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Weekly Internet Poll # 348

Q. What is the best option for King Gyanendra?

Total votes: 5,779



- Go into exile 27.9%
- Go into an ashram 12.8%
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Weekly Internet Poll # 349. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Do you think there will be talks between the MJF and the eight-party government?


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Bankrupt

The long lines at gas stations are a sure sign this country is broke

DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

The long queues at gas stations in the capital this week mean only one thing: this country is bankrupt.

The latest crisis has been sparked off by Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) not having the money to pay for this month's import of oil from India. It has stocks to last just two more days.

Thursday's eight-party meeting is being held to decide on a date for the postponed constituent assembly elections. But the politicians should first figure out a way to pay India to

resume imports.

"We've always sold low and bought high, and that's no way to run a business," says NOC spokesman Ichchha B Thapa, "either the government allows us to raise fuel prices or it pays Indian Oil. There is no other solution to this."

Street protests last August forced the government to backtrack on a price hike. Ever since, NOC has amassed nearly Rs 6 billion in debt. Now, Indian Oil has refused to ship more oil unless it receives Rs 150 million a month. Indian Oil has been

cutting back on supplies by 30 percent in past months to prod the NOC to clear its dues.

The Petroleum Dealers' Association says private pumps have not got supplies since Tuesday. "We'll keep having these shortages until the government pays the Indians," says Sharad Bhandari of the dealers' association. "And for that, the eight parties need to take a quick decision." There are long queues at government gas stations, and private pumps have run out of fuel.

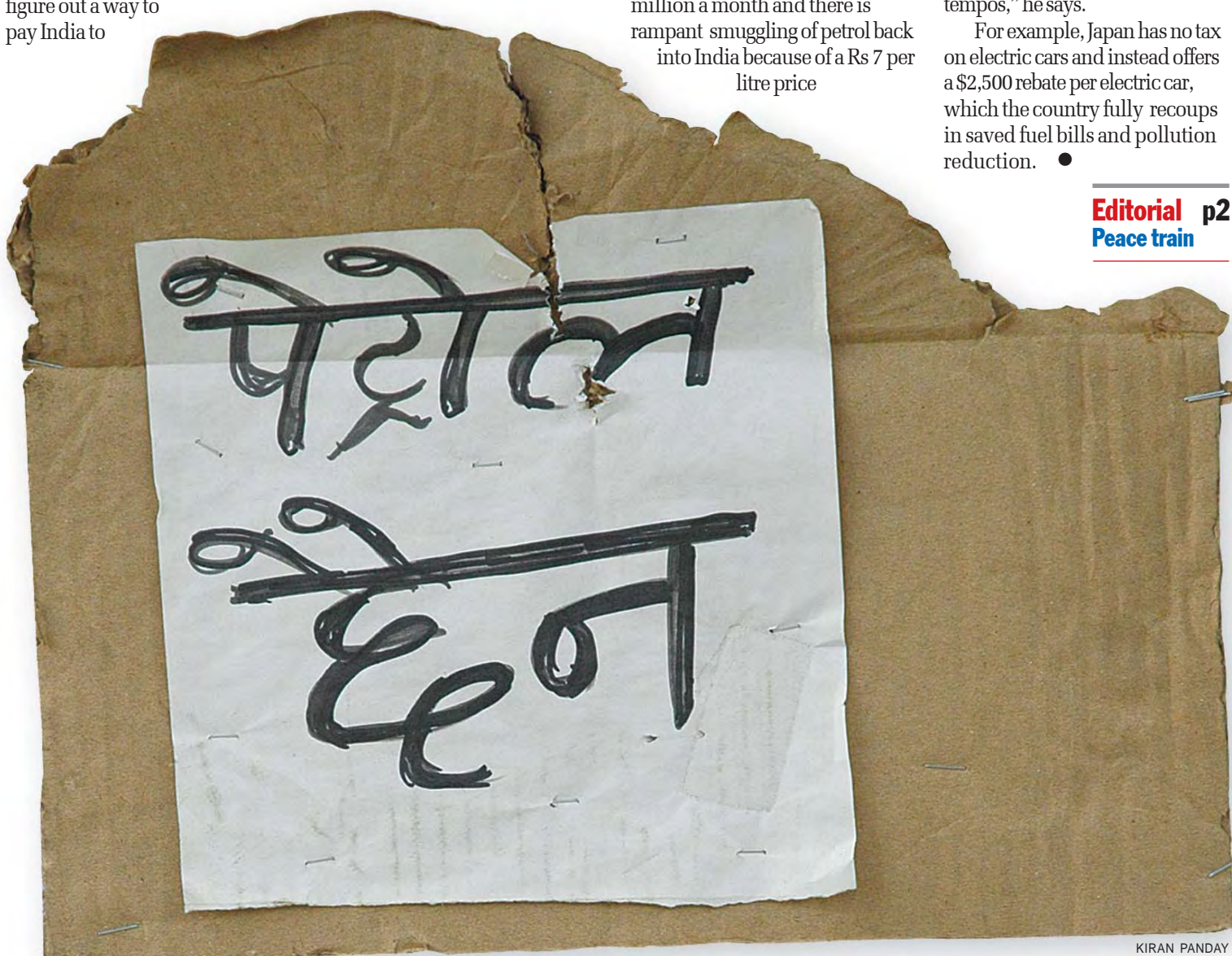
NOC's losses total Rs 250 million a month and there is rampant smuggling of petrol back into India because of a Rs 7 per litre price

differential. In the short-term there doesn't seem to be any alternative but to raise gas prices, but this is a hot potato no politician wants to touch.

In the long term, given Nepal's heavy dependence on imported oil and air pollution problems, there must be a move towards electric vehicles, says JA Goff at the renewable energy group Eco-Visions in Kathmandu. "It would be prudent for the government of Nepal to eliminate all import duties and taxes on electric vehicles like it did with Safa tempos," he says.

For example, Japan has no tax on electric cars and instead offers a \$2,500 rebate per electric car, which the country fully recoups in saved fuel bills and pollution reduction. ●

Editorial p2
Peace train



KIRAN PANDAY

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Published by Himalmedia Pvt Ltd, Editor: Kunda Dixit
Executive Editor: Anagha Neelakantan
Design: Kiran Maharjan Web: Rupendra Kayastha
Director Sales and Marketing: Sunaina Shah marketing@himalmedia.com
Circulation Manager: Samir Maharjan sales@himalmedia.com
Subscription: subscription@himalmedia.com, 5011628/29
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur
GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu 5543333-6, Fax: 5521013
Printed at Jagadamba Press, Hatiban: 5547018



New country, old habits

Listen to 'the people' while planning a new Nepal

In Kathmandu last week, I met friends from the human rights community in Nepal coming out of a class on federalism. Over a decade ago, when I was an election observer here, I, like other activists, was delighted to see the emergence of a robust human rights and democratic activism in Nepal. As part of the international rights community, we nurtured these forces, which we also saw as supporting the aspirations of SAARC citizens.



GUEST COLUMN
Nimalka Fernando

What we did not expect to see was these trends deteriorating slowly as political struggles took hold. What happened? Did the progressives become so state-ist that they removed themselves from the 'people' in order to sustain the regime? This situation begs another question of the Nepali polity: who is setting the agenda now? Who is charting new territory, and what does it look like?

Nepal is going through an intense process of constitution-making. The crucial issue of dealing with the monarchy might have been resolved in the call for

a constitution which, at its core, respects 'people's power'. In a legalistic sense the alternate to a unitary constitution obviously is 'federalist'.

Post-independence India and Sri Lanka have seen violence and blood-shed as communities and nationalities struggled for equality. I am in favour of federalism in Sri Lanka—where the monarchy was kicked out by colonial powers—because political power-sharing is the only way to resolve its raging ethnic conflict. The struggle for federalism together with the right to self-determination suggest homelands, distinct languages, territories, and cultural identities.

But this might not be appropriate for Nepal. Nepal today is at the threshold of giving birth to the diversity of its people, rather than making 'one nation'. Can its political future, the aspirations of its minority communities, janajatis, dalits, and other caste groups be enshrined in an effective and representative manner in a federalist project?

All constitutional pundits offer all countries coming out of armed struggle federalist options, and perhaps they are compelled by constitutional law to offer

federalism as a structure for power-sharing. But one needs to begin from the fundamentals. What are the core concerns of the Nepali people? Where in a federal structure would we place dalits and janjatis? Is geographical territory or non-territorial asymmetry more important? What will be devolved unit? If it is regional units, how can we find representation in that political establishment for discriminated-against

communities?

Nepal has to face up to the crucial challenge of its democratic struggle and related reforms. It still has large unresolved issues related to land reform and has to engage in a public discourse regarding the equal rights of women and girl children. It has to find the best mechanism to facilitate equal representation of all minorities in the governing process and find modalities to combat discriminatory practices, whether traditional or recent.

It is of course an exciting experience to deal with the notion of power sharing immediately after a victory of this nature. But we must not forget the soul of this struggle. The strength of this resistance to monarchy and caste-based domination was drawn from those who risked their lives for a democratic and just Nepal. The cause for free and independent Nepal was nurtured by 'the people'.

The formation of a New Nepal calls for a high level of representation of the people at all decision making levels in governance. And there's no way to facilitate this representation if we can't even agree on a state model.

And before state structures are formed, there has to be broad-based dialogue as to how unity can be forged within and among its numerous communities. Representation and participatory democracy are crucial issues for debate. Civil society and political forces need to take their task seriously and broaden their terms of debate before mapping the country's options. ●

Nimalka Fernando is a Sri Lankan attorney and founding member of Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives.

PEACE TRAIN

It was clear from the very outset that mainstreaming the Maoists wasn't going to be an easy task: for the Maoists as well as for the rest of the country.

Every conflict leaves a legacy of bad blood and scores are settled. The Northern Ireland peace process took more than a decade to get over entrenched hostilities and finally agree on power sharing this week. Sri Lanka has slipped back into war after three years of ceasefire.

Often in the past year's rollercoaster peace process we in Nepal have been pushed to the brink. Maoist negotiators used the threat of a return to war as an effective bargaining tool in negotiations. The country was sometimes held hostage and Nepal's paid a ransom for peace.

But, such was our desire to see an end to conflict, that we went along with it. Hope hinged on three factors: Indian facilitation, UN monitoring and the watchdog role of civil society. And all this had to be carefully sequenced so that neither the Maoist fighters nor the army generals felt it was a surrender.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal has had to do a precarious high-wire act: balancing the frustrations of former fighters with the need to appear like a mature mainstream politician. Of all the leaders in the Group of Eight, he has the toughest job.

As the Eight meet this week, they should be reminding themselves that this is not about just the mechanics of conducting elections anymore. It is about how to address the ethnic fragmentation threatening us in the aftermath of the insurgency.

Despite YCL guerrillas-in-civvies roughing up someone or criminalised comrades attacking a police post we must remember Dahal is the moderate in this process. We need to help him keep his hotheads in check and try to understand it when he completely contradicts himself from one day to the next.

Last week in Dang, Baburam Bhattarai was heckled by his own party members who wanted to hang on to confiscated property. Now there are grumblings within the Maoists about the Dahal-Bhattarai stewardship of the process. Those who rejoice at an impending implosion in the Maoist party have only to see what happened when the tarai factions splintered off.

The casualties of Dahal's balancing act have been the two sharp censures against the Maoists last week from OHCHR and UNMIN. By laying preconditions for the second round of verification and for continued violence and intimidation, the Maoists crossed a threshold. This could have serious repercussions for the comrades and for the peace process.

As usual when beset with internal dissent, the Maoists look for an external enemy. So it is this time with the ultimatum on republic and the reinstatement of the 'expansionist power' label on India. But most Nepal's are going to see this as rank opportunism on the part of a force that operated out of Indian territory until recently.

It is hard to see where all this is going: the Maoists have alienated just about everyone. Peaceful politics requires a certain level of maturity and tolerance. The Maoist leadership must do all it can to prevent the derailment of the peace train. This time they are its fellow passengers.



SAGAR SHRESTHA

Rocky road to republic

Koirala is stuck between royalists and his own party's republicans

There were no surprises at the four day-long conclave of the Nepali Congress district unit chiefs. With no clear directives from the central leadership on republicanism, inclusion and socialism, the district committee chairs are going back home more confused than ever.

Basically, Girija Prasad Koirala told his



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

party that procedures rather than cheap sloganeering would help establish a republic, and district presidents should go back with a positive mindset and create favourable conditions for the election. Fair enough, but no help at all to party presidents caught in the crosscurrents of republicanism and inclusion at the grassroots.

Koirala's flip-flopping on the monarchy is getting tiresome. First he came up with the idea of a ceremonial monarchy, a

position without role or responsibility. He then proclaimed from Biratnagar that Gyanendra could save the throne by abdicating, presumably in favour of his only grandson or granddaughter. His last salvo was fired from New Delhi where, as Nepal's de facto head of state, he thundered that Gyanendra should no more be called 'king'. The coup de grace was his accepting the credentials of the new Chinese ambassador. Koirala now holds the position as well as the power of head of state. So why is he so hesitant to bid adieu to the Shah Dynasty? Because he needs the pro-palace lobby.

Nepali communists have had a troubled relationship with the palace. Until the mid-80s, the palace repeatedly used them to keep kangresis in check. This climaxed with the communist boycott of the 1980 referendum. Palace strategists had succeeded in engineering the victory of the king over multiparty democracy by co-opting everyone opposed to BP Koirala. This is why the UML had no moral authority left to lead the anti-king coalition in 1990. The

Maoists also squandered away their credibility by forming an alliance with the palace against the country's imperfect but democratic governments in the 1990s. Prachanda and his cohort undermined their own case for a republic by opening negotiations with King Gyanendra.

Thus, even though the other parties swear by republicanism in public, the fate of the monarchy will ultimately be decided by the NC. Koirala knows this and wants to use it to attract pro-palace forces to his party. A desperate choice, but the NC is in dire straits in most districts and is clutching at straws.

The Madhes Uprising has severely weakened the Congress on its home turf. The NC has been the main enemy of the traditional power elite that drew its sustenance from the palace. The party has never done well in the capital even when it has the Valley's biggest political personalities on its side. The so-called Chure-Bhabar and Bhriti Madhes, populated mainly by migrants from the mid-

hills, continues to be a UML stronghold. The CPN-M remains the first choice of dalits and other marginalised groups in the hills and the tarai.

Koirala is skating on thin ice laid out by the 'international community' monarchy. But there is a limit to what Mukherji and Moriarty can do. He needs conservatives and right-wingers close to the palace as much as they need him.

This marriage of convenience between the NC and the 'ceremonial monarchy' camp seems to have been solemnised with the tacit support of the Nepal Army. The problem with all this is that Gyanendra has alienated the rank and file of the Congress to the extent that they may even defy their own president to reject any form of monarchy.

This is why Koirala goes on about 'procedure' rather than openly opposing republicanism. The standard bearer of the republican movement inside the NC, Narahari Acharya, might be getting closer to his goal after all. ●

LETTERS

SPOT ON

Kunda Dixit is right ('On your marks', #347). It's high time politicians became responsible citizens and thought twice about throwing any old political agenda at their cadres. The Maoists are behaving like bullies. Sitaula did his job well as long as it was the Maoists who were the issue. That's changed, and he needs to reconsider his position. As for grandpa, he has to show his commitment in practical terms to at least democracy, if not...

Santosh Dhungana, email

● Girija Prasad Koirala must be having the last laugh about the postponed elections. After all, it buys him time to straighten things out in his own party. Singha Darbar has been replaced by Baluwatar Darbar. Prachanda gallantly suggests that the Maoists be renamed the Unified-Communists and the kangresis Grandstanding Monarchists. We've got the world's longest interim constitution and will soon have the mother of all parliaments in our interim lawmaking body.

Surya B Prasai, email

TARAI TERROR

Ajit Tiwari's 'Terror in the tarai' (#347) was heartrending. One can only imagine how much worse the situation will become if it is not addressed promptly. Ethnic violence will destroy the harmony and dignity of the Nepali people. It's high time politicians put this on top of their priority list, instead of the time-frame to the elections to the constituent assembly. That is by no means feasible in places where the government cannot even provide security or much-needed services like post offices, municipalities, and hospitals.

Sanjeev Karmacharya, Khusibun

● I have been through various parts of the eastern tarai over the last few weeks. I grew up there, and have family members who still live there. We understand the anger of people of madhesi origin (we aren't), though it means we are sometimes at the receiving end. The thing is we've lived here for two generations, this is home, we speak the local languages and we love living here, in our diverse, colourful neighbourhoods, with all our different friends. But we believe, as do our friends, 'madhesi' and 'pahadi' alike, that none of this can continue if something is not done fast, seriously, and respectfully about the real imbalances in our society. Those who do not have as much opportunity or voice as the rest of us need to be listened to. How can we Nepalis call ourselves 'brave', 'glorious', 'warm-hearted' or any of those hyperbolic labels we love to use if we can't exhibit basic decency to our compatriots.

Name withheld, Bishalnagar

● There is a limit to the people's patience. Eventually, the people of pahadi origin will show their character by organising self-defence groups that will eliminate bandits like the JTMM, the

Tigers, and the MJF. Opportunists in the tarai are trying to convert it into another criminalised Bihar. The leaders of the MJF did not dare to oppose the policies of the erstwhile government. In fact, many were even part of the government responsible for leading our country into crisis.

The people in the government are not interested in holding the elections. Not solving the problem in the tarai gives them a perfect excuse. What they don't realise of course is that in playing these games they are merely making their own reign shorter.

Abhi, New Delhi

MAVERICK

It was wonderful to see CK Lal writing on a business personality ('Death of a maverick', State of the state, #347). Such pieces are encouraging and break the monotonous cycle of politics and dwelling on all the bad things around us. I would like to see more positive and business-centric news. I enjoyed the thought provoking article on currency pegging ('Economy's up', Economic sense), and the interview with Vijay Vaidya ('Business hasn't grown as expected'). Thanks for brightening our Friday mornings.

Prakash Sharma, email

TOGETHERNESS

Charles Haviland's 'Let's stay together' (Nepali pan, #346) is one of the best articles I've read in recent years. I hope its message reaches out and enlightens the country.

Udaya Kasaju, email

SELF-DEFENSE

I agree with M Gurung's comment that law and order in Nepal is at its lowest ebb and that no private citizen should have to resort to forming 'neighbourhood police' groups to protect their communities ('Law and order',

letters, #347). But I think it is gravely unjust to neighbourhood patrol groups to compare them to the Young Communist League. The YCL conducts itself as an omnipotent and offensive 'police force', rather than a passive defensive force, as most 'citizen's security' groups can be characterised. The league's high-handedness and arrogance ensure that the YCL deserves every critical remark directed towards it. In fact, how can we be so sure that the "decent law-abiding citizens" Gurung mentions are not compelled to resort to forming these neighbourhood police groups precisely to protect themselves from the YCL? There's a thought.

Chanda T, email

ASININE

There might not be a Deep Throat at all ('May Day! May Day!', Ass, #347). For all we know what's coming out of the palace could be information that is being intentionally leaked (for what purpose, don't ask me). Ever heard of the term 'disinformation'?

Name withheld, email

● The Ass at Backside rocks. It seems as if you are the only media outlet that can make fun of the Maoists and get away with it. If it weren't for you, I'd honestly stop reading the Nepali newspapers.

Prasanna KC, Pokhara



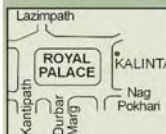
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Being European

In the next six years the EU will nearly double its aid to Nepal

May 9th is another opportunity to celebrate our collective identity as Europeans and to reaffirm the longstanding partnership between the European Union and other individual EU member states with Nepal.

A very forward-looking and positively charged speech by the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman laid the foundation stone for the European integration. The EU was created a few years later in 1957. Fifty years later, in 2007 as we celebrate our common history and values, Schuman's idea of lasting peace continues to inspire countries and peoples to set aside their disputes and embark upon dialogue.



COMMENT
Eduardo Lechuga-Jimenez

Over the years the European Union has expanded from six to 27 member states making the continent the largest economic

and political block. The integrated Europe houses approximately 450 million people and accession negotiation is already underway with two more countries—Croatia and Turkey.

With continuous enlargement, the EU now has a global reach that enables us to facilitate trade and development to support human rights, rule of law, and democracy worldwide. I am proud to say that the EU has successfully been able to take on the responsibilities that come along the increased political influence it casts globally. Integrated Europe, today, is the largest development donor in the world.



Schuman proposed that Europeans commit themselves to democracy and should solve important political and economic issues among themselves through dialogue. These are the same values the EU continues to uphold, and those values are also reflected in the aid we provide to other countries.

Even though the European Commission opened its Delegation to Nepal in March 2002, its presence in Nepal is much older. It formally established diplomatic relations in 1975 and set up its Technical Office in 1992. An EU-Nepal Co-operation Agreement has existed since June 1996. Within this cooperation framework high-level consultation the so-called 'Joint Commission' takes place between the European Commission and the Government of Nepal on bi-annual basis. The most recent EC-Nepal Joint Commission was held on 14 February 2007.

We have continuously increased our presence in Nepal in the form of increased development aid. In the next six-year cooperation period of 2007-2013, the EU will nearly double its aid to Nepal to 160 million (NRs 11 billion). The huge boost in aid to Nepal is an indication of our trust and faith in the Nepal's current process of transition to democracy and sustainable peace.

We assure a full backing to the current Nepal government and reassure our sincere support to the democratic process that will ultimately lead to lasting peace in the country. That is a reason why the EU likes to focus its assistance on the Nepal government's endeavours to improve literacy in the coming five years.

We believe in helping Nepal develop and prosper and will continue to work not only with the government but also with other leaders from civil society and the general public. We are fully committed to promote the core EU values of human rights, democracy, press freedom, and equality in Nepal with financial and moral support. ●

Eduardo Lechuga-Jimenez is Chargé d' Affaires of the Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal.

"Ideas, actions, compassion"

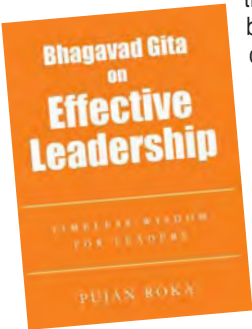


Pujan Roka grew up in Kathmandu and attended St Xavier's before heading to the US for a BA and an MBA. Award-winning editorial cartoonist and now author Roka spoke with *Nepali Times* about his book *Bhagavad Gita on Effective Leadership* (reviewed in Strictly Business).

Nepali Times: What is the one thing about leadership you distilled from the Gita?
Pujan Roka: Leadership is about inspiring and guiding others by ideas, actions, and compassion. This is what the Gita and contemporary leadership authorities say.

Why the *Bhagavad Gita* for a book on leadership?
Scholars and management thinkers are constantly re-defining leadership. A few writers have looked into ancient texts, such as Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, and spiritual figures such as Jesus, in the context of management and leadership. But no one had previously explored the Gita in the context of present-day leadership.

I did research on leadership for over three years, and examined what contemporary authorities have to say. Prominent management thinkers had not devoted much thought to the Gita, and Gita scholars had not extracted lessons for business readers. My book is therefore both on leadership, and for admirers of the Gita who are interested to read it from a different perspective.



During my research I exchanged notes with well-known management gurus Peter Senge and Marshall Goldsmith, and their positive responses motivated me further.

Why did you self-publish?
Many new and well-established writers are publishing their own books these days in the US. Self-publication has created a brand new publishing model which gives control to the writers instead of the publishers.

I found no publisher who could represent the genre that is demanded by my book. There are publishers that specialise in either business or spirituality but there are none that specialise in handling both in a cohesive way.

Given these constraints, self-publishing has worked very well for me. I have a worldwide distribution through retailers like Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and major wholesalers like Ingram. I have been able to channel most of the proceeds to Save the Children programs.

University Grants Commission

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Only candidates with adequate competency and having excellent communication skill in Nepali and English are requested to apply. Women and Dalits are encouraged to apply.

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Lordly lessons

The Gita can teach us about leadership

Business managers normally do not see the Gita as a how-to guide for sorting out modern-day leadership issues.

That's because, at it simplest, the Gita is an extended conversation between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kuruchettra. The warrior Arjuna is



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

hesitant about taking part in a war that requires him to kill his own cousins, most of whom are baying for his blood. Krishna, Arjuna's friend and charioteer, dispels this confusion by teaching Arjuna how fighting this righteous war amounts to fulfilling earthly duties. Arjuna's actions in the battlefield, Krishna instructs him, are a sliver of a larger truth about the nature of the universe and man's place in it.

In *Bhagavad Gita on Effective Leadership*, Pujan Roka applies Krishna's instructions to effective leadership practices. Roka reinforces those lessons with examples drawn from American settings. Published last year, this 172-page book carries an approving blurb from the dean of the Kellogg School of Management. Last October, it was cited by *Businessweek* in an article entitled 'Karma Capitalism', which asked whether

the Gita had replaced Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* as "the hip new ancient Eastern management text" in boardrooms and classrooms.

The book's 18 chapters are written in easy-to-follow language. Each chapter details traits a leader should possess. Most are the usual leadership fare: leaders must be self-aware; they must have the ability to embrace challenges; they must have the desire to leave a legacy; they must have an ability to influence others; they must have a big-picture sense of how what they do is connected to everything else, and so on.

To this mix, Roka's makes two unique contributions. First, he calls on leaders to derive spiritual nourishment by having faith in a higher authority. Second, he asks them to achieve success by engaging in meditation, practicing sacrifice, and selfless giving, and adopting a *sattvic* mindset that is open to hard work without being worried about the results.

Roka puts lessons from the Gita in today's business context by weaving what Krishna says to Arjuna with vignettes of stories drawn from the lives of Gandhi, Mandela, Martin Luther King or former IBM head Louis Gerstner, and from baseball and basketball. I was intrigued, for instance, by the parallels he draws between Krishna's showing his *virat rupa*, or universal form, and an effective leader's

displaying holistic vision. My quibbles are small and large. The book could have been edited further to cut down on repetitions. And in terms of helping readers exercise leadership traits, the book could have taken a more pragmatic how-to approach. For instance, for any leadership action, it gives the Gita's version. It then gives examples of similar actions taken by contemporary leaders. What it doesn't do is help ordinary readers understand how they too can start transforming what they 'know' about leadership into how they 'do' leadership in everyday situations.

But this problem is common to most leadership volumes, whose authors seem to forget that their readers are not Gandhi, Mandela, or Arjuna, but ordinary mortals who struggle daily with both self-discipline and self-leadership.

Perhaps in times ahead, as neuroscience, which has become the newest tool of leadership scholars, makes further advances in understanding how the human brain works, we will learn more about how to turn ancient wisdom into habits that we can call our own. Until then, regardless of whether one has read the Gita, this book serves as one handy reference for managers to view their short-term decisions with a long-term life-fulfilling horizon. ●

NIC and IFC

Nepal Industrial and Commercial Bank has become the first Nepali bank to qualify for a line of credit with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) under its Global Trade Finance Program. NIC, which has a \$2 million credit line with IFC, can now have its international letters of credit and guarantees confirmed by the corporation, and will be associated with hundreds of correspondent banks around the world.

BoK expands

A new Bank of Kathmandu branch in Itahari will serve customers from Saptari, Siraha, Dhankuta, Sunsari and Morang. In the capital, customers can now also get cash in Shree Krishna Tower, New Baneshwor from Bank of Kathmandu's new ATM. BoK, established in 1995, and now has 14 branches and 48 ATMs all over the country.



New look

The Bajaj Discover DTSi sports a new look with improved head- and rearlights, and black metallic colour. The Discover's DTSi power engine is exclusive to Bajaj bikes while the ExhaustEC provides a mileage of 101km per litre. The Discover is Nepal's highest selling bike in the 125cc category and now comes with a two-year warranty and five years of free servicing. Financing for the Discover is handled by the Teku branch of Everest Bank.

Springwood

Surya Nepal's latest venture, the Springwood line of clothing, is being launched in Kathmandu after a successful trial run in Pokhara. The range includes shirts (Rs 450-750) and trousers (Rs 650-750) for office wear, casual wear, and 'college wear' made from cotton, polyester cotton, cotton lycra, and cotton spandex. Surya Nepal also distributes the John Players brand of men's clothing.



Treat



Asian Thai Foods has launched a new instant noodle brand, Treat, with a scheme Treat Malamaal Daily, through which customers can win cash prizes of Rs 10,001 everyday. Treat costs Rs 10 per packet for vegetarian and non-vegetarian flavours. Asian Thai Foods manufactures other instant noodles too, including Rumpum, 2PM, and Mama.

Face of the month

The first winner of Fem Fairness Bleach's Fem Face of the Month campaign is Anchal Pradhan from Dhapakhel, Lalitpur. Face of the Month is a monthly beauty contest in which participants drop off their photos, names, and addresses, at Bakery Cafés, Bluebird Departmental Stores, Jai Nepal and Kumari Cinema Halls, Digi Plus, and Eden at Kathmandu Mall. The prizes are Haier electronic goods and a lifesize photo by Digi Plus.



Howzzat

Dipendra Lama of Nepalganj and Safala Thapa of Lalitpur have won the Lifebuoy Howzzat quiz contest. There were 1,640 entries from all over Nepal, of which 1,060 had all-correct answers. The winners were chosen by lucky draw. Dipendra Lama gets Rs 50,000 as first prize, and runner-up Safala Thapa receives Rs 25,000. Lifebuoy soap is manufactured by Unilever Nepal.

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Afraid of the royal shadow

Letter to the editor in Kantipur, 6 May

कान्तिपुर

On May Day at the Khula Manch, Prachanda delivered a fiery speech. In summary, he warned that if parliament didn't declare Nepal a republic his party would launch a typhoon of protests from the streets, parliament, and the cantonments. Then Matrika Yadav threatened not to allow cabinet meetings to go ahead. Strong words were received by strong applause from a sympathetic crowd.

The same day, Lena Sundh, representative of the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued a statement in which she accused the Maoists of not living up to their commitment to allow internally displaced people to return to their homes and returning property seized during the conflict. That evening the UN secretary general's special representative Ian Martin warned the Maoists not to put conditions ahead of the second phase of the verification of the fighters in the cantonments. Since then there have been attacks on a police post in Banke, and abductions for ransom.

The question arises: why is Prachanda flogging the dead horse of monarchy? Shouldn't this country's priority be the establishment of true peace? What the Maoists couldn't win with 11 years of armed struggle was achieved through 19 days of street protests. This is proof that the people support non-violent struggle and that this path is more effective in fighting for democracy. Prachanda and his comrades

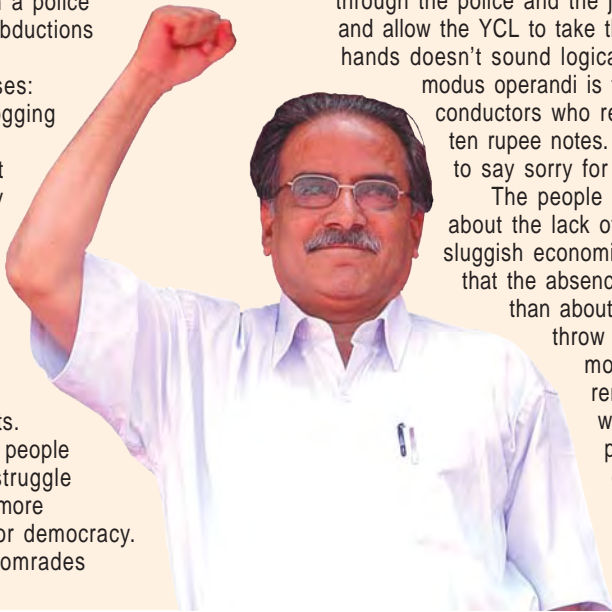
should have understood that by now.

He must realise that most Nepalis are watching to see if the CPN-M behaves like a political party that it is supposed to be. After all, it is now part of the government and interim parliament. The people aren't so scared of the dead horse of the monarchy that they want to throw it into the river. There are some who think the monarchy has not been weakened, that it may get new energy and destabilise the state. But that shows a lack a self-confidence. Getting spooked by the ghost of a monarchy only proves how insecure we are. After all, the people brought down a king who had the entire strength of state security behind him.

So why, at a time when your own party cadre aren't listening to your guidelines, get into a frenzy when the king goes to pray at a temple? Prachandaji: the people are against all forms of totalitarianism. They will not digest one party trying to force its writ on all others. Your party is already in government. Together with the other parties, you are responsible for the rule of law through the police and the judiciary. To ignore that and allow the YCL to take the law into its own hands doesn't sound logical, comrade. The YCL's modus operandi is to beat up bus conductors who refuse to take damaged ten rupee notes. How often do you want to say sorry for this kind of behaviour?

The people are much more worried about the lack of development, sluggish economic growth, and the fact that the absence of war is not peace than about whether or not we throw away the corpse of monarchy. Just remember, the people are watching your performance and evaluating your every move.

Pushpa Pokhrel, Kathmandu



KIRAN PANDAY

NC fights

Naya Patrika, 10 May

वर्या

Many senior leaders inside Nepali Congress don't speak to each other. The fighting is serious, and in many cases very physical.

Sujata Koirala is famous for yelling when things don't go her way. Her dislike for Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula is common knowledge. Her relationship with Arjun Narsingh KC is also going downhill. KC has been heard saying Sujata is in power only because of her father. Sujata calls KC a 'mandale'.

Meanwhile Sitaula and Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat are not on talking terms because Sitaula replaced Mahat as the NC spokesperson. They never look at each other in meetings and at a recent central committee meeting started calling each other names. There's coldness between Sitaula and Chakra Prasad Bastola's too. Sitaula became district chairman of Jhapa after his contribution to the 1990 People's Movement, defeating the candidate supported by Bastola in 1992 elections. Sitaula, who until then was close to Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganesh Man Singh, went over to Girija Prasad Koirala's camp, and insiders say Bastola felt slighted. The relationship went sour and they don't even greet each other.

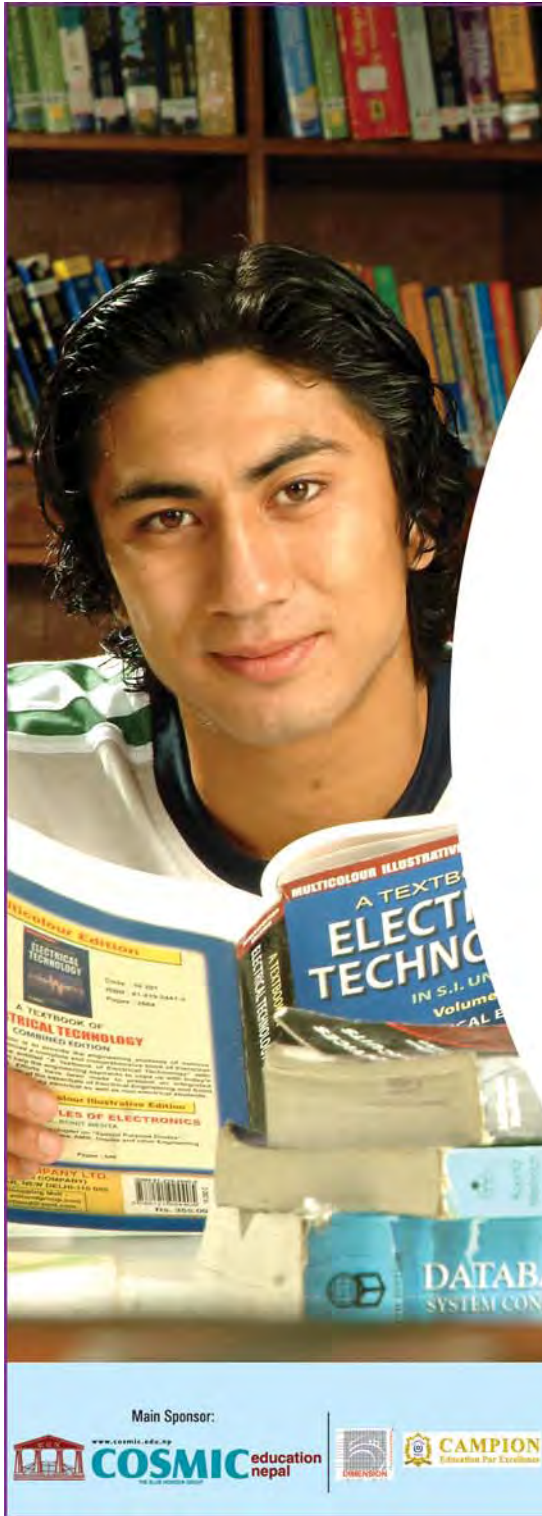
Govinda Raj Joshi and Ram Chandra Poudel, both from Tanahun, are bitter enemies. They

have different cliques in the central committee and in their wards. Joshi insisted that that there is no bitterness between them and that their dealings are cordial. Poudel was close to KP Bhattarai, which is why Koirala propped up Joshi as a competitor. When the NC was splitting, Poudel had almost decided to join Deuba's faction, but then he defeated Joshi in the NC central committee elections and decided to stay on.

The relationship between Joshi and Sushil Koirala, never really good, has hit a new low as Joshi is becoming close to Sujata Koirala. Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat hates Arjun KC and their animosity often puts the prime minister in a tight spot.

Meanwhile, Khum Bahadur Khadka, Baldeb Sharma Majgaiya, and Deepak Giri have had a cold war for over a decade. The NC in Kaski is divided into three groups, lead by former speaker Taranath Ranabhat, Mahadeb Gurung, and Sukra Raj Shastri. Before Jana Andolan II, Shastri and Gurung had formed an alliance against Ranabhat. They called him a royalist and did not allow him to return to his district. They still do not accept Ranabhat as an NC representative and he still cannot go back to Kaski to visit his family.


When Nona Koirala was alive, she and Shailaja Acharya agreed that Sujata was incompetent. Acharya is said to have stopped



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Sujata from contesting for a central committee position. Nona has died and Acharya tries to keep away from politics due to her own weak health. This has made Sujata stronger and she is understood to be trying to form alliances with Shekhar and Sashank Koirala—who, apparently, hate each other.

Thieving ways

Ghatana ra bichar, 9-15 May

The government needs to give out another Rs 440 million, but wants to wait until the Maoists return private property seized from citizens . The reluctance also stems from the popular sentiment

that is running high against the Maoists' lack of transparency about their expenditure of the one billion rupees already given to them for the management of their army and cantonments. The horrible state of the cantonments housing the fighters, the increasing pressure to return property, and the strain on the peace process due to these factors puts the Maoist leadership in a tight spot. Unless it reins in the YCL and control its actions, assists in the process of holding elections to the constituent assembly, and returns captured property, the atmosphere around the country will remain negative. There is no official record of

whose property the Maoists have confiscated during their 10 year-long, and the value of all the seized property, but the Nepali Congress central office has records of 129 politicians and party activists who have had property taken away from them. On the list are: general secretary Kul Bahadur Gurung (Ilam), party leader Khum Bahadur Khadka (Dang), and central party members Binay Dhoj Chand (Bardiya), Maheswor Prasad Singh (Dhanusa-Mahottari), Gopal Raj Pahadi (Sankhuwasabha), Surendra Prasad Chaudhari (Parsa), Purshottam Basnet (Solukhumbu), Diwakar Gautam (Pyuthan), Ananda Prasad Dhungana (Dhanusa).



Left
Election preparations? Electoral constituencies?
Peace and security? Voter lists? Citizenship
distribution? Federal structure?
Girija Prasad Koirala: “I don’t know! I don’t now!”

Right
What about 21 June?
Girija Prasad Koirala: “I know, the elections
have to happen at any cost! Only the dates
will change!!”

नेपाल Nepal, 6 May

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ People who are scared by the popularity of the Young Communist League and who envy their creativity are accusing the YCL of being an illegitimate organisation.” ”

CPN-M chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal in an interview with *Naya Patrika*, 9 May

SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

“Anything is possible if the left parties unite”

Interview with Maoist leader Mohan Baidya in *Budhabar*, 9 May

बुधवार

Why did this talk about not returning the property seized during the ‘people’s war’ start after you entered government?

We believe that we should first develop a long-term strategy for land distribution. Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal is clear when he says that if land has been seized unfairly, it needs to go back to the [original] owner. But if they are feudal, it will not. The eight parties need to sit together to form policies on land reform, and new laws can be made through interim legislature. There will be no redistribution or return until these issues are settled. We believe in giving land to the poor, and we have to be careful that seized property does not go back to the rich again.



KIRAN PANDAY

Discussions about left party unification have pushed back the elections to the constituent assembly and prevented eight-party meetings.

If Girija (sic) and Deuba (sic) can talk about unification, why can't we talk about a unified left? The left parties have a majority in parliament and feel that a united left will make the alliance stronger, though we can, of course, face the Nepali Congress as an independent entity. The NC is trying hard to disrupt the momentum we have created in our unification [plans].

What do you hope a united left will achieve?

Unity until the elections to the constituent assembly is most important, so we can work for equality and socialism. Right now, a republic is not possible either, without left party unification. Even the capitalists talk about a republic, but the NC is so influenced by foreign capitalist forces, that it refuses to join the discussion. The left parties have contributed to the success of the two People's Movements, and in forming the 12-point agreement. Together, the left parties can fight foreign interference and the royalist forces together. Anything is possible if the left parties unite. Due to ideological and political differences with the CPN-UML there can be no immediate unification with them, but we could settle our differences through discussion.

Your party’s central committee meeting also decided to talk about nationalism.

Our political agendas have been hampered because of international interference. Look at what the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum is doing in the tarai, listen to [US ambassador] Moriarty’s speeches—it’s clear foreign forces do not want Nepal to be a republic. Who would call Nepal independent with all this interference? Nepal is being Sikkimised.





Trikaal's newest offering of ethnic electronic music hits some high notes

The third ear

PRANAYA SJB RANA

Trikaal's latest offering, Trikaal 3: Global Waves, lives up to its name. The album's nine ethnic electronic tracks are lush with the sounds of the Australian didgeridoo, the African djembe, the south Asian flute and sarangi, and the guitar. The record starts off with the soft Shanti River, a tribute to the river of peace. Ani Choying Dolma's soft, otherworldly Buddhist chant slowly gives way to Sujay Shrestha's acoustic strumming. Tabla maestro Navaraj Gurung deals out a steady beat

and the tune lifts off with his staccato vocals. Ani Choying's ethereal voice and Santosh Shrestha's ishraj give this track moments of transcendence. The Ani is back again on track four, Jewels of Heaven, which builds slowly, with Ani Choying and Navaraj expertly playing off each others' vocals. It doesn't actually reach a peak, though, which makes for somewhat unsatisfying listening.

The album's standout track is Colours of East-West, which stars Bijaya Vaidya, Sur Sudha's virtuoso sitar player riffing with Sujay's guitar, against a backdrop

of tabla and shaker. Rajendra Karna adds a sublime udo.

Trikaal Tantriks, a shortened version of Trikaal's most famous song, a 30 minute epic from Trikaal II, is instantly recognisable, particularly Nikhil Tuladhar's strong djembe and Shyam Nepali's slippery sarangi.

Jam Freak Street is Trikaal's nod to cheekiness. It starts out instantly recognisable as an interpretation of DJ Raju's phenomenally successful remix of Chyangba Hoi Chyangba. By the end, though, you're transported someplace rather different from the teenybopper discos and

wedding parties evoked by the original.

The album closes with Trikaal Air, eight minutes of classic ethnic-influenced electronic dance music composed by didgeridoo player Salil Kanika and Navaraj Gurung. There are hints of Asian underground sounds, Thievery Corporation, and the odd blips of a speedy Mad Professor, but the end result is a sound unto itself. The electronic beats, didgeridoo, tabla, and ishraj almost don't work, but various elements of surprise, like the harmonica cameo by Girish Subedi of the rock band Mukut, the scatting, and the densely textured sound come together after all. Trikaal Air refers to the earlier tracks and sounds like an homage to the entire album.

With this album, Trikaal manage, in a small way, to transcend time, as they promise in their closing track, fusing the ethnic past with the electronic present and future. "Our music

transcends our identities," says Navaraj. "Trikaal is not a band. It has no permanent members, we are just musicians performing under a common banner. Any of us may leave, but Trikaal will go on," he says.

This isn't a perfect album, to be sure—the transitions between the different styles suggested by the various instruments can be choppy. But what Trikaal do manage is to be cosmopolitan while remaining Nepali in essence. ●



Trikaal 3: Global Waves is available through SAC Music International, www.sacmusicnepal.com.

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YUKO MASKAY

The Kathmandu Chorale's annual spring concert is upon us, and promises to be more diverse than ever.

The ensemble performances are of madrigals, arias, Nepali folk songs, jazz, rock 'n roll, and gospel tunes. The instruments being played include the clarinet, trumpet, French horn, viola, double bass, piano, keyboard, violin, flute, and madal. The chorus is a culturally diverse group of Nepalis, expats, musicians, amateurs, missionaries, and students—all there for the love of music, and to raise money for a worthy cause.

Bryan Varenkamp, a Texas linguist who has been residing on and off in Nepal since 1985 and conducting the chorus for the past five years, says this performance will be a lot more "colourful" than last year's winter concert. "We have an ensemble of music spanning many eras, from the 1300s to songs that were popular two years ago," he explains.



"We will also perform a medley of songs from The Phantom of the Opera."

The challenge in song selection is that, historically, choral singing is so closely associated with the church, which is not a connection the

chorale necessarily wants to push. They try therefore to choose secular music that everyone will be interested in.

Varenkamp says the variety of music is also a reflection of the diversity of the singers—some are full-fledged musicians while others cannot read music. Suman Chitrakar, who was introduced to the chorale by his music teacher at Kathmandu University, says it's a great chance to explore and develop his talent. "I'm really learning to use my vocal chords," he says.

The Kathmandu Chorale, which turns 15 this year, was started by American native Kareen Messerschmidt, who wanted to share her passion for music—for a charitable purpose. "The Kathmandu Chorale from its early years has always been about giving back," she says.

Last year the chorale attracted 800 listeners and raised Rs 110,000 through donations. This year, the two organisations that will receive donations are the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre and Namaste Children Nepal, which provides orphans and other children food, education, and healthcare. ●

The Kathmandu Chorale Spring Concert is on 19 May at 3.30 PM and 6 PM at The British School Auditorium in Jhamsikhel, Patan. Admission is free but donations are welcome. For more information contact Bryan Varenkamp at 9841218610.

A new conservatory aims for better jazz in the city

Future sounds

RAHUL GIRI

Kathmandu's first Jazzmandu in 2001 deserved the hype. The musicians, from Nepal and around the world, were excellent, and the atmosphere was energetic.

Six years later, the 'Kathmandu's phenomenal jazz scene' line is starting to sound like a bromide, in part because it's not entirely true. The sounds haven't really matured—there's still a lot of noodling, rock-tinged sounds, and staid chords that walk a fine line between clichéd and standard. Cadenza, which regularly expanded its range of styles, often goes into hibernation.

Sure, you can catch live shows in a number of clubs and bars by bands such as Inner Groove, the JCS quartet, and Cadenza, but the offerings can get predictable. Stupa's Yuvaraj Chhetri argues that that is because "jazz is an acquired taste," and that audiences in Nepal need some time before they can be hit with truly experimental sounds.

That attitude, ever-so-slightly patronising as it is, is the first line of reasoning most musicians we spoke with trotted out. But push the question, and you see another real barrier to regular, challenging performances—the lack of trained musicians exposed to a variety of sophisticated music. Jigme Sherpa of the JCS quartet says this is why it is unreasonable to expect jazz to develop any faster in Kathmandu.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Mariano Abello, who plays with Cadenza and Stupa says he was shocked to find out that many talented jazz musicians here learn music by repeatedly listening to CDs and then imitating what they hear. Few would take the line that you absolutely cannot be a good jazz musician without formal training, but to raise the overall standard of performance and understanding of music, which in turn guides innovation, it's important to have some kind of training. Abello likens not having basic knowledge of music theory to knowing how to speak, but not being able to read or write.

This is why Abello and Nirakar Yakhumba of Stupa and 1974AD are setting up the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, to provide professional music education for students at all levels. The school, which will be located in Gyanodaya College in Jhamsikhel, will contain five practice rooms, two combo rooms, a percussion room, a classroom and a 200-seater auditorium. There will be state-of-the-art recording facilities and Yamaha instruments. The largely expat faculty will be chosen for their teaching and performing experiences. Lessons will focus on music theory, ear training, improvisation classes, arranging, and composition.

The school is slated to open in September this year. The promoters believe there is enough raw talent here. "In four years we will have Nepali musicians who can perform on the international circuit," says Yakhumba. The musicians in Kathmandu's closely knit jazz community are holding their breath. So are audiences. ●

For more information on the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, go to www.katjazz.com.

Stupa performs at Moksh on Tuesdays and Fridays, Inner Groove at Dwarika's on Wednesdays, JCS at Jazz Upstairs on Tuesdays and at Full Moon on Thursdays, and Cadenza at Jazz Upstairs Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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Young Clueless League

The YCL can't give up its old habits and isn't ready for its new role

While their Maoist mentors warm their bottoms on ministerial seats, the Young Communist League is neither influenced by reason, intimidated by threats of police raids, nor worried by the damage it is inflicting on its mother party. Everybody, including Good Guy Ian Martin and his crowd of bluecoats, is helpless.

But if you were a neutralised Maoist conscript looking for ways to start a new life, would you rather join a sexily named political outfit and brandish power in Kathmandu, or go back to your village to sow turnips?

By offering its young cadres raw clout to rule the streets, the Maoist leadership has craftily brought together ex-guerrillas under a political umbrella. But if the YCL's parental harness is not tightened, its freelancers and warlords can run amok in the countryside. Signs of this are already visible.

YCL brand-building can't be done just by staging exhibitions of smuggled computers at Tundikhel. Recently, they nabbed some burglars and delivered summary justice. The YCL also helped track down the culprits who leaked SLC question papers in Bhaktapur, and as we go to press, are helping direct traffic in Kathmandu and protecting tourists from touts at the airport. Yet, the YCL hasn't been able to win the public trust in the capital.

One reason is that Kathmandu's vocal natives have always been scornful of outsiders. The customary wisdom among 'Manduites' is that migrants are a strain on capital's resources and they contribute to traffic congestion and the growth of slums.

Nepalis are much more sympathetic to the police force. Underpaid and corrupt they may be, but look at the way we are clamouring to get their posts re-established all over the country. Forget the YCL, we want our loved and loathed cops back on the beat.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

CLEANING UP THE ACT: YCL members gain some sympathy through their street cleaning efforts, but it isn't enough.

The YCL is not going to become extinct anytime soon and no state apparatus is able to tame them. They are not giving up on extortion and bullying because that is the only lifestyle to which they are accustomed. One way to tame them is to train them in various law-enforcement efforts. The fellows in red aprons seem to be pretty good at traffic management. A week to bring them up to speed, and they could augment Kathmandu's traffic police which is overstretched trying to manage an unmanageable situation.

Or maybe our INGO friends could start hiring them as security guards. Neighbourhoods could pay the YCL to do anti-crime patrols. Civil society has lofty plans about security sector reform which so far has been a lot of hot air. But not a single one of them seems to be offering anything like employment or genuine opportunities to these ex-warriors to fall back on.

Re-integrating the YCL into a society sceptical of their methods will not be easy. The media hounds them as if they are sworn enemies of the state. Businesses see them as extortionists. It is clear that the going is getting tough for the YCL with plenty of testosterone but not much to do. How many games of volleyball can you play in a day?

Might it be the law of the jungle, but now they are out in the open the YCL needs to invest a little more in public relations. There is a danger that we will just be replacing one band of thugs with another. The League's criminal justice system could degenerate into gangland violence.

Instead of playing cops and robbers, the YCL is better off listening to the genuine grievances of the people. When they do, they should try not to run foul of the government. After all, their parent is part of the government now. ●



On the Lam

Fleeing the politicisation of everything

Living in Interesting Times takes its toll on us all, even insensitive types like the Hand get worn down by the relentless flow of bad news and nagging uncertainty as to what comes next.

Reading the morning papers is often enough to skew the day irreparably, while staying one step ahead of marauding



MOVING TARGET
Foreign Hand

demonstrators and wildcat strikes seems like a full-time job. By increasing stress levels in an already hectic life, political instability undermines mental stability and peace of mind, especially when the potential for chaos and carnage looms large.

Any hopes that the signatories of the historic peace treaty weren't lying, and their signatures actually meant peace, are now dashed as the New Nepal proves to be less stable and more unpredictable than the old. Just trying to keep track of the empowerment of everybody and politicisation of everything all at once can leave one bewildered and exhausted.

All this makes leaving the country more attractive than ever, and sticking around a potential health hazard.

The Hand has identified several syndromes to look out for and strongly suggests fleeing should they appear.

Rhetoric Fatigue: Over-exposure to speeches, threats and ideological drivel can lead to irritability, sleep loss, and delirium. The victim feels harangued and bullied into towing the party line by everyone he meets, while suspecting friends and family are actually undercover politicians out to ruin his life.

Obsessive Analysis Disorder: Reading between the lines of every available newspaper becomes compulsive and time consuming. Symptoms include stuffing pockets with news clippings to show cabdrivers and buttonholing strangers for their opinions on current events. Nervous twitches may occur at the sound of Radio Nepal's hourly beep and when passing newsstands.

Betrayal Rage: Symptoms include cursing out authority figures on street corners and throwing objects at the television. Sufferers feel tricked and manipulated by unseen forces for unknown, nefarious purposes.

Chronic Lassitude: not wanting to get out of bed in the morning is a primary symptom, accompanied by an overwhelming sense of resignation that whatever you produce will be nationalised and we'll all end up in re-education camps anyways, so why bother?

Upon recognising several of these symptoms recently, the Hand fled abroad for a cure. The whole world feels like a spa after

this place, and it came as a huge relief to confirm that there is, in fact, life beyond bad politics.

Getting away is good—just ask the millions of Nepalis who have already left and unlike the Hand, aren't coming back anytime soon. While the politicians squabble and undermine each other, the economy stagnates, filling outbound flights with young men desperate to work for minimum wage. More discretely, developed countries select the best educated and most qualified from among the mobs of visa applicants, fuelling the downward spiral. There is no blame in anyone searching elsewhere for a better harvest, but the longer this brain drain continues the worse off Nepal ends up.

The Hand fondly recalls a bygone era when politics played a marginal role in most people's lives, the economy functioned normally, and everyone was allowed to go about their lives without hindrance. No extortion/donations, no angry rabble snarling traffic, no kamikaze trade unionism, and much less posturing to the backbeat of menacing rhetoric. This freedom from political stress and interference that is taken for granted in most countries would be highly beneficial here after so much politicisation, and the very least we should demand from our rulers is to be left to our own devices. Perhaps that's all it would take to make fleeing less appealing and give Nepal the chance for a decent future. ●



Vacancy – Business Manager

COMPANY PROFILE

Himal Southasian is Southasia's first and only regional magazine. It is a review magazine published from Kathmandu. Through its print and online editions (www.himalmag.com), Himal provides in-depth analysis and commentary on key issues of Southasia, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet.

Himal Southasian is looking for Business Manager to direct our expanding sales, distribution and marketing networks throughout Southasia. Applicants must be interested in coming up with and overseeing innovative strategies to reach a region-wide market.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Sales & Marketing for Himal Southasian in Nepal as well as Southasia
- Business Development to expand the reach of HSA by increasing subscriptions in places other than Southasia
- Expand distribution of HSA outside of Nepal, either through direct distribution or subscription
- Responsible for ad revenue generation from Nepal as well as international coordination of operational activities such as vendor development, distribution network and supply chain
- Manage day-to-day activities of the office

DESIRED PROFILE

- MBA with 4-5 years work experience
- Preferably 1-2 years working experience in an international set-up
- Knowledge and experience in advertising and magazine publication
- Good communication skills
- Fluency in English (written & spoken) is a must
- Willingness to travel outside Nepal

The above profile is Kathmandu based.

Application Process:

Send in your CV to komalm@himalmag.com
Last date of application: 20 May 2007
Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview.

Replacement population

Fears of a second wave of Bhutani refugees in the making

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

Some Bhutani refugees in the UN-run camps in Jhapa and Morang are readying to leave for new homes in the US and Canada. But refugee leaders are worried about a possible second round of arrivals from Bhutan.

Over 80,000 Bhutanis were not allowed to vote in the recent mock elections held ahead of the country's first parliamentary elections next year. Most were Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas termed 'foreign nationals' in last year's census.

Bhutan refugee and democracy movement leader Tek Nath Rijal who sees a humanitarian crisis in the making. Rijal recently spoke to Bhutani national assembly members and village block heads, who told him that the mock voting was another reminder to Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas that they are not 'real' Bhutanis.

"They said that during the registration for mock voting, Nepali-speaking Bhutanis were told in a humiliating manner that they too now had a chance to settle in countries like the US, just like the Bhutani refugees in Nepal," Rijal said. "They also told me they were threatened repeatedly that it was time for them to decide about resettling elsewhere."

Another refugee leader told us that "Nepali speakers in southern Bhutan are being accused of having relatives in the refugee camps in Nepal and indulging in politics." They also



COMING AND GOING: These Bhutani refugee camps in Jhapa may remain crowded despite third country resettlement.

ANUP KAPHL

report being constantly told that their names would not be included in the voters' list and the census.

Rijal says the village heads whose constituencies were not included in voters' registration counted the number of Nepali speakers excluded from the mock voting. "They found that the number is close to 80,000."

Bhutan officials deny this. Bhutan's chief election commissioner Kunjang Wangdi says refugee leaders in Nepal are spreading propaganda. "It is irresponsible on their part to do this. The royal government's

policy is of non-discrimination."

He did however indicate that some southern Bhutanis of Nepali origin were not allowed to vote in the mock polls last month. "If they did not have valid documents, only then it must have been so. As long as you are a citizen, there is no problem."

Wangdi could not give us an exact number of Bhutanis who are not on the voters' list. "We are still in the process of voter registration; it is difficult for me to say anything until that is completed."

Refugee leaders believe the 'non-Bhutanis' figure stands at

around 82,000, 13 percent of Bhutan's present population. This figure is the difference between those counted as Bhutani citizens and the total population (635,000) as enumerated by Bhutan's Population and Census Commission in 2005. Refugee sources say that last year's census and the non-registration of voters this year, are indications that over 80,000 Nepali speakers in southern Bhutan are in the process of being made stateless.

One leader said, "All might not be made refugees at one go,

like in the late '80s but it will happen in several phases, and Nepal will again have to bear the consequences."

The majority of Bhutani refugees living in the camps in east Nepal say they were forcibly evicted from Bhutan in the early 1990s. Thimphu has consistently termed the now over 105,000 Lhotsampa refugees illegal immigrants.

The joint refugee verification process carried out by Nepal and Bhutan has been through 16 rounds of ministerial level meetings and is regularly disrupted by disputes. ●

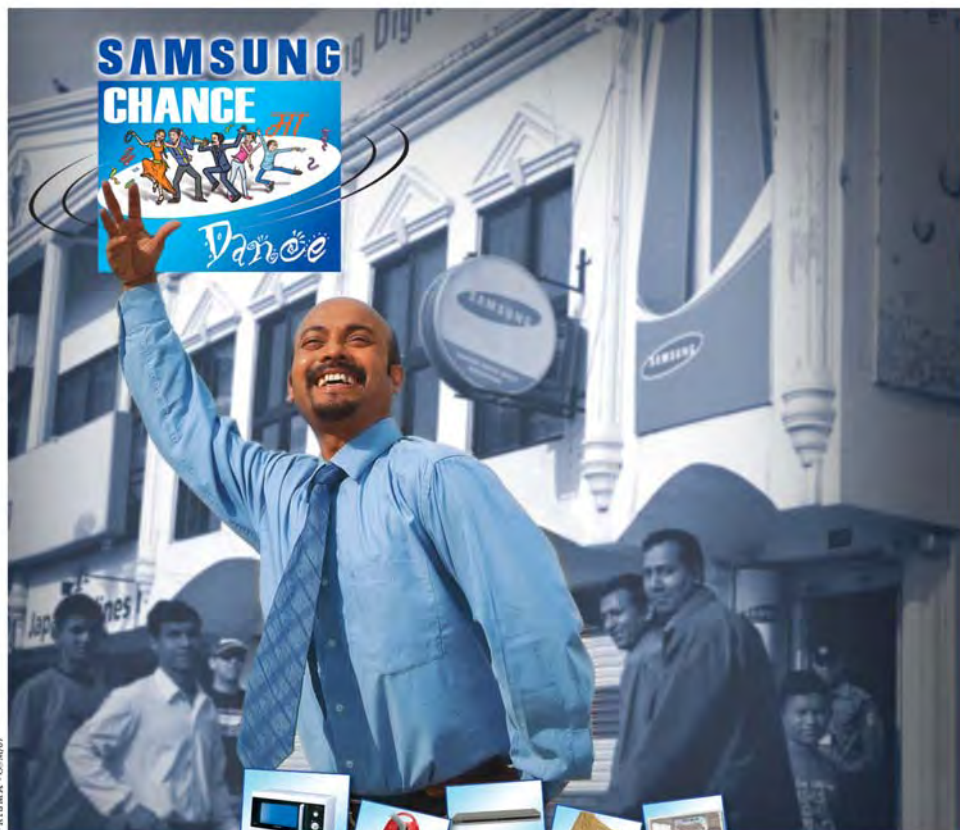
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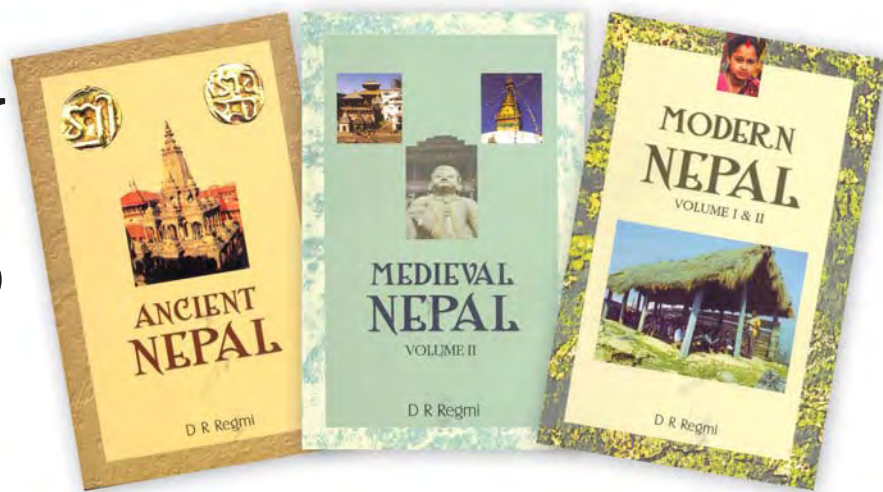
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Ancient history for modern times

A welcome re-issue of the classic, if dated, work of historian Dilli Raman Regmi



Dilli Raman Regmi's massive history of Nepal from antiquity up to 1814 is itself of historic importance. Regmi was the first scholar to explore in elaborate detail the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Nepal in antiquity and medieval times and



REVIEW
TR Vaidya

help make the case for Nepal as an independent entity. Nepal scholars and enthusiasts will be pleased to

know that New Delhi-based publishers Rupa & Co, in association with the Dr Dilli Raman Regmi Foundation in Kathmandu, have re-issued this seminal work in four parts—*Ancient Nepal*, *Medieval Nepal Vols I and II*, *Modern Nepal Vols I and II*. The reprint rolls

the four volumes of *Medieval Nepal* into two volumes and the two of *Modern Nepal* into one.

Nepal's changing political scenario has affected interpretive and analytical approaches to history. After the fall of Rana rule in 1951 local and foreign scholars started undertaking exploratory and analytical research on Nepal's history. Today, historians can write frankly without fear of censorship or retribution and there are now new authoritative scholarly texts. But first there was DR Regmi.

Regmi started writing about Nepali history, politics, and economics in 1942. Most of his books were published by Firma KL Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta.

Ancient Nepal was first published in 1960 and enlarged in 1969. The author's meticulous research results in a political history of the Licchavi period's kings, polity, economy, and foreign policy, and society, and analytical descriptions of the culture, art, architecture, and sculpture of the time. Regmi's assessment of the importance and utility of various source materials connected with this period of Nepal's history remains valuable.

The two volumes of *Medieval Nepal* present a short history of the kingdoms of the time covering the areas including and around present-day Nepal. Regmi details the Khasa Malla kingdom extending from Garhwal (in present-day India) in the west, to the Trisuli in the east, Manasarovar and Taklakhar area (in present-day Tibet) in the north, and the tarai in the south.

The Karnata kingdom with Simroangarch as capital extended from the Mahabharat range in the north, to Bodh Gaya and the Ganga in the south, the Gandaki in the west, and the Kosi in the east. Also covered are the *baise* principalities in the Karnali basin area, the *chaubise* in the Gandaki basin area, and the three Sena kingdoms of the eastern Nepal. Finally, there are the three Malla kingdoms that ruled from the three towns of Kathmandu Valley from the Trisuli in the west, the Dudh Kosi in the east, Kuti and Kerong (present-day Tibet) in the north, and to the Mahabharat range in the south.

Regmi writes in detail about the genealogical political history of the Malla dynasty of the

Nepal Mandala and presents the first comprehensive assessment of their economic, administrative, socio-cultural, and artistic systems. Regmi's work is critiqued as Kathmandu Valley-centric, a leaning he would not deny. He believed that the Valley, the original 'Nepal', was "the centre of learning" in medieval times.

In 1961 Regmi wrote a brief volume on early modern Nepal, based on contemporary epigraphic evidence. Fourteen years later, he published the two volumes of *Modern Nepal*, covering political history up to 1814 with detailed explanations, exhaustive information, and comprehensive analytical assessments of specific events. The re-issue contains new information and analysis. The revised volumes bear testimony to Regmi's extensive research, but do not contain his trademark analysis of the social, economic, administrative, and cultural aspects of the era.

Nepal's history was, until DR Regmi, written and interpreted by foreign scholars in terms of it being a small country sandwiched between two massive ones. In his histories, Regmi makes a strong case to counter that perception.

Regmi's academic contributions, in particular, his history books suffer from certain limitations. Since he was not an epigraphist, he had to depend upon the findings and interpretations of others. At the time that he was writing, there had been very limited archaeological excavations and explorations carried out to interpret Nepal's history. Regmi's political career has had positive and negative influences on his scholarly work. From the present day perspective, some of his views can seem obsolete or erroneous. Yet, it remains rewarding to consult these books as a product of their time—and of an indefatigable scholar.

The publishers of this welcome re-issue seem to have inexplicably omitted the fourth volume of *Medieval Nepal*, part IV. Also, a new edition, with corrections and updated by contemporary scholars would be much appreciated. ●

TR Vaidya is professor of history and vice-chancellor of Lumbini Buddha University.

The HONEST THIEF

a heroic comedy



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5 May, 12 May, 19 May
SUNDAY
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Inviting all colleges for participation in the WAVE MISTER & MISS UNIVERSITY 2007



A Project of World- CARP Nepal

WAVE Mister & Miss University 2007



Mister University International 2006 Niraj Baral (Nepal Commerce Campus)

WAVE magazine in association with World-CARP Nepal is organizing the WAVE Mister & Miss University Nepal 2007 (WMMU) to be held on 15 June in BICC, Kathmandu. The contest aims to bring together student representatives from various backgrounds from across the country, to present a model of one world family to all people through the medium of a contest.

WMMU seeks beauty not only externally, but also in the quality of character with which people carry out their lives. The participants are encouraged to pursue personal excellence through challenging one's limitations and to use their capacities for the sake of others by promoting a life of service dedicated to creating harmony in all aspects of life. WMMU encourages delegates to become campus peace ambassadors who can spread the culture of peace throughout their campuses.

This is also one contest where Nepal has been able to make a mark, for Mister University Nepal Niraj Baral is the reigning Mister University International. He outshone contestants from 27 countries to win the title on August of 2006 in Philippines. The winners of this year's contest will participate in the Mister and Miss University International to be held on July 7 in Seoul, Korea.

The entry form for this year is available in the May issue of WAVE magazine as well as in its website www.wavemag.com.np. The last date of entry is 18 May. Interested individuals or colleges can send in their participants. For further details visit www.mmui.org. Application form can be submitted at GPO Box: 7251, Kathmandu or Himalmedia sales office, Kupundole Height, Ph: 554 3333, 552 3845



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Advertorial

Europe Day – 9 May 2007



Member states of the European Union (2007)
Candidate countries



Staff members of the Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal

MIN BAJRACHARYA

total EU contribution to the mission stood at EUR 5,050,000.00.

Conflict Mitigation Conflict Mitigation Packages

The European Commission launched Conflict Mitigation Package I (CMP I) in 2005, which will conclude this year. Under this first Conflict Mitigation Package I (2.153 M€) three projects are currently in their final year of implementation. Two projects are aiming at improving the socio-economic conditions and confidence building measures for people in rural areas and one is aimed at mitigating the conflict through mass communication and media in Nepal. The subsequent Conflict Mitigation Package II (7 M€), under which implementation will start in May of 2007,

seeks to strengthen national institutions in their efforts to promote and enforce human rights and aims at assisting efforts to enforce rule of law in Nepal.

Infrastructure and Rural Development Renewal Energy Project Nepal

The European Commission has been funding Nepal Government's Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPD) to implement the Renewable Energy Project since 2004. The five year project will end at the end of 2008. The total EC contribution to the project is €15 million.

The overall objectives of the project are to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas, which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate institutional strengthening to public agencies and policy reform, mainly to encourage the Government's policy of democratization and decentralization.



Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration

The European Commission has allocated a budget of about 8 million EUR to support: a) Nepal WTO programme, access to finance for SMEs, and diversification of exports; b) SAARC in the context of standards and customs harmonization, helping the region to better integrate economically as the EC/EU has been invited as an observer at the 14th SAARC Summit in New Delhi.

Humanitarian Aid

The European Commission is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid to Nepal. Since 2001, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) has provided close to €26 million aid for victims of these crises, including €12 million for the 106,000 Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and nearly €14 million for victims of the armed conflict. In 2006, ECHO's funding to Nepal totalled €7.8 million (EUR 3 million for conflict-affected populations). In 2007, funding will be €6 million, reiterating the EC's willingness to support Nepal in this time of transition where humanitarian needs are still high.

Europe has a global reach which enables us to facilitate trade and development to support human right, rule of law and democracy worldwide. In this proud moment the Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal would like to remember the special friendship between the EU and Nepal.

Eduardo LECHUGA-JIMENEZ

Chargé d' Affaires

Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal

The EU Institutions

There are five main EU institutions, each playing a specific role:

- European Commission (driving force and executive body);
- Council of the European Union (representing the governments of the Member States);
- European Parliament (elected directly since 1979 by the citizens of the Member States);
- European Court of Justice (ensuring compliance with law);
- Court of Auditors (controlling sound and lawful management of the EU budget).

Several other agencies and bodies complete the system, including the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Central Bank, the European Ombudsman and the European Investment Bank. The Presidency of the European Union rotates every 6 months among the 27 Member States. Every five years, European citizens elect new members to the European Parliament.

The EU in Nepal

Several EU member countries are long-standing development partners with Nepal and currently five member countries have established individual diplomatic missions in Kathmandu: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. These five EU member countries share the responsibility for acting as the local EU Presidency in Nepal.

The European Commission opened its Delegation to Nepal in March 2002. But its presence in Nepal is much older — it formally tied diplomatic relations in 1975 and established its Technical Office in 1992. An EU-Nepal Co-operation Agreement has existed since June 1996. Within this co-operation framework high-level consultations — the so-called 'Joint Commission' takes place between the European Commission and the Government of Nepal on bi-annual basis. The most recent EC-Nepal Joint Commission was held on 14 February 2007. The EU member countries and the European Commission (EC) coordinate their policies and assistance to Nepal but the individual member states have their own assistance programmes. Additionally the EC administers the common EU budget for specific initiatives and assistance as well as a portfolio of development assistance. Following are the major EU funded projects underway in Nepal:

Human Rights European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

The EIDHR is programmed for promoting core values of the European Union and serves as a mean to promote these values by providing financial and moral support to civil society initiatives concerning human rights and democratization in third countries. The general objectives of EIDHR are to respond rapidly to requests for small-scale financial supports for initiatives designed to promote and protect human rights and democratization as well as efforts aimed at conflict resolution.

Nepal is one of the 68 focus countries for the EIDHR worldwide. Since Nepal became a focus country for EIDHR support in 2001, the European Commission has funded 27 EIDHR micro projects and 9 EIDHR Macro Projects in Nepal with the total contribution of €5,430,435.00. Project selection process is underway for the project selection under the EIDHR Micro allocations to Nepal for 2006 (€375,000.00)

Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Nepal

The OHCHR Mission in Nepal, the largest in the world, also had the European Union as its biggest donor during its first mandate of September 2005 to March 2007. The

9 May is the day people from 27 different countries of the European Union (EU) celebrate their common reference as Europeans. The celebration of "Europe Day" takes place the same day as the former French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman delivered a famous speech back in 1950 that laid the foundation stone for the European integration. Schuman proposed that Europeans committed themselves to democracy and increased dialogues should solve important political and economic issues among themselves. Schuman's proposal came when Europe was trying to recover from the devastation it suffered during the Second World War (1939-45). In 2007, as Europeans again celebrate their common history and values, Schuman's idea of lasting peace continues to inspire countries and peoples to set aside their disputes and embark upon a dialogue.

Schuman envisaged that economic interdependence between European countries would make war a phenomenon of the past. It took less than a year before Schuman's idea was translated into a binding legal document — the political commitment to peace was thus already a reality. On 18 April 1951, six countries signed the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. Soon thereafter, this commitment was sealed with the Treaties of Rome, which are still considered the founding documents of today's European Union.

Continuous Enlargement

Over the years the European Community has expanded from 6 to 27 member states with the entry of Romania and Bulgaria on 1 January 2007. The initial 6 member states are Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. The biggest ever enlargement took place in 2004 with 10 countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The EU, its members, and institutions have a common flag that is used as a symbol of the European unity — the flag is dark blue with a circle of 12 yellow stars. No matter how many member states join the EU, this flag remains the same.

As a further integrating factor the common currency, the Euro (€) was introduced on 1 January 1999 and put into real circulation three years later. Currently 13 EU Member States, including Slovenia, the latest joining the European Monetary Union on 1 January 2007, use the Euro as official currency.



ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Colours of the sepals and petals** an exhibition of paintings based on botanical art by Neera Joshi Pradhan, 10.30 AM-6PM, except Saturdays at Park Gallery, Pulchok, until 15 May. 5522307
- ❖ **Moments of passion** an exhibition of collage paintings by Gaurav Shrestha, until 15 May, 11AM-6PM daily at The Art Shop, Darbar Marg. 9841341810
- ❖ **Sacred realms** mixed media works by Seema Sharma Shah at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, until 26 May, 11AM-6PM daily. 4218048

EVENTS

- ❖ **Letters from Iwo Jima** a Clint Eastwood film, 11 May, 6.30 PM at the Lazimpat Gallery Cafe.
- ❖ **The Honest Thief** performed by Studio 7, opening weekend 4-6 May, further performances on 11-19 May and 18-20 May, 7.15 PM at the Naga Theater, Hotel Vajra. 4271545
- ❖ **Pilgrim's Book Festival** 11-20 May, 10Am-8PM at Pilgrim's Book House, Kupondole. 5521159
- ❖ **Light of the Himalaya** an FSA Film Club and WAVE magazine presentation, 13 May, 5.30 PM at Yala Maya Kendra, Rs 50 entrance, all proceeds go to the Tilganga Eye Centre. 5542544
- ❖ **The Alliance's Brunch** Sunday brunch at the Alliance Francaise, 13 May, 11AM in the AF garden, Rs 300. 4241163.
- ❖ **Yuva Chalfal Shrinkhala** about contemporary discussions on FM Radios, 3-5PM, 11 May, at Martin Chautari. 4107599
- ❖ **Lectures, therapies, and workshops** on memory, self-confidence, stress and health by Dutch psychotherapist P Langedijk, until 12 May at Nepal Japan Children's Library, Lainchaur. 4279712
- ❖ **School bullying** a talk program by Niti Rana, 17 May at The New Era, Battisputali. 9851023958
- ❖ **Pottery course** by Santosh Kumar from the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, at Newa Art Ceramics in Madhyapur, Thimi, 25 May-24 June. 9841257968

MUSIC

- ❖ **Stupa Live** at the Moksh Bar, 8.30 PM on 11 May. 5526212
- ❖ **Kathmandu Chorale spring concert** 19 May, 3.30 PM and 6 PM, at The British School, Jhamsikhel. Admission free. 5521218
- ❖ **Jatra ma jazz** every Saturday by Inner Groove, 6:30 PM onwards, Jatra, Thamel. 4256622
- ❖ **Open mic night** at Via Via Café, every Friday, 8PM onwards.
- ❖ **Live music** at the Red Onion Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- ❖ **DJ Raju and the Cloudwalkers** live at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, every Friday and Saturday. 4491234

DINING

- ❖ **Hawaiian Nite** at La Soon Restaurant, Pulchok, 11 May, Rs 850 including a complimentary drink. 5537166
- ❖ **Friday evening BBQ** with live music, at the Hotel Himalaya, 7PM, Rs 499 net. 5523900
- ❖ **Kebabs and curries** at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9841290619
- ❖ **Krishnarpan** Nepali specialty restaurant at Dwarika's Hotel, six to 22 course ceremonial lunch and dinner. 4479488
- ❖ **Weekend special** with sekuwa, bara, barbeque, Fridays at Ambassador Garden House, Lazimpat, 5.30 PM. 4411706
- ❖ **Mongolian BBQ** Wednesdays and Fridays, 6.30 PM at the Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel. Rs 1,000 for unlimited barbeque and beer. 4422828
- ❖ **Flavours** of the Middle East every Friday and the taste of Thailand every Wednesday at The Café, Hyatt Regency, Boudha. 4491234
- ❖ **Light nouvelle snacks** and elaborate cordon bleu meals at La'Soon, Pulchok, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- ❖ **Continental cuisine** and wine by the fire place at Kilroy's, Thamel. 4250440.
- ❖ **Smorgasbord** lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4375280
- ❖ **Gyakok** at the Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, minimum four diners at Rs 450 per person, two hours' notice.
- ❖ **Retro brunch barbecue** with Crossfire Band at Le Meridien, Gokarna from 12-4PM, Rs 1,000 including swimming. 4451212
- ❖ **Calcutta's rolls, biryani, kebabs** Indian cuisine at Bawarchi, Bluebird Mall Food Court. 9741000735
- ❖ **Woodfired pizzas** at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel 4262768, Bhatbhateni 4426587 and Pulchok 5521755
- ❖ **Pizza** from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- ❖ **Jazzabell café** enjoy great food, exotic cocktails and music, Chakupat, Patan. 2114075

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Weekend package** at Le Meridien Kathmandu Gokarna Forest Golf Resort and Spa, two nights three days at Rs 8,888 and one night two days at Rs 4,444. 4451212
- ❖ **Wet and wild package** at Godavari Village Resort, every Saturday and Sunday, unlimited swimming, buffet lunch with a bottle of beer or a softdrink, Rs 690 net. 5560675

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com

Quest Entertainment



Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) finally seems to be finding the right balance between being Spiderman and dating girlfriend Mary-Jane Watson (Kirsten Dunst), but his new-found happiness is shattered when a meteorite crashes to earth bringing with it a slimy black substance that binds with Spidey's suit to give him new powers. Two new supervillians Sandman and Venom enter the fray and to add to his troubles, Harry Osborne (James Franco) is back as the new Green Goblin.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal
www.jainepal.com

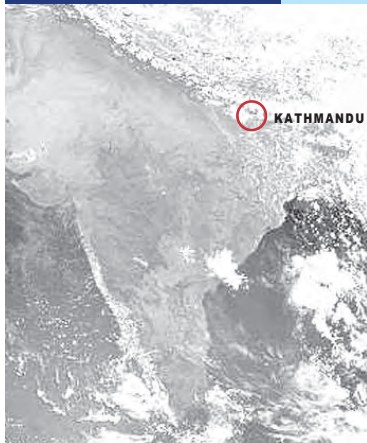
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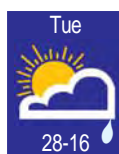
NEPALI WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL



The rain these days is normal, but chill in the hills is not. This is because inundating waves of cold westerlies are keeping the warm air from the south at bay. The welcome rain comes from low pressure systems emerging from the Tibetan plateau and pulling in surrounding clouds. Thursday afternoon's satellite picture shows a fresh westerly front on the border of Iran and Pakistan heading east with no confronting system to block it. This, and with the powerful low pressure over Nepal means lots of rain early next week. For the weekend Valley residents can expect lovely weather—mild days, passing clouds, breezy afternoons, fresh mornings, and light occasional rains.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



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हरेक विहान ५:०० देखि राती ११:०० बजे सम्म सूचना सिद्धा र स्वस्थ मनोरञ्जनका लागि भरपर्दो साथी रेडियो सगरमाथा १०२ थोप्लो ८ मेगाहर्ज



KIRAN PANDAY

ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?: Girija Prasad Koirala makes a point to Ram Chandra Poudel and Bal Bahadur Rai (*right*) at the Nepali Congress' conclave of district presidents on Friday.



KIRAN PANDAY

RED JUSTICE: This large stash of red sandalwood was delivered by members of the Young Communist League to the District Forest Office in Hattiban on Thursday afternoon. The YCL seized the contraband in a raid on an Imadole house on Wednesday.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

NOT THE BEST POLICY: Deeya Maskey and Sabine Lehmann busy projecting in Studio 7's production of *The Honest Thief* on Sunday. The play is on for two more long weekends at the Naga Theatre, Hotel Vajra.



KIRAN KRISHNA SHRESTHA

CAN'T LOOK: Chandra Sekhar Karki's picture of a woman grieving over the body of her husband at Naumule five years ago was too much for this high school student. More than 100,000 people all over the country watched the photo exhibition tour of photographs from the book, *A People War*.

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Let us bray

Even as tabloids this week exposed the details of how Paras sirca had to scrounge around to raise the Rs 1.6 million compensation (Daddy apparently didn't chip in) for the widow of musician Pravin Gurung after he allegedly ran over him near the Yak & Yeti seven years ago, came news that the crownless prince has got bored hanging around at Gokarna and is **back to his old ways** roughing up people at watering holes in the capital.



The Ass was glad to see that not getting an American transit visa didn't deter Suresh Ale Magar from flying off on a junket to Peru recently. The trip was paid for by the Americans, ironically enough, although Suresh Dai says the Swiss took care of his part of the ticket and per diem. Be that as it may, the delegation met Peruvian civil society, peace monitors, and human rights organisations involved in truth and reconciliation. The Nepalis even flew off to the Andean altiplano to the town of Ayacucho and the university where Abimael Guzman taught. Ale was so moved to be in the cradle of the Shining Path that he started singing praises of Prachanda Path, about the common struggle of the Peruvian and Nepali people for the cause of **World Revolution** and how violence is justified in a political struggle. Needless to say, there weren't many takers among his Peruano hosts for Guruji's end-justifies-the-means line of reasoning.



The Nepali media survived the sycophantic Panchayat era toeing the royal line, lived through the post-1990 period when every new elected government used state media shamelessly as a propaganda tool and even after 2002 when KingG turned Radio Nepal, NTV, and Gorkhapatra into his mouth organs.

Now that we have a **Minister of Incommunicado** belonging to the Maoist persuasion, one expected him to revolutionise things. Nope. Maharababu has inducted (if that's the right word) four comrades into Radio Nepal and actually argued at a cabinet

meeting that he should be allowed to do it because that was what the NC and UML did when they controlled the ministry. Makes perfect sense: they ate donkey manure why can't I?

On World Press Freedom Day the minister also shot himself in the foot by delivering a convoluted justification for past assassination of journalists by his party. All this was duly reported in excruciating detail by His Master's Voice on NTV's evening news. Let us pray.



Speaking of the eight parties, none except the foreign minister bothered to show up for the official EU Day function at the Hyatt on Wednesday. Don't they know the Europeans have just doubled aid and are basically bankrolling the elections? Not that any of you is asking the Ass, but if you did I'd say we're getting a tad too dependent on donors. The NC's district president meeting this week was paid for by the Indians. Now that the kangresi netas are used to flying Yeti, you can be sure they ain't gonna take **night buses to party conventions** no more. Even the UML had no qualms about having their recent conclave sponsored by Scandies. Who's paying for the new helipad at Baluwatar, eh?



So, like the Ass, all of you thought Sita Ram Yechury had come to check up on the progress of the peace process? Ha! Fooled ya'll. It's no coincidence that soon after the visit, we heard that GMR had won the bids to explore both Upper Karnali and Arun III. Congrats, Chandrababu.

One recent proof that absolute **power corrupts absolutely** is that Naryanhiti hasn't paid its power bills for the past few years. And those power-hungry chappies didn't even have to suffer loadshedding! No wonder Comrade Sita Ram wants a republic.

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