable Car, which, since 1998, has carried people to a popular pilgrimage site from the Mahendra Highway, has proven that a well managed system can be profitable and deliver excellent





ALL PICS (EXCEPT ABOVE) MAARTEN POST

Clockwise from above:

The rusting hulks of the towers of the ropeway at Chitlang Pass.

The half-buried Rana-era ropeway godown at Dhorsing.

In Hetauda the terminal of Nepal Ropeway has become a playground for children.

Krishna Prasad Paniru in Dhorsing points to the cables of a ropeway he helped built.

A carrier hangs like a question mark near Bhimpheedi exactly where it stopped eight years ago.

Another carrier is frozen in time on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

services.

Unfortunately, Nepal Ropeway awaited a different fate. Mismanagement and apathy took their toll and the ropeway stopped running in 1994. In Hetauda, goats graze in the terminal compound. On the other side of the mountain, in Dhaksi, a man who is living directly underneath the ropeway says the buzzing sound he was so familiar with stopped eight years ago. Along the route, pieces of cable have come down, the terminals are rusted and crumbling and useful steel parts have been stolen, including six complete towers.

Experts cite many reasons for the collapse of Nepal Ropeway. The open style carriages made pilferage easy. A woman in Dhaksi tells us that people used long bamboo poles to push sacks of foodgrains out of the carriers as they passed overhead. There is also a conspiracy theory which says truck owners sabotaged the ropeway. But the biggest problem was institutional: the ropeway was operated by the Nepal Transport Corporation (NTC) under the Ministry of Works and Transport, which were primarily

concerned with building roads.

Maintenance is vital for a ropeway, because the shutdown for one single day results in huge revenue losses and is disastrous for its reputation. The budget allocated to maintain Nepal Ropeway was not enough. It was overstaffed and suffered poor capacity utilisation. Although several studies showed hauling freight by ropeway was actually cheaper than transporting it by road, even government corporations like National Trading used trucks instead of the ropeway to get their supplies to Kathmandu.

In 1993, Nepal Ropeway proved its value for the last time after floods washed away parts of both the Tribhuban and Prithvi highways, cutting Kathmandu off. The ropeway had lost two towers along the Rapti river bank, but with the help of the army they were restored in 24 days and the ropeway could supply Kathmandu with vegetables and other food products.

But after the roads reopened, the promises for better government support evaporated and things went downhill fast. The NTC was dissolved two years ago and the ropeway has been shifted to the Ministry of Labour and Transport, but nobody really feels responsible anymore. Nepali cable car expert, Resham Raj Dhakal, says with an air of finality: "It is dead."

Even so, Grade Eight students all over Nepal still have to memorise details about a glorious 42km pioneering ropeway connecting Hetauda to Kathmandu 'in operation at present' (Ekta Books, *Our Social Studies*, 2004 revised edition).



INK JET PRINTER

EPSON STYLUS™ C45

HOME PRINTING WITH STYLE



himalgraphics

Unveiling sleek compact home printer with impressive output quality.

**MERCANTILE
OFFICE SYSTEMS**

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

Authorised Dealers :

Star Office Automation, Putalisadak, Kathmandu, Tel: 4266820 / 4244827
Ishan Infosys, Newroad, Kathmandu, Tel : 4244440 / 4247119

Authorised Reseller :

BIRATNAGAR: Birat Infotech and Megatech Trade Group **BIRGUNJ:** Computer Shoppe and Banglamukhi Enterprises **HETAUDA:** Computer Science Education Centre **NARAYANGHAT:** Technopark Center **KATHMANDU:** Om Shree Computer, Shree City Computer & Home Appliances, Mars Trading, Lalit Trading Co. Newroad, The Waves Group Trading House Pvt. Ltd. Lazimpat, Dos Trading Pvt. Ltd. Naxal, Samari IT Solution, Kantipath **POKHARA:** Himalayan Trading House **BUTWAL:** Computer and Electronics Trade Link **NEPALGUNJ:** Manokamana Hi-tech **DHANGADI:** Ugratara Trading House



BUMRUNGRAD HOSPITAL

World Class Medicine...

- **ONE-STOP MEDICAL CENTER**
Emergency, outpatient, diagnostics, therapeutics, inpatient
- **INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED DOCTORS**
Over 600 physicians in all medical specialties
- **REGIONAL REFERRAL CENTER FOR ADVANCED CARE**
Heart, Cancer, Neurosurgery...
- **ASIA'S FIRST INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED HOSPITAL**

World Class Service...

- **INTERNATIONAL PATIENT CENTER**
Interpreters, visa assistance, medical coordination
- **INTERACTIVE WEBSITE**
- **EMAIL APPOINTMENTS**
- **ON-SITE HOUSING**
74 serviced apartments



BUMRUNGRAD HOSPITAL
BANGKOK, THAILAND

World Class Medicine...World Class Service

33 Sukhumvit Soi 3 (Soi Nana Nua), Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +(66 2) 667 1234 Fax: +(66 2) 667 1214
E-mail: info@bumrungrad.com
www.bumrungrad.com



For more information, appointments and related services, please contact:
Mr. Amod Pyakuryal, Authorized Representative in Nepal, Bhatbhateni (Near Claycrafts & more) Kathmandu
Tel: 4441653, Mobile 9810 22 767 e-mail: info@bumrungrad.wlink.com.np

Showing us the ropes

Learning from Nepal's experience with ropeways, a new book lays out concrete ideas for the future



Clockwise from left:
An improved *ghirling* over the Trisuli.
Women make a precarious river crossing on an earlier design.
The Barpak Ropeway carrying cargo up to the town
The Bhatte Danda Milkway ferrying brooms to the roadhead.
Nepal's most successful tourist and pilgrim cable car to Manakamna.

ALL PICS: ROPEWAYS IN NEPAL



If we had to do it all over again, and somehow we could go back to 1952 to plan Nepal's future, what would we do differently?

Harnessing hydroelectricity for transportation would be high on the list. From very early on, international and Nepali experts pointed out the simple wisdom of using the energy of falling water to run trains, trolley buses, trams and

REVIEW Kunda Dixit

cable cars. Yet, we took the wrong turn back in the 1950s, and never really corrected that mistake. As a result, a country with abundant renewable energy is now crippling dependent on imported fuel, a business that is run by an entrenched adulteration mafia.

It's not that roads are not needed, but we were never serious about exploring a multi-modal transportation network more suited for Nepal's topographic and socio-economic reality. An ideal plan would have been an east-west railway artery along the tarai, linked to north-south highways to follow Himalayan rivers, which are in turn connected to ridge-top district towns by ropeway systems.

A new book to be released this weekend, *Ropeways in Nepal*, explores that third part: the past, present and future of traditional ghirlings, cargo ropeways and passenger cable cars. The book starts with a chapter by Toni Hagen, one of the early proponents of ropeways in Nepal, about how Nepal can learn to organise a multi-modal transport network as in his native Switzerland.

The other chapters analyse why early projects worked brilliantly, why long-range ropeways built later failed despite potential and includes case studies of several rural ropeways that transformed people's lives. The book draws lessons for the future development of ropeways in Nepal, building on the experiences of the government-run Hetauda-Kathmandu Nepal Ropeway, Bhattedanda Milkway, Barpak Ropeway and the immensely successful privately-run Manakamana Cable Car.

Editors Dipak Gyawali, Ajaya Dixit and Madhukar Upadhyaya conclude that the 'sins of unsustainability' were built-in into some of the ropeway projects. They propose a *gaun-besi* ropeway system to link hill towns to roadheads in the valleys below. 'These ropeways, if properly planned, enable villagers to take advantage of the market, rather than the other way around...they do not replace roads, but exploit them more fully to increase traffic to and from remote hamlets,' argue Gyawali and Dixit in the concluding chapter.

Indeed, calculations show that ropeways usually cost half as much as mountain highways per km to build, and are more than 20 times cheaper to maintain. It appears Nepal's Rana rulers were much more visionary about the potential for ropeways than our contemporary rulers. It was Chandra Shumshere who installed a 22 km cargo ropeway between Dhorsing and Kathmandu in 1924 (see p10-11), although he appears to have preferred ropeways in order to retain Kathmandu Valley's

strategic inaccessibility from the Indian plains.

It took another 40 years for Nepal's second ropeway to be set up, and this time we needed the Americans to build it for us. The 42km Hetauda-Kathmandu Nepal Ropeway cost half as much as the Tribhuban Highway on the same route to build. The government-run ropeway and the private trucks on the highway were bitter rivals, and in the end, the highway won. In 1964, when Nepal Ropeway went into operation, it pulled so much electricity from the grid that Kathmandu Valley's lights dimmed when it was running.

But government apathy, mismanagement and neglect took their toll. The ropeway was never used to more than half its capacity northbound, and the cars always headed back to Hetauda empty. Although it showed its brilliant potential during the Indian blockade in 1988-89 and when landslides washed off both Tribhuban and Mugling highways in 1993, Nepal Ropeway was finally closed down in 2001.

Since then, there have been numerous feasibility studies by the UN and others for long ropeways, to revive and privatise the Hetauda Ropeway, and to build cable cars for tourist areas like Namche and Hatiban. But the grandiose dreams remained dreams, while local initiative and expertise knew the ropeway's true potential for grassroots development.

Ropeways in Nepal examines in detail two of these bold experiments, created up by pioneers who dared to think outside the envelope such as Bir

Bahadur Ghale of Barpak in Gorkha and Madhukar Upadhyaya from Bhatte Danda in Lalitpur.

Bir Bahadur ran a micro-hydro business selling power to his picturesque native village, a three-day walk north of Gorkha. But he could never break even because he could only sell power at night and his plant lay idle in the daytime. Then, while on a trip to Hong Kong, Bir Bahadur saw a cable car and got the idea of using his electricity to power a ropeway to carry goods from the valley up to Barpak.

When it was finally built with a grant from the British Embassy in 1998, the ropeway slashed portering time and brought down the cost of essentials in the market. The ropeway was so popular that passengers rode the cars even when repeatedly warned not to do so. A tragic accident killed four illegal riders two years ago and a few months later a flash flood on the Daraundi washed away the base station. Bir Bahadur has learnt his lesson and is rebuilding his ropeway.

Madhukar Upadhyaya worked on a TU project in south Lalitpur where dairy farmers suffered because they couldn't take their milk to market. To preserve the milk, they boiled it down to khuwa or ghiu, decimating the surrounding forests in the process. The Bhatte Danda Milkway enabled farmers to take the milk quickly to the roadhead

and on to Kathmandu, considerably enhancing their income. But a village faction influenced by the truck lobby on the Kanti Highway, which lost business, forced the ropeway to close.

However, when rains washed off portions of the highway in 2002 and the milk started to spoil, villagers vowed never to stop the ropeway again. Says Upadhyaya, 'In response to collective constraints, individuals in a community innovate and put aside differences during times of crisis.' Indeed, the political economy of south Lalitpur before the ropeway was interesting. Farmers living near the roadhead who could sell fresh milk got the most value for their product and were mainly Congress supporters. Those in the first valley where milk had to be boiled down to khuwa and ghiu tended to be UML and in the farthest valley where there was no market for milk products, the peasants were Maoist supporters even back then.

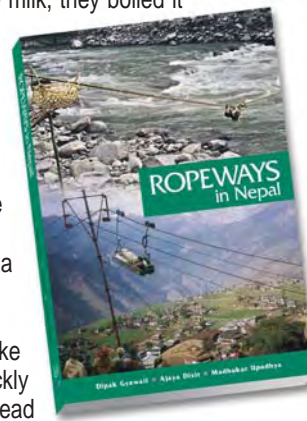
The conclusion of *Ropeways in Nepal* is that the best way forward for Nepal is to shun long-distance multi-stage ropeways and go for an 'arranged marriage' of micro-hydro projects with the capabilities of the suspension bridge industry. These are two sectors in which Nepal has amassed a lot of indigenous expertise, and can be the building blocks of a network of gaun-besi ropeways to empower villages with access to markets, lessen drudgery for inhabitants and reduce the environmental and economic risks that roads bring.

Gyawali and Dixit have even worked out a plan to pay for almost 50 gaun-besi ropeways a year, with a fund created by a one percent tax on diesel, petrol and LPG. It is hard to see how this plan can go wrong, provided there is vision and political will among our rulers. ●

Ropeways in Nepal

Dipak Gyawali, Ajaya dixit, Madhukar Upadhyaya (eds)
Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF) and Kathmandu Electric Vehicle Alliance (KEVA), 2004
Rs 350

Book launch with discussion 'Nepal's Other Transport Future' at Hotel Shankar on Sunday, 15 August.
NWCF: 01-5528111,
KEVA: 01-4467087



Weight off your club

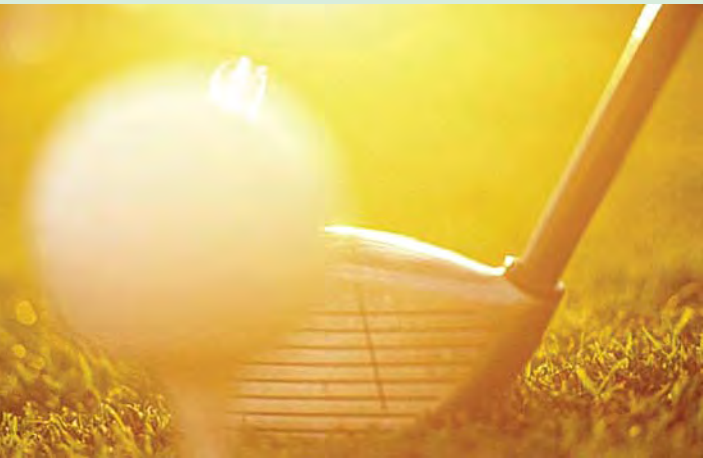
Why and how you can use lead tape to get that extra edge

Many amateur golfers are fascinated by the thin strips of heavy lead tape they see plastered to the back of a pro's club. They often ask me if lead tape can help them fix their own swings. Better players—those who hit a ball that starts straight but curves slightly at the end—can fine tune their ball flight by using lead tape to adjust the weight and balance of their clubs. However, lead tape isn't a swing cure, nor will it straighten out a full-blown slice or hook.

On a shot that starts out straight, how the club face reacts at impact can determine how much the ball will curve near the end of its flight. By adding small amounts

of weight to the toe or heel of the club, you will be surprised how the club face can square at impact and the problems of the ball being a fade or draw at the end can be changed. Adding a bit of tape behind the sweet spot can increase the height of shots. Also, lead tape can be used to fix that one club in the bag that feels different and produces a different ball flight from other clubs.

Below are some tips on how to tweak the flight of a golf ball by using weights. Lead tapes are available in rolls or strips. A one-inch strip weighs from 0.7-1.5gm, depending on the brand.



To hit the ball higher:
Everyone likes to hit the ball higher, which allows the ball to hover in the air for a long time. If your ball flight is low, then your distances could be much shorter than your golfing buddies, especially with your driver. To launch the ball higher, you can try adding weight at the back of the club.
A driver's center of gravity is typically located towards the back of the head, down low and slightly towards the toe, which is where you can add some tape. This may help you increase the trajectory of your ball flight. To get the best effect, experiment by adding a strip at a time, try hitting some shots and find an ideal modification that suits you.

To enhance a draw or reduce a fade:
Adding weight to the heel of the club helps rotate, or close the club face through impact. The larger the club head, the harder it is to square the club face at impact, which is why many of the latest oversize drivers feature extra heel weighting.

To reduce a draw or enhance a fade:
Adding weight on the toe of the club will slow the rotation of the club around its axis. This should help you hit the ball straighter or get a ball flight moving slightly left to right.
Perhaps you can shape your shots away from the trees and bushes using these tips. Feel free to ask your golf professional for help on these modifications.

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu. prodeepak@hotmail.com



Sneak preview

Plans for Friday's dazzling opening ceremony at the Athens Games include ancient myths and goddesses

Nearly four billion people will watch the opening ceremony of the Olympics in Athens, and Greece is preparing to break a record of its own as the host of the Summer Olympic Games. A worldwide television audience of approximately 3.9 billion will watch the Olympics opening ceremony on Friday night. Athens will break the previous world record, held by the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony, which was watched by three billion people in 2000.
Friday's opening ceremony of the Athens Games will start at 9PM local time (just past midnight in Nepal) and will last four hours. It will pay homage to Greek history and the classical period that gave birth to the Olympics: a Trojan horse, a giant statue of the goddess Athena and mythological figures sailing through a lake at the Olympic stadium.

The ceremony was supposed to be a national secret, but details leaked out after a dress rehearsal Sunday night with an audience of about 35,000 people, including employees of the Athens organising committee and volunteers.
A taxi driver, who got a rehearsal ticket because his niece is working on the show, saw one third of the three-hour ceremony. The infield of the stadium was flooded and a giant statue of Athena, the city's protector, rose into the stadium through a hole in the middle of the field.

The set then turns into a mountain, topped by an olive tree and volunteers dance around in costumes from ancient times. Hundreds of musicians beat drums and a performer dressed as a centaur, half man, half horse, shoots an arrow intended to look like a comet.

At another point in the show, mythological figures sail on a boat symbolising the ancient story of Jason and the Argonauts, in which the hero and his crew hunt for the legendary golden fleece. The dress rehearsal also included a Trojan horse. In Homer's epic, the *Iliad*, the horse concealed Greek troops who sacked the city of Troy.
Athens organisers have refused to reveal plans of the ceremony. Now, with details coming out, officials are stressing the real ceremony on Friday will be special because athletes will be there. "We cannot keep everything a secret. We know that," Michael Zacharatos, an Athens 2004 spokesman, said on Monday. "When people with tickets will be in the stadium, celebrating together with all the athletes...

this is the important thing."
A dress rehearsal of the full three-hour ceremony was held on Tuesday with 70,000 spectators expected, giving officials a chance to test security, crowd management and transport issues.
Simon Graveling, producer of the opening ceremony for the Athens Olympic Games, said they will put up a better show than the Sydney Olympics four years ago. "I think so," said Graveling when asked whether Friday's opening ceremony will be better than that of the Sydney Olympics, which was highlighted by Cathy Freeman's dramatic show in lighting the Olympic cauldron. But the Briton, whose wife and two daughters were also accredited to attend the opening, declined to disclose anything about the ceremony. ●

Second

JAPANESE

PEAR

FESTIVAL

Exhibition and Sale

Organized by Love Green Nepal

with the support of Hotel Himalaya

on August 14, 2004 (Saturday)

at Hotel Himalaya from 1200 to 1700

This festival has been organized to help producers/farmers and for them to access the market and to introduce genuine products to customers. Different kinds of cuisine made from pears will also be available during the exhibition.

PRAKRITI QUALITY FARM PRODUCTS



The resource curse

Why having natural resources isn't always an asset

There is a curious phenomenon that economists call the *resource curse*—so named because, on average, countries with large endowments of natural resources perform *worse* than countries that are less well endowed.

ANALYSIS
Joseph E Stiglitz



Yet some countries with abundant natural resources do perform better than others, and some have done well. Why is the spell of the resource curse cast so unequally?

Thirty years ago, Indonesia and Nigeria—both dependent on oil—had comparable per capita incomes. Today, Indonesia's per capita income is four times that of Nigeria, while Nigeria's per capita income has fallen. Both Sierra Leone and Botswana are rich in diamonds. Yet Botswana averaged 8.7% annual economic growth over the past 30 years, while Sierra Leone plunged into civil strife. The failures in the oil-rich Middle East are legion.

Economists put forward three reasons for the dismal performance of some richly endowed countries:

- First, the prospect of riches orients official efforts to seizing a larger share of the pie, rather than creating a larger pie. The result of this wealth grab is often war. At other times simple rent-seeking behaviour by officials, aided and abetted by outsiders, is the outcome. It is cheaper to bribe a government to provide resources at below-market prices than to invest and develop an industry, so it is no surprise that some firms succumb to this temptation.
- Second, natural resource prices are volatile, and managing this volatility is hard. Lenders provide money when times are good, but

want their money back when, say, energy prices plummet. Economic activity is thus even more volatile than commodity prices, and much of the gains made in a boom unravels in the bust that follows.

- Third, oil and other natural resources, while perhaps a source of wealth, do not create jobs by themselves and unfortunately, they often crowd out other economic sectors. For example, an inflow of oil money often leads to currency appreciation—a phenomenon called the *Dutch Disease*.

The Netherlands, after its discovery of North Sea gas and oil, found itself plagued with growing unemployment and workforce disability (many found disability benefits to be more generous than unemployment benefits.) When the exchange rate soars as a result of resource booms, countries cannot export manufactured or agriculture goods, and domestic producers cannot compete with an onslaught of imports.

So abundant natural wealth often creates rich countries with poor people. Two thirds of the people in Venezuela, the Latin American country with the largest oil deposits, live in poverty. Fortunately, as we have become aware of these problems, we have learned much about what can be done about them. Democratic, consensual and transparent processes are more likely to ensure that the fruits of a country's wealth are equitably and well spent.

We also know that stabilisation funds—which set aside some of the money earned when prices are high—can help reduce the economic volatility associated with natural resource prices. Moreover, such fluctuations are amplified by borrowing in good years, so countries should resist foreign

lenders who try to persuade them of the virtues of such capital flows.

The Dutch disease, however, is one of the more intractable consequences of oil and resource wealth. In principle, it is easy to avoid currency appreciation: keep the foreign exchange earned from, say, oil exports out of the country. Invest the money in the US or Europe. Bring it in only gradually. But in most developing countries, such a policy is viewed as helping someone else's economy.

Some countries are trying to implement these lessons. Nigeria has proposed creating stabilisation funds, and plans to sell its natural resources in transparent, competitive bidding processes. Most importantly, the Nigerians are taking measures to ensure that the fruits of this endowment are invested, so that as the country's *natural* resources are depleted, its real wealth—fixed and human capital—is increased.

Western governments can help with common-sense reforms. Secret bank accounts not only support terrorism, but also facilitate the corruption that undermines development. Similarly, transparency would be encouraged if only payments that are fully documented were tax deductible. Violent conflict is fed and its effects worsened by massive sales of arms by Western governments to developing countries. This should be stopped.

Abundant natural resources can and should be a blessing, not a curse. We know what must be done. What is missing is the political will to make it so. ● (*Project Syndicate*)

Joseph E Stiglitz is Professor of Economics at Columbia University and a member of the Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation. He received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001.

Who's afraid of Al Jazeera?

The Arab tv station should be part of the solution

No one is indifferent to Al Jazeera, the Qatari-based Arab satellite tv station. You can practically see the blood of US officials boil when they discuss it. True, in the context of the dream of all Arabs being united and independent of foreign control, Al Jazeera is undeniably partial to Arab aspirations. But that does not make its reporting untruthful.

In fact, Al Jazeera, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell calls "horrible" and "slanted", is a pivotal vehicle for reform and change, which genuinely democratic Arab activists and the international community alike have been calling for.

So incensed has America been, however, that it created its own Arabic language mouthpiece in the form of satellite station Al Hurra.

Yet Al Hurra is forbidden from broadcasting within the US, because it is state controlled. Arabs don't trust it, either. It demonstrated its lapdog status by never broadcasting images of prisoners being abused inside Baghdad's notorious Abu Ghraib prison. In this respect, at least, Al Hurra fits perfectly within the tame tradition of Arab state broadcasters.

America, however, is not alone in challenging Al Jazeera. The BBC, which briefly ran an Arabic language news station in the mid-90s—before closing it because Saudi funders were unhappy with its reporting—recently announced that it will re-launch an Arabic language news satellite station.

But instead of bashing or seeking to undermine Al Jazeera, politicians should encourage this bastion of free expression, recognising that Arabs will need to endure a messy process on the way to democracy. Along that tortuous route, the world's major powers are bound to be offended, probably quite regularly.

Television in the Arab world has for years been the mouthpiece used by ruling presidents, kings and emirs to propagate their official opinions and nothing else. Elite military units usually protect radio and television stations, because they have often been the first targets in military coups.

Given this history, and the storm of calls for reform in the Arab world, it is a tragic irony that America and the West have paid so little attention to the terrestrial Arab monopoly television channels. Indeed, US criticism of Al Jazeera sounds more like special pleading because of America's inept bumbling in Iraq than a genuine desire for free, open and critical Arab media.



If democracy means giving people a free choice, then there is no doubt that the choice of most Arabs is for a television broadcaster that reflects their aspirations. In this sense, Al Jazeera is clearly biased, because it is run by Arab patriots and reflects Arab sentiment. But this is no more a crime than the fact that America's media reflects American aspirations, and in times of war behaves like a cheerleader for US forces. The key issue here is whether Al Jazeera, as well as American TV stations, are truthful in what they say.

Al Jazeera is certainly professional. Its leading journalists are Western-trained, many having worked for years at the BBC. In fact, Al Jazeera was founded only *after* the BBC closed its Arabic language station under Saudi pressure. Al Jazeera's motto, "opinion and opposing opinion", has galvanised Arab viewers, because clashing opinions are rarely heard on terrestrial Arab television stations.


Of course, when covering the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the US-led war on Iraq, Al Jazeera has not been objective. How could it be? But it did not make up facts; it merely reflected majority Arab opinion. On such fundamental issues of Arab consensus, it is simply illogical to expect an Arab broadcaster to be even-handed.

Moreover, Al Jazeera has not been dumb to complaints about it. In July, Al Jazeera became the first Arab TV station to create a professional code of ethics. According to the BBC, the code defines with absolute clarity and transparency how Al-Jazeera journalists are to behave, and sets clear divisions between news, analysis and commentary.

As for Al Jazeera's journalistic performance, it is past time that the station be judged by respected professional journalists, not by US or other officials with a policy axe to grind. A major university department of journalism working with Arab media critics, for example, could provide a much more honest analysis of the station's work.

If American, British and other Western officials are serious about reform in the Arab world, they must support reform-minded Arab individuals and organisations, even if those organisations make them uncomfortable at times. If that becomes the West's standard, Al Jazeera will rightly be seen as part of the solution, not part of the problem. ● (*Project Syndicate*)


Daoud Kuttab is director of the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University in Ramallah, and AmmanNet, the Arab world's first independent Internet radio.



presents **Talking Woodstock**

A 3-part mini series on the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, 1969, hosted by Classic Rock squad:
Marina, Neeraz, Vikash & Yannik

August 15, 16 & 17 (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday). 9-00 - 10-00 pm



3 HOURS
of PEACE
& MUSIC



We extend our Heartiest Greetings & Felicitations to the Government, Business Community and friendly people of India for their continued progress and prosperity. We also hail our age-old relations on the occasion of the

58th
Independence Day of India

India and Nepal: Partnership in Economic Development

On the 58th Independence Day of India it would be pertinent to recall the close economic co-operation between India and Nepal, which began in 1951. The Indian Aid Mission which was setup in 1954 to coordinate development efforts was, in 1986, renamed as the Indian Co-operation Mission. Today it is called the Economic Co-operation Wing of the Embassy of India. Recently, India and Nepal have entered into an Umbrella Agreement for the speedy clearance of local level projects upto an upper limit of NRs. 30 million.

Some Enduring Symbols of Indian Assistance

Roads - Tribhuvan Rajmarg, 750 kms of East-West Mahendra Rajmarg, Sonauli-Pokhara Road, Feeder roads from Kathmandu to Dakshinkali, Trishuli, Balaju, and Godavri.

Hydroelectric projects - Devighat, Gandak, Tanakpur and Trishuli.

Airports - Tribhuvan International Airport, Pokhara, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Simara and Bhairawa.

Communications - The East-West Optical Fibre Network, GPO, Kathmandu, Foreign Post Office Building, Telephone Exchanges at Janakpur, Biratnagar and Jhapa.

Bridges - 22 bridges on Kohalpur-Mahakali sector of East-West Highway, Bridge on river Mohana in Kailali, Bridge on river Sirsiya in Birgunj, Bagmati bridge in Kathmandu.

Health - BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Bir Hospital project, Paropkar Shree Panch Indra Rajya Laxmi Devi Prasuti Griha, Kathmandu, Ultra-sonography equipment for TU Teaching Hospital, Hospitals in Dhangadi, Taulihawa, Gulmi and Ilam, Goitre Control Project, Gifting of Ambulances and the Medicine Packs Scheme.

Educational infrastructure - Tribhuvan University (Science Block, Library, Hostels, Staff Quarters, Stadium, Gandhi Bhawan), Trichandra College (Science Block), Tribhuvan Adarsh Vidyalyaya, Adarsh Balika Mahavidyalaya, Biratnagar.

Human Resource Development - Every year over 1000 Nepalese, including students and Government employees are offered scholarships, seats and training programmes. There are several tens of thousands of alumni of Indian educational institutions in Nepal.

Embankment Construction - Financial assistance is extended every year by India for construction of embankments on Lalbakeya, Bagmati, Khando and Kamala rivers. This year over NRs. 10 crores has been provided to Nepal.

Unique feature of Indian economic assistance is that all projects are financed through outright grants without any financial liability on Nepal. Project assistance is exclusive of all project preparation costs such as consultancy or travel of experts. There is minimum overload of administrative costs.

Current strategy for India's economic cooperation is to pursue a mix of both infrastructure and local community development projects. India and Nepal have entered into an Umbrella Agreement for the speedy clearance of local level projects upto an upper limit of NRs 30 million. There are currently about 60 projects at various stages of implementation.

Important projects in the offing

Infrastructure - 1400 Kms. road development project in the Terai. Improvement of Infrastructure at the 4 major checkpoints at the India-Nepal border (both sides). Feasibility studies are also planned on important rail links across the India-Nepal border. Trauma Centre for the Bir Hospital, Polytechnic Institutes near Biratnagar, Morang and Hetauda, Establishment of Institute of Technology in Far Western Nepal and Nepal-Bharat Maitri Vidyalyaya in Pokhara, Assistance to Pashupati Area Development Trust and an Eye Hospital in Kapilvastu. **Local Community Development Projects** that give priority to education, health and rural development. Several school buildings, girls' hostels and libraries and health clinics are currently being financed. Link roads between important rural towns and villages, solar electrification of villages and irrigation through tube wells are some of the other rural development projects under implementation.

Quantum of Development Assistance has been increasing each year. It is projected to reach NRs 1.63 billion in 2004-05. India has strengthened development co-operation with Nepal with the conviction that this would address the socio-economic problems in rural Nepal, which have led to serious repercussions. As a close neighbour of Nepal, with an open border, India has an important stake in Nepal's political stability and economic prosperity. Indian co-operation with Nepal in a wide range of fields offering opportunities in cutting edge sectors will continue to grow in the years to come, in line with Nepal's needs and priorities.



Kathmandu
Nepal

Message

The Prime Minister

On the happy occasion of 58th Independence Day of India, I would like to extend my sincere congratulation and best wishes to the Government and the people of India.

As close neighbours, Nepal and India enjoy excellent relations based on solid foundation of historical, cultural, social and economic linkages. These linkages have been further nurtured by extensive people-to-people contacts and frequent interactions at different levels. Our relations are marked by goodwill, understanding, mutual trust and cooperation.

The impressive progress of India in various fields particularly in human resources development and science and technology has been well recognized beyond the regions as well. We, in Nepal, highly acclaim these exemplary achievements and wish the friendly people of India continued progress and prosperity.

India is our invaluable development partner. Her cooperation over the years has helped further socio-economic development of our country, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and human resource development. We eagerly look for Indian investment in Nepal in harnessing our natural resources, developing basic infrastructure and strengthening and widening industrial base. The vast scope for expansion and consolidation of economic and commercial ties between the two countries needs to be fully realized to the mutual benefit of our two peoples.

In this age of all-encompassing globalization the private sectors have an important role to play at all levels-national, regional and global. This is equally true in the context of Nepal-India economic and trade relations. I am confident that the initiatives by private sectors of the two countries in jointly undertaking mutually beneficial projects are certain to provide an additional anchor to sustain the traditionally friendly and mutually beneficial ties between our two countries and peoples. I believe the private sectors have the determination and courage to generate a new dynamism in our age-old relationship. This dynamism should also provide a lasting commitment and means to our efforts in reducing poverty.

Finally, I would like to commend the efforts of the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industries for promoting bilateral trade, investment and business and wish them all success ahead.

Sher Bahadur Deuba
Sher Bahadur Deuba
Prime Minister



V.P. Haran
Charge d' Affaires

भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाडौं, नेपाल



Ambassador of India
Kathmandu, Nepal

Independent Day Message

To all my countrymen and well-wishers in Nepal, I extend my very best wishes and greetings on the 58th Independence Day of India.

1. A seminal day like this is an occasion to look back at the journey our nation has taken. We have come a long way since 1947. We can, today, with good reason and pride say that we have moved from the basic question of survival to that of opportunity and enterprise. There is little doubt that India is very different today. A greater and bigger role awaits us. Optimism prevails.

2. It's not just the multi-sectoral economy that is a source of pride; the political philosophy and system built around democracy and inclusiveness that our founding fathers created, has delivered with distinction. As an ethnically hued and religiously diverse country we have consistently recognised and celebrated pluralism.

3. India considers its relations with Nepal as something very special. The multi-faceted relations between India and Nepal is built on the strong foundation of goodwill of the people. India stands ready to cooperate and work with Nepal in this period when Nepal is passing through a difficult phase. We look forward to the further strengthening of our bonds of friendship and mutually advantageous cooperation in the period ahead, with a view to furthering the welfare of the people of our two countries.

V.P. Haran
(V.P. Haran)



Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry
The President

Message

Felicitations to India on her 58th Independence Day, from the trade and commerce fraternity of Nepal. Long years of freedom struggle and glorious years of independence have indeed made India a shining example of enterprise and success. Her ever expanding commerce and liberalization are an inspiration to the business world on this part of the globe. With her religious diversity, multi-sectoral economy and inclusive political philosophy India's pluralism calls for a celebration.

With pleasure and pride I extend my best wishes for her bright future. May India have Peace and Security and Harmony in the coming years.

As a fledgling country cradled on India's northern arm, Nepal takes the privilege and brotherly right to seek evermore co-operation, guidance and sustenance. Be it infrastructural development, market expansion, fiscal policies, diplomatic ties, human rights preservation or natural resources, it is imperative that India & Nepal work together in the interest of their people. And, not just because we share boundary. One would think that our cultural ties and historical differences are mature enough to allow a wise and enriching relationship. Let us then move hand, from strength to strength.

I take this occasion to express a gratitude for the journey we have made together, and an optimism for the long way still have to go!

With Best Wishes

Arun K. Chaudhary
Arun K. Chaudhary



Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Heritage Plaza 3rd Floor, G.P.O. Box: 13245, Kamaladi, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: 4250607, 4250642, Fax: 977-1- 4250642; e-mail: nicci@mos.com.np
web-page: <http://www.nicci.org>



Agni Incorporated (P) Ltd.
Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Tel: 4410373, 4414628, Fax: 977-1-4416718



Arun Intercontinental Traders
Post Box no. 4869, Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur,
Tel: 5545891, 5545892, Fax: 977-1-5546223,
E-mail: maruti@chaudharygroup.com



Berger Jenson & Nicholson (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd.
(A wholly Subsidiary of Berger Paints India Ltd.)
P.O. Box : 3530, Tinkune, Kathmandu
Tel: 4446038, 4466038, E-mail: jnnp@net.com.np



Bhajuratra Engineering & Sales Limited
Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, P.O. Box:133, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph: 4225134, 4225230, 4226327, Fax: 977-1-4268188/4226314
E-mail: pjyoti@mail.com.np



Colgate Palmolive (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd.
HID, Ward No 8, Hetauda, Makwanpur
Tel. 057-522005, 522006; Fax : 057-521222



Dabur (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd.
Post Box No. 14375, TNT Building, Kathmandu
Tel: 4478010, Fax: 977-1-4478030
E-mail: dnpl@dabur.wlink.com



EVEREST BANK LIMITED
(A Joint-Venture with punjab national bank, India)
EBL House, Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Tel. 4443377, 4444383; Fax: 977-1-4443160
E-mail: ebl@mos.com.np



Fast Food (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd.
Chaudhary House, Sanepa, Lalitpur
Tel: 5521994, 5525039, Fax: 977-1-5523818



GORKHA BREWERY
Gorkha Brewery (P) Ltd.
Khetan House, Hattisar, Kathmandu
Tel: 4444445, 4444321, Fax: 977-1-4444443



Gorakhkali Rubber Udyog Ltd.
P.O.Box : 1700, Salt Trading Building, kalimati,
Kathmandu, Tel: 4271102, Fax : 4270367
E-mail: grul@wlink.com.np



Himalayan Snax & Noodles Pvt. Ltd.
Post Box No. 6156, Kantipath, Kathmandu
Tel: 4255680, Fax: 977-1-42255912
E-mail: admin@mayos.com.np



National Insurance Company Limited
P.O.Box : 376, KKM Building, Tripureshwor
Kathmandu, Nepal, Tel. 4250710, 4260672
Fax : 977-1-4261289, E-mail : natinsur@ccsl.com.np



National Life & General Insurance Company Limited.
Lazimpat, Kathmandu
Tel: 4416556, 4418113, Fax: 977-1-4416427



Nepal Boards Limited.
Golchha House, Ganabahal, Kathmandu
Tel: 4250001, 4250004, Fax: 977-1-4249723
Simara, Bara, Nepal
Tel: 520245, 520448, Fax: 977-53-520393



Nepal Lever Limited
Post Box No. 7765, Heritage Plaza, Kathmandu
Tel: 4252127, 4253351 Fax: 977-1-4253462
E-mail: nlltkm@mos.com.np



Rajesh Metal Crafts Ltd.
P.O. Box: 585, Bagmati Chamber 2nd floor, Teku,
Ph: 4231080, Fax: 977-1-4220689, Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: roop@mc.wlink.com.np



Salt Trading Corporation
Post Box No. 483, Kalimati, Kathmandu,
Tel: 4271014, Fax: 977-1-4271704
e-mail: noonkath@mos.com.np



Shree Investment & Finance Co. Ltd.
Post Box no. 10717, Dillibazar, Kathmandu
Tel: 4426146, 4415344; Fax: 977-1-4421774
e-mail: shreefin@mos.com.np



Sipradi Trading Co. (P) Ltd.
P. O. Box: 192, Naikap, Kathmandu
Tel: 4311481, 4240133, Fax: 977-1-4225096



Soalteer Crowne Plaza
P.O.Box : 3800, Tahachal, Kathmandu
Tel. 4273999, 4275555, Fax : 4272205



Standard Chartered
Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Limited
Post Box no. 3990, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu
Tel: 4783753, 4782333, Fax: 4780762



Surya Nepal Private Limited
Post Box No.: 1864, Kantipath, Kathmandu
Tel: 4214634, 4248270, Fax: 977-1-4227585
E-mail: stc@mos.com.np



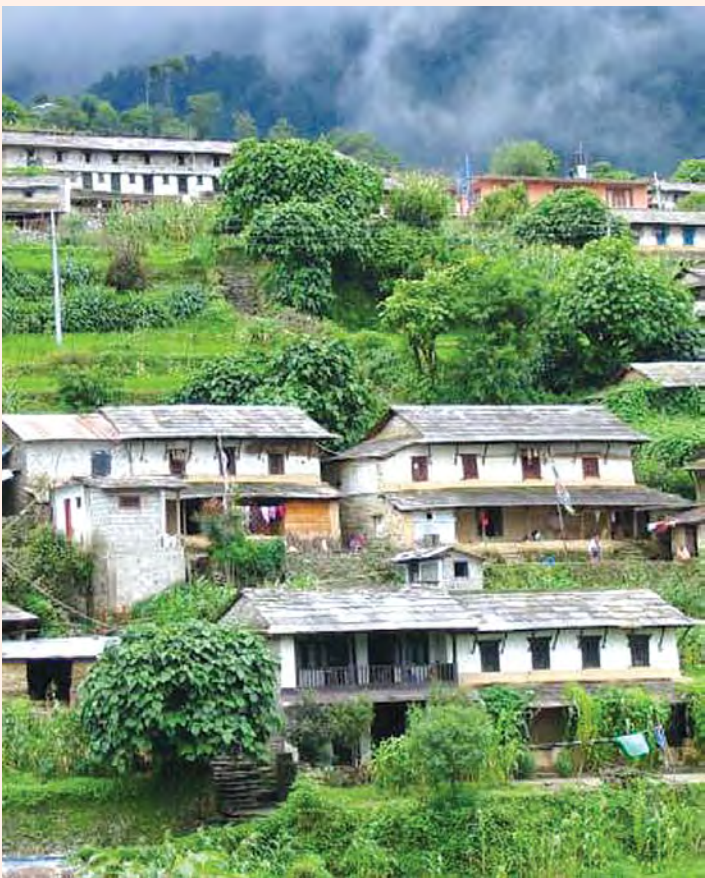
The Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd.
P.O. Box no. 165, Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, Kathmandu
Tel: 4221448, 4250137, 241960, Fax: 977-1-223419
E-mail: oriental@wlink.com.np



United Insurance Co. (Nepal) Ltd.
L.J Plaza, Durbar Marg, P.O.Box: 9075, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel. 4220492, 4230958, Fax: 977-1-4246687,
E-mail : uic@mail.com.np



Key Advertising Service (P) Ltd
G P O Box: 13351, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4-261669, 4-261677, Fax: 977-1-4-269499
E-mail: keyads@wlink.com.np



Ghost town in the Annapurnas

Rewati Sapkota in Ghandruk
Rajdhani, 7 August

The writing on the wall at Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) office appears to be handwritten in blood. ‘Maoists and the royal army, end your oppression!’ It is a feeling echoed by many in this once-idyllic trekking town. Six months ago, the people of Ghandruk were forced to witness four of their own killed in cold blood, their bodies tossed like waste near the abandoned and bombed-out building that used to be the ACAP headquarters.

“They should have killed us old people instead,” say the tearful parents of Ishwor Gurung, who, along with hotelier Dil Man Gurung, was tortured for five hours at night and then gunned down by Maoist militants who accused them of working as government spies. Ishwor’s cries for help: “Mother help me!” still haunt his mother who, like all the other helpless villagers, heard him but could do nothing to stop the rebels from torturing and executing her son.

Ishwor and Dilman were both innocent civilians who had never been associated with the army in any way. Ishwor was a 32-year-old businessman running a communication office where he allowed anyone, including the Maoists and the army, to use his phone line. Dil Man was a 65-year-old hotelier whose Snow Land Hotel was a favourite with trekkers. He was a wise and generous man.

The Maoists executed the two in revenge for the December 2003 killings of Ramchandra Adhikari and Gokarna Pandit, who were tortured and killed and their bodies thrown like animal carcasses near the ACAP office. The Maoists did to Ishwor and Dil Man Gurung exactly what the army did to Adhikari and Pandit, and threw their bodies in the exact same spot. “Ishwor and Dil Man would have been alive today if the Maoists were arrested and punished according to the law instead of being tortured and killed,” says Krishna Prasad Poudel, principal of Meshram Barah Secondary School.

Their brutal death has created such terror that villagers don’t talk to strangers anymore. Trekking lodges have their doors bolted and open then only to foreign trekkers. It took us almost five hours to convince Dharma Gurung that we were journalists and not Maoists. Recently, a group of youngsters extorted Rs 5,000 from Dharma, claiming to be Maoists. Later, he found out they were UML workers. The Maoists had assured him that they would find the looters and return his money, but that hasn’t happened. “I still have nightmares of the army coming here,” says Dharma, who is more afraid of the army than the Maoists. The locals blame the government for the death of tourism and spread of terror in their village. “We’ll sue the government for its oppression. We are filing a case at the Supreme Court,” says Krishna Prasad Upadhyaya, principal of Himalaya Secondary School.

“We constantly live in fear that we’ll all be killed at any time,” says a local hotelier, a retired soldier, who says that it is better for villagers to just stay deaf and blind to everything that happens around them.

The situation in Ghandruk took a turn for the worse last autumn when an army helicopter fired randomly in 15 places looking for Maoists. They could not trace a single rebel, and instead shot a young boy working in a farm.

Since then, a large number of families have abandoned their homes. Most of the young men and women have already left Ghandruk. Only the poor and old and those who have no relatives outside have remained. Most of Ghandruk’s once-bustling 65 hotels remain empty in this ghost town.

Letter to Baburam

Letter to the editor in
Kantipur, 9 August

Reading Baburamji’s article in your paper on 6 August, I was reminded of his party’s excesses and activities which have typecast the Maoist party. There may be very few people who freely agree with their criminal campaign of murder and violence. Maybe there needs to be revolution not just in the monarchy and the ‘old regime’, but also within his party. The Maoists never cease calling themselves ‘communist’, but how can the kind of barbarism they have unleashed in this day and age be called civilised? Their extreme reaction to any criticism, extinguishing human life and tearing apart the fabric of Nepali society by planting seeds of terrorism—how can these things be called ‘communist’? Ganesh Chiluwal, who burnt an effigy of the Maoist leaders, was shot. The chairman of the Rasuwa DDC, Bhimlal Hirachan, had his corpse desecrated. The ex-mayor of Guluriya was cut into three pieces while attending the funeral of a relative. Many police and soldiers who have gone home on leave have been killed. Why can’t they visit their families? Isn’t that their human right? They weren’t going to war, they weren’t armed. Is this just a way to show revolutionary zeal, or is this the revolution itself? Is this the way to create an environment for talks? Abducting thousands of teachers and students with scant regard for human rights? Why don’t you answer, Baburamji?

Not a Maoist

Kantipur, 9 August

PANCHKANYA—27-year-old Samasi Rai was a farmer and lived with his two wives and

two-and-half year old son. On 3 August, some soldiers called him out of his house, blindfolded him and took him away. The next day at 9PM, they brought him and shot him dead close to the house. But they haven’t given his body back to the family. Samasi’s father, Dil Bahadur Rai found blood stains, his son’s slippers and four cartridges at the spot where he was killed. Before killing him, the soldiers had brought Samasi to his family, and questioned his wife Mina about why she, a Chhetri, had married a Rai. Mina sobs: “He was never a Maoist, why did they kill him? Why aren’t they giving us back his body? Who are they providing security to?” Samasi’s second wife, Pabitra, has a baby. “How will I take care of him now?” she says. Kushal, the head of the Maoist’s publicity wing in Sunsari, Kushal, says Samasi was not a Maoist, even though he was taken for questioning by the army last year.

Taxi terror

Editorial in Samaya, 13 August

The taxi strike on 30 July created a havoc in the capital. It was a day of anarchy and terror. Taxi drivers parked their cars randomly, gridlocking all main roads. This was a criminal act, proved by the fact that even ambulances were blocked. They did not even consider school children, who were sitting in their buses scared, parched and

hungry. Many finally reached their anxious parents late in the evening. The six-hour strike also exposed police apathy and the inefficiency among the senior officers of the traffic department to sort out the mess. There is no information about how the Home Ministry has reacted to such incompetence. It has not yet made any enquiry or held anyone responsible so far.

The taxi drivers’ demands were reasonable. They have the right to protest police harassment like weekly payoffs, seizing licences without valid reason, restricting entry of meter-taxis inside the airport and so on. They say they were forced to take harsh action when they were unable to get government attention. But the extreme step taken by taxi drivers last Friday was totally improper. It was especially unjust for people needing emergency medical treatment and care. Many sick patients were unable to reach hospitals. Nobody should be above the law when they break such basic norms.

Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadga aspires to build a clean, compassionate and disciplined police force. He should start by removing the corruption inside the airport that has deprived taxi drivers of their livelihood. The police should be able to treat the taxi drivers humanely. The taxi drivers should also set a good example by punishing those who cheat passengers.



KIRAN PANDAY



Miss Nepal

स्पेसटाइम दैनिक Spacetime, 8 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Nepali Congress has been diverted from its course, which is why I am running for presidency,”

NC Leader Shailaja Acharya, in Himalaya Times, 11 August

ADVERTORIAL

Effimax & KTE Venture inspired to write Kangchenjunga Is The Same As Sagarmatha



Tea is addictive because it contains caffeine. Not all tea is good for you. Some teas contain agro-chemical residues used in growing them. There is also a problem with synthetic estrogen found in chemical fertilisers, pesticides and utensils that may lead to impotence, low sperm count, uterine defects, breast cancer and other physical ailments. This is the reason that many Western countries have strict bans on



chemicals and are turning more and more towards organically grown produce. The Germany-based International Federation of Organic Agri-culture Movement (IFOAM) is dedicated to promoting healthy and environment friendly farming practices.

Just try a little experiment: mix a little turmeric powder in a glass of water. In one of them. add a spoonful of an extract of rittha herb. Then add a few drops of your favourite detergent. Within a minute you will notice that the glass with the rittha will remain the colour of turmeric while the one with the detergent gradually turns blood red This is exactly what happens to food that we ingest when it gets mixed up with artificial estrogen, which can enter the human food chain from tea grown in gardens that use chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

And yet there is a socio-cultural habit of the Nepalis, which force them to drink 8 -10 cups of tea a day! This is a huge mistake. People make mistakes, but as human beings we have to learn from them. Intelligent readers like you needn't be told what to do, I am just making you aware of the consequences of your actions.

In 1974, Dipak Prakash Banskota brought 5,000 seeds of Hybrid Chinese Teabushes from Darjeeling and set up the Kangchenjunga Tea Estate (KTE), which is a private limited company. This was a very far-sighted move. There are now 150 associated families working in the tea garden under the cooperative principle. The product here is the world's only certified organically-grown **Green Tea**, which is refined in a specialised processing plant imported from India with the recommendation of IFOAM. KTE has become a model organic tea garden in the world, where German and French agriculture students come every year to do their internships.

The tea garden is unique not just because the majestic Kangchenjunga Himal forms its backdrop. It is situated between 2500-6000ft above sea level and has a great altitude containing vivid geographical features, vegetation variation. The highest organic tea garden in the world that is the pride of all. The tea is inspected annually by the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture (NASAA) USDA- of United States and JAS- of Japan are also having accreditation of NASAA, which are again entending their certification to import KTE in their Country.

The tea is now being marketed worldwide, and it has been a big challenge to respond to specific



A Insect that helps to Tea Bushes

Steep land of the Tea Garden.



Cardemum and other herbs' naturally preserved farm of KTE

market needs. Still KTE has persevered. "I am a warrior in the organic tea sector, I am a warrior who doesn't know the meaning of defeat," says Banskota.

This writer has also been actively involved in promoting organic green tea. "This is the third time I am trying to make a venture of marketing KTE Green Tea, specially. The reason I am so passionate about it is that the business helps the 150 farmers involved in the KTE and due to the importance of Green Tea, the farmers have staked all to growing tea, which is a cash crop, instead of paddy or maize. The government, of course, thinks that just by giving the industry VAT-free status it has done a lot. It hasn't."

Effimax International, the worldwide marketer of KTE Organic Green Tea has placed a first order for Rs 7.5 million worth of tea. Effimax is a network marketing company, which has started its network in Nepal last year. Network marketing is a system, which penetrates the features of particular product from person to person . Considering such a system Mr. Banskota initiated to connect KTE Green Tea in the network of Effimax. The ttea is being promoted and marketed worldwide to achieve a target of exporting 200,000kg green tea by 2005.

A patient had a heart problem and he was getting worried that the ailment persisted. His doctor prescribed hypertension medicine and told him he had to take it all his life. Then he heard that drinking green tea would help. And he started taking the tea regularly for six years. When he went to get a medical checkup in Bangkok, the doctors were flabbergasted. His blood pressure was under control and his heart functions were back nowheart condition is as similar as 90% people have. "I have proof that it worked and I become a model of my own tea as well" says the patient, who is none other than Dipak Prasad Banskota.

Another exciting scientific declaration made by FDA, Canada i.e.caffeine, which contains less in Organic Green Tea helps to prevent heart problems.

By: Purna Bandhan
E-mail: bisam_baba@yahoo.com



General Knowledge Quiz

If you get 5, out of the following five questions right you will win Good Health, if you get 4 right you will win Healthy, if you get 3 right you will win Well, if you get only 2 you will have Smart and if you will have 1 you will win Vigour. Even if you get none of the questions right, you will be honoured as a distinguished Nepali. Clues to the answers can be found in the following write-up. Answers at the end.

1. Which country makes the world's only certified organic green tea?
2. The highest tea estate in the world making organic tea is in Nepal, which is and where it is?
3. Which is the foremost organisation in the world that gives organic certification?
4. Which are the diseases that can be treated with organic green tea?
5. Who is Dipak Prakash Banskota, and what is his link to organic green tea cooperatives?

Answers to Quiz:

1. Nepal
2. Kangchanjungha Tea Estate, Phidim, Pancharthar.
3. National Association of Sustainable Agriculture, Australia. (NASAA)
4. Cancer, Heart and other 21 fatal diseases.
5. Founder Chairman of KTE and modern farmer specializing in organic green tea.

"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a man with a bad goatee can be a hero.)

The Adventures of HEROJIG
HELLO. NAMASSTHAY!
by jiggy gaton

"Softwear Wizard" of the EAST

Shirts, Pants, & Shorts .Com

"Softwear Wizard" of the WEST

HeroJig's Adventures can also be seen at www.extreme-nepal.com

KE GARNE? WHATEVER.
But be a Heroji - Drink tea with others

"They have computers, and they may have other weapons of mass destruction."
-- Janet Reno, US Attorney General on Iraq in August of 1998

Next change:
Herojig visits Mexico and instinctively blurts "Namaste" instead of "Buenos Dios"

#33 © 2001 by jiggy gaton - read. love. write.

ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Charcoal drawings** by Youdhisthir Maharjan at Indigo Gallery, 14-29 August. 4413580, www.asianart.com/indigo
- ❖ **Contemporary Expressions from India** Various artists celebrating India's 58th Independence Day. 19-30 August.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Hami Nepali Haun** Party at the Rox Bar, 7PM onwards on 14 August. Rs 399 with drink. www.partynepal.com
- ❖ **Children's Carnival**, 1-5PM on 14 August at Shambala Garden and Khel, Shangri-La Hotel, Lazimpat. 4412999
- ❖ **4th Bagmati River Festival** till 21 August:
Dunga Daud, corporate rafting challenge on 14 August
Drama competition for schools, 1PM onwards on 13 August at Kanya Mandir School
Poem and Essay competitions for schools, 4PM onwards on 14 August at Pashupati Aryaghat
Photography competition for schools, 8AM on 16 August at Shankhamul
Speech competition, 4PM onwards on 16 August at Bhugol Park.
- ❖ **Movies** 2PM onwards at the Alliance Francaise: L'629, 15 August
- ❖ **St Augustine's (Kalimpong) School Day Celebration** @ Hotel Nirvana, Thamel. 5.30 PM on 28 August. Tickets Rs 200 for 1996 batch & later and Rs 400 for everyone else. 9851020267
- ❖ **Surviving in culture** Support the Blue Diamond Society. 31 August, 12 noon to 2PM, starting at Tridevi Marg. 4443350, 4445147. bluediamondsociety@yahoo.com

MUSIC

- ❖ **Talking Woodstock**
Three-part mini-series on the 1969 Woodstock Festival. 15,16,17 August, 9-10PM on Hitsfm91.2
- ❖ **1974AD Unplugged** at Moksh on 14 August. 7-9.30 PM, Rs 300.
- ❖ **Jatra Friday Nites** Live music by The Strings. 4256622
- ❖ **Live music** at Moksh. A-Four Guitar Quartet Tuesdays and Full Circle on Fridays. 6PM onwards, free entry.



DRINKS

- ❖ **Free drink deals** at Red Onion Bar, Lazimpat
- ❖ **Monsoon Wine Festival** at Kilroy's, Thamel. Rs 150 per large glass.
- ❖ **Lychee Martinis** at Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency. 4491234

FOOD

- ❖ **Food Festival** at The Café, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. Exclusive Paratha, Galouti & Salan, 7 August-15 August. 4491234
- ❖ **Delicious barbecue dinner** Fridays at Summit Hotel. 5521810
- ❖ **Friday Nights** at Subterranea Club Kilroy. 4412821
- ❖ **Farm House Café** Nature with meals Park Village Hotel. 4375280
- ❖ **Café Bahal** Newari cuisine Kathmandu Guest House. 4700632
- ❖ **Vegetarian Creations** at Stupa View Restaurant. 4480262
- ❖ **Splash Spring BBQ** Wednesdays, Fridays, Radisson Hotel
- ❖ **Executive Lunch** at Toran Restaurant, Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Sunny Side Up Weekend BBQ** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
- ❖ **The Beer Garden** Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Dwarika's Thali** Lunch at The Heritage courtyard. 4479488

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Summer in Shivapuri** Birdwatching and great views at Sivapuri Heights Cottage. steve@escape2nepal.com. 9851051780
- ❖ **Wet & Wild Summer Splash** Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Pure relaxation** at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. 01 4361500
- ❖ **Bardia National Park** junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
- ❖ **Golf** at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa. 4451212
- ❖ **Weekend Special** at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280
- ❖ **Early Bird discounts** at Shangri-La Hotel & Resort. 4412999

VARIETIES OF

WINE

and MORE

Dexo House
THE SUPERMARKET

Thamel, Tel: 4233526, 4411800

In *Kyun! ho gaya na...* Diya Malhotra (Asihwarya Rai) is an idealistic, sensitive girl, raised by her father. When he decides she should travel to Mumbai to help his friend Raj Chauhan (Amitabh Bachchan) run a small orphanage, he arranges that she stay with family friends, the Khannas. She then meets Arjun (Vivek Oberoi), a seemingly free-spirited, fun-loving, adventurous guy. The two later realise that they're staying at the same house—the Khannas are Arjun's parents. Their friendship develops and their opposing views on love and marriage are at the heart of this romantic comedy.

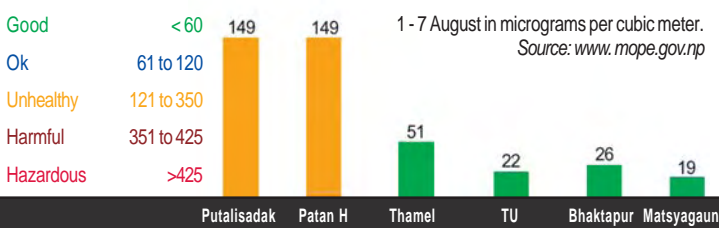
Friday, 20 August Bookings open
Call 4442220 for show timings www.jainepal.com

JAINEPAL CINEMA



KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY

While the air quality along Kathmandu's busy roads was 'unhealthy', the air in residential areas and suburbs in the rest of the Valley was fairly good this week. The concentration of particles of fine dust less than 10 microns in diameter along Putali Sadak and Patan Hospital were above the national standard of 120 micrograms per cubic metre throughout the week, except on Saturday when fewer vehicles on the road and the rains resulted in cleaner air. So if you stay away from busy roads, it should be ok to breathe in Kathmandu.



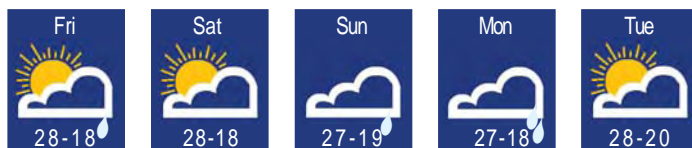
NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



This has been a patchy monsoon with unusually uneven precipitation over Nepal. In Kathmandu, it has been a fairly normal July in terms of total rainfall, but it has come in sporadic bursts with dry spells in between. The weekend is going to see short, heavy bursts of rain more characteristic of *bhadaure jhari*. But by midweek next week a new monsoon pulse (*satellite pic taken on Thursday at noon, left*) should bring us more sustained longterm rain. Expect hot and humid afternoons.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



McQuay AIR CONDITIONER

100% CFC FREE

Authorized Distributor
AIRTECH Industries Pvt. Ltd.
Thapathali, Kathmandu, Tel: 4-219999, 4-243897
Fax: 4-228822, E-mail: info@airtech.com.np

ISO 9001:2000 CE

CLASSIFIED

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

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

FOR SALE: A newly constructed 2 storied furnished house on rent at Civil Homes Bhainsipati For details contact Sekhar 9851041293

A new Opel Corsa Sail 1.4 2500 km Rs 13,50,000 For details, contact Sekhar 9851041293

A new white Maruti 9500 km Rs 60,0000 For details, contact Sekhar 9851041293

HOUSE ON RENT: At Panipokhari, opposite the American embassy, behind the petrol pump station. 1 master bedroom w/t attached bath, 3 bedrooms w/t semi-attached bath, drawing room, dining room kitchen, store-room, puja room, watchman room, an outhouse and garage. Total area of compound 7500 sq. ft. For details contact mobile no. 9851024874.

A modern bungalow with 5 rooms, 5 bathrooms at Comfort Housing, Sitapaila with community facilities of Security Guard, Swimming Pool, Health Club, Squash Court. Contact: 9851024437

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 5543333-36.

Mandala House APARTMENT HOTEL

Tastefully decorated and perfectly located in a quiet residential area close to shopping centers, business houses and diplomatic enclaves. Ideal for expatriates on short or long stay.

Contact 4412412
98412-45814 (after 5:00 pm & Saturdays)
or
[check: www.emandala.com](http://www.emandala.com)

Newsbulletin of Radio Sagarmatha

"Haal-Chaal"

Nepali Radio Nepali Aawaj

Morning : 6:45, 7:45, 8: 45, 11:45
Afternoon : 2:45, 4:45
Evening : 5:45, 6:45, 9:45

Radio Sagarmatha is at your service for 18 hours a day with a complete package
P.O. Box: 6958, Phone: 977-1-5528091, Fax: 977-1-5530227, Email: info@radiosagarmatha.org
Website: www.radiosagarmatha.org



ANUP PRAKASH

ALL SMILES: Managing director of Royal Nepal Airlines, Mohan Khanal, hands over a cheque to Payal Shakya, Dabur Vatika Miss Nepal 2004, at the BICC on Saturday. Sarah Gurung, first runner-up, is in the middle.



ANIL SHRESTHA

ON THE SAME BOAT: Negotiating a bend on the Sundarijal to Gokarna stretch of the Bagmati, Himal Media won the "best raft" award. Thirteen media houses participated in *Dunga Daud* organised by Nepal River Conservation Trust on Saturday to raise awareness.



KIRAN PANDAY

YOUNG GRAFT BUSTERS: Members of the National Committee against Corruption staged a relay hunger strike to raise awareness about corruption in Kathmandu this week.



KIRAN PANDAY

SKULL AND BONES: World Indigenous Day on Monday was marked by an anti-war and pro-peace rally in Kathmandu.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

INTERNATIONAL WEDDING: Shabnam Koirala wed Badi Azad from San Francisco at a traditional Nepali ceremony in Kathmandu on Saturday. The bride's parents, Bharat and Joanne Koirala, are seen blessing the couple.

Marie's politics

The last thing Nepalis think when they meet Marie Ringler is that she is a politician. "You look like a rock star," some say, others ask: "Are you a model?"

But as a 27-year-old Green Party member of the Austrian federal state parliament for Vienna, Marie is used to such reactions. Here on a six-week placement with the US-based National Democratic Institute, she is preparing a report on ways to increase the representation of women in political parties in this country.

We caught up with Marie during her visit to a school in Patan last week, where she asked a group of grade ten students how many wanted to become politicians. Only two hesitant hands went up. The rest wanted to know what was so great about politics anyway. Marie's answer: "You are in the middle of things, you can't just complain, you have to find solutions."

More hands went up: what makes a good politician? "You have to like people, care about them, you need a will to learn and listen to what people want." And what does she think about Nepali politicians? Here, Marie is slightly diplomatic: "There is



MIN BAJRACHARYA

a very rigid hierarchy, a deference to seniority and there are hardly any women in politics."

Now it's Marie turn to ask the children some questions. "If you met the prime minister, what would you tell him?" The response comes thick and fast from the group of 16-year-old Nepali boys and girls: "Negotiate with the Maoists", "create jobs", "take development to the villages", "use Nepali talent in Nepal".

And how can the Maoist insurgency be resolved? "Both

sides have to be flexible", "both have to compromise", "you have to start with what you agree on and take it from there". Marie is nodding vigorously. It looks like the youngsters are showing more common sense than most adults she has met in this country.

There are still many questions from the class, but time is up. Before she goes, Marie asks the children once more how many want to become politicians. Four hands go up, and she says, happily: "That's double of what we started with. We are making progress." ●

Share Moments. Share Life.™

Creating Reasons to Smile.

For the best photos in town

Kodak EXPRESS
QUALITY MONITORING SERVICE

PRISMA/04677/04

NEW!
Designs

STATION

Kopundol, Tel: 55 47 400/500/600
Web: www.graphicstation.net

अब हामी तपाईंसँग

अफ नजिक

साउन १ गते देखि मेट्रो एफ एम ५४.६ मेघा हजमा प्रसारण भई रहेछ।

मेट्रो

एफ एम

५४.६

Do you ever Miss Nepal?

We got hints last week that Nepali women and men have at long last shed the shackles of patriarchy to stand head over heels and tear down a decorative gate set up for

UNDER MY HAT
Kunda Dixit



the Miss Nepal Beauty Pageant

at the BICC and turn it into a burning issue.

I have it on good authority that some of the arsonists would have easily qualified for, and perhaps even won, the Miss Photo Opportunity, Miss Pyrotechnic or the Miss Dandruff titles.

But they didn't let such temptations distract them from expressing in no uncertain terms their firm opposition to anyone daring to have gorgeous and stunning hair at a time when the country is sinking into a quagmire. The

protestors at Bijuli Bajar had reason to be mad as hell: they never stood a chance to ever be crowned Miss Nepal. Because many of them were men.

A beauty pageant is a rigorous process of separating the wheat from the chaff. After the gruelling Swimsuit Competition, which includes the Derriere Round and the Udder Round to ensure that all participants are in fact female, contestants are finally shortlisted for the Most Photogenic Belly-button Category. In this manner, through a process of natural selection, they finally make it to the pinnacle of evolution, which is the climactic moment of the make-or-break Interview Round.

What I want to know is how comes us guys don't get to have such fun. When are we going to have our own Speedo Round? When is someone going to judge us by our looks? Why isn't anyone

interested in the size and shape of our pectoral fins? Why can't I enter my gluteus maximus in some competition and win a crown too? It is a travesty that in this day and age, when all known genders are supposed to be equal, there is not yet a Mr Himalayan Hunk Pageant.

In preparation for the day when us men, too, will qualify for beauty contests, I have already started taking coaching classes in how to answer trick questions that those heartless and cruel judges hurl at you during the Interview Round. The thing to remember is never to lose your poise, maintain eye contact with the members of the jury and deliver your memorised speech no matter what the question is.

For instance, if the question is: "What would you exchange your good looks for?" You answer should be: "The most important thing is to restore

peace in the country by talking a lot."

Another question designed to throw off contestants is: "What is a Himalayan Legend?" The answer to this can be any number of things: a yak, a yeti, a yak & yeti, the Red Panda, the Lesser Himalayan White-rumped Langur or even Arniko, but remember: you need to impress the judges. And the answer that will get you ten out of ten from all judges will be: "Um...unhh...right...the most important thing is to restore peace in the country by talking a lot,"

Then comes the clincher: "What would you do if you were the prime minister?" And the answer to that is, you guessed it: "The most important thing is to restore peace in the country by talking a lot." ●

ONE STOP SHOP

Typeset

Photoedit

Design

Layout

Dispatch

Printing

All your publishing needs under one roof.



JAGADAMBA PRESS

Hattiban,

Phone: 5547017/18, 5543017

Email: japray@mos.com.np

Fax: 01-5547027

विश्वको नम्बर १

Splendor

को बिक्रि छिटै ५० लाख वटा पुग्न लागेको

शुभ-उपलक्ष्यमा

आउनुहोस् चढनुहोस्

अनि मनाउनुहोस्

हिरो होण्डा **Splendor+** र **Passion Plus**

को प्रत्येक खरिदमा

ने.रु. १६०१

फाइदा गर्नुहोस्

HERO HONDA

World No. 1

Two-Wheeler Company

यो योजना 1st Aug, '04 देखि 31st Aug. '04 सम्म लागु हुनेछ ।

विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि:

2 Year Warranty

Authorised Distributor:

SYAKAR COMPANY LTD.

Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, Kathmandu

Tel.: 4225132, 4240801, 4225490

Branches:-

Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath Tel: 4225377, 4225490 • Teku Tel: 4261227, 4251761 • Batisputali Tel: 4497161 • Putalisadak Tel: 4435155 • Balaju Chowk Tel: 4361786 • Lalitpur Tel: 5541798 • Bhaktapu Tel: 6611370 • Biratnagar-530334 • Birgunj Ghantaghar-529667 • Birgunj Kalaiya- 550120 • Bhairahawa-524290 • Bharatpur-524217 • Narayanghat-520297 • Hetauda-521881 • Janakpur-520322 • Nepalgunj-520374 • Pokhara-521922 • Butwal-547158 • Birtamod-540452 • Dhangadhi-522018 • Dharan-525168, • B.P. Chowk, Butwal-540648, • Lahan-560955 • Palpa-521166 • Dang-560052 • Damak-581463