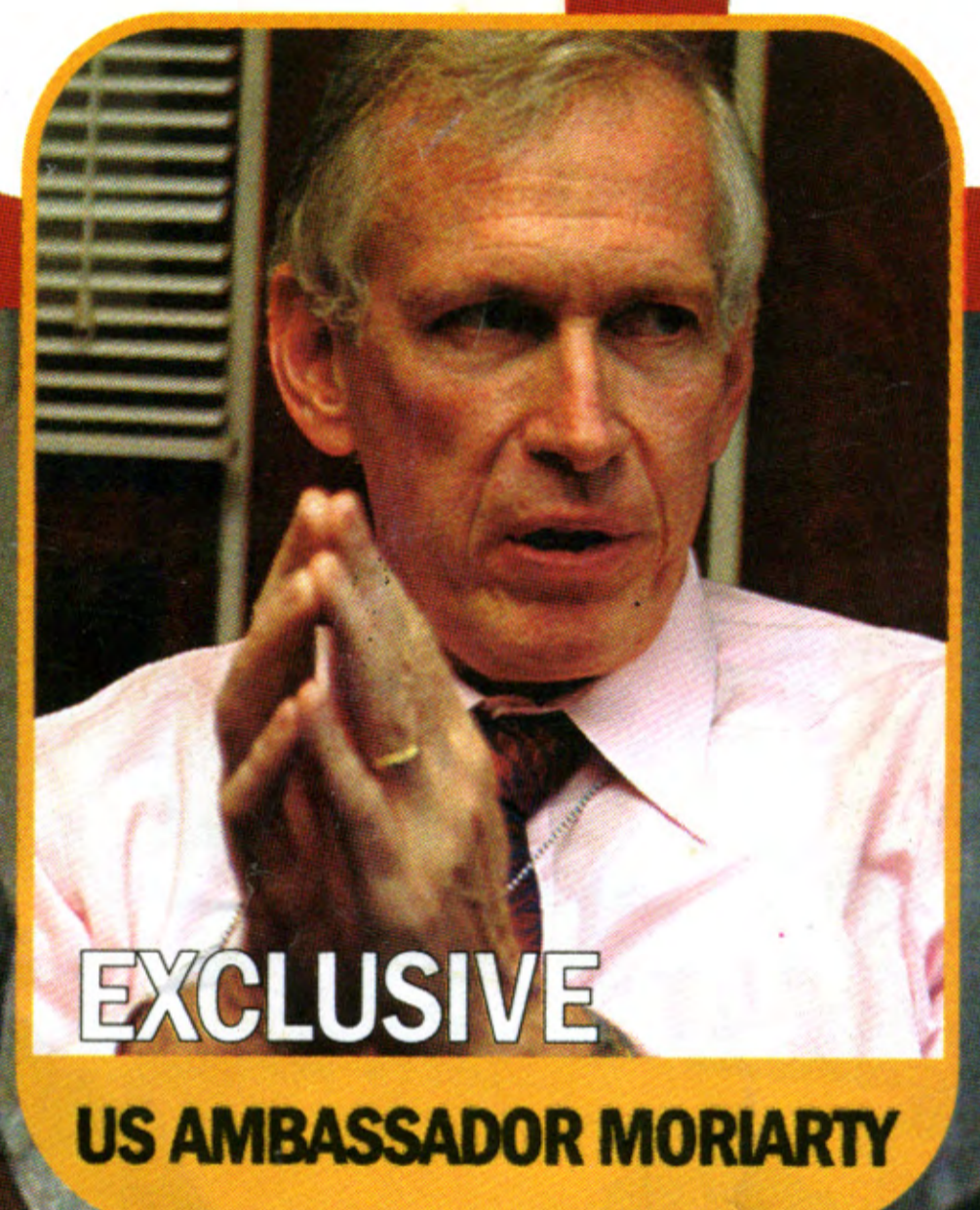


AUGUST 1, 2004 VOL. I, NO. 15

www.nation.com.np

nation

WEEKLY



EXCLUSIVE
US AMBASSADOR MORIARTY



HOME IS WHERE HEART IS

Hundreds Of Foreigners
Come To Nepal And Forget
Their Way Home

if you publish

TRY WORDSCAPE



<< These books were designed by WordScape for UNDP, World Bank and Save the Children.

**"You can't go wrong
with WordScape."**

WordScape
CROSSMEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

The Media House, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu
GPO 8975, EPC 5620
tel: 4229825, 4261831, 4263098
fax: 4216281 Info@wordscapeonline.com
www.wordscapeonline.com

Learn to Lead join

APEX



Apex provides an educational environment that stimulates, inculcates, rewards, and reinforces a quest for lifelong scholarship and professional excellence.

Education at Apex is rigorous, practical, and market relevant to prepare you to innovate and manage organizations in the global context.

Programs Offered:

- *Masters of Business Administration (MBA)* – 2 yrs
- *Bachelors of Business Administration (BBA)* – 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Computer Information System (BCIS)* – 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Computer Engineering (BE –Computer)* – 4 yrs
- *Bachelors of Electronics and Communication Engineering (BE-Elx)* – 4 yrs

Eligibility

At least, second division or a CGPA of 2.0.

Masters of Business Administration

At least 15 years of schooling that includes a 3-year Bachelors degree in any discipline.

Bachelors

BBA/BCIS:

10+2 or PCL in any discipline,

BE Computer/Electronics:

10+2 or PCL (Physics or Biology)

or a Diploma in Engineering or Architecture.

Available:
Apex Merit Scholarship

Baneshwor, Kathmandu.
Tel: 4467922, Fax: 4467923.
Email: admissions@apexcollege.edu.np
www.apexcollege.edu.np

APEX
COLLEGE

(Affiliated to Pokhara University)

Education for Rewarding Career.

For You.

Seize the day.

Take the initiative of your lifetime.

The MBA programme of ace is for people with dreams. People who do not compromise on values and are not lured by frills. People who want to lead and see opportunities amidst challenges. Who care for others and understand that their welfare lies in the welfare of others. People who question traditions because they are not limited by their existing knowledge and practice. Captains who

look to the horizon before they chart their journey.

At Ace Institute of Management, we do not teach you business, nor do we teach you to be leaders. We provide an environment that enables you to rediscover yourself and translate your dreams into missions. And realise the difference you can make. Seize the day. Call us or visit the institute today for further information.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 30th July, 2004 (Friday). **ENTRANCE TEST:** 1st August, 2004 (Sunday).
ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLMENT: 3 years Bachelors' Degree in any discipline with minimum 2nd Division marks.



Mera Thompson, a Canadian, with little nuns at Arya Tara School in Samakhushi. A former South China Morning Post and AFP reporter, Thompson takes care of the school's accounts, subs in for sick teachers, and helps with the fundraising

COVER STORY

20 Home Is Where Heart Is

By John Narayan Parajuli

Why do foreigners want to stay in Nepal when so many of us want to leave? The answer is mostly that they like us. That should make us think

OPINIONS

Take Your Pick by **Kunal Lama**
Ke Garne by **John Child**

EXCLUSIVE

25 Interview: U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty

COLUMNS

11 Crime And Punishment

By Jogendra Ghimire

Maoists are responsible for crimes against humanity and are liable to prosecution even outside Nepal

30 Machiavelli And The Fall Of Mr. Wagle

By Swarnim Wagle

So fantastic was his ascent that Wagle and allies couldn't handle the rise with grace or purpose

38 Bullish Banks

By Sudesh Shrestha

All sectors are bearish except the banks. Is there something that doesn't meet the eye?

40 Three Rupees Worth Of Democracy

By Sushma Joshi

What keeps America, in spite of its flaws, still a functioning democracy is its in-built check and balances to authority

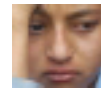
18 Cable War

By Satish Jung Shahi

The police action against cable operators may be an extension of the longstanding battle among cable operators for control over the Kathmandu market

26 Involuntary Migration

By John Narayan Parajuli



The internal conflict is forcing thousands to flee their homes

28 Lure Of Lahur

By Ajit Baral

A vast amount of time and energy is wasted competing for the 350 British Gurkha positions open each year, and unscrupulous operators are ever ready to cease the opportunity for profit

BUSINESS

32 Olympian Dreams

By John Narayan Parajuli

Nepali companies are beginning to learn the value of hitching their brand-wagon to Olympic stars

ARTS & SOCIETY

34 It's Party Time

By Yashas Vaidya



"Never a dull moment," is their motto and it is what the PartyNepal people are all about

36 In Vinto Veritas

By Satish Jung Shahi



Wine imports are barreling ahead as consumers heed the ancient Latin dictum, "wine is truth," but Nepal's only vintner is struggling

DEPARTMENTS

6 LETTERS

10 PICTURE OF THE WEEK

14 CAPSULES

16 BIZ BUZZ

39 CITY PAGE

44 KHULA MANCH: GIRENDRA RAJBANSHI

45 BOOKS

46 LAST WORD

KarmaCharity

www.karmacharyagroup.com

Rs. 10/-

दर १०/-
दर १०/-



A QUALITY PRODUCT FROM KARMACHARYA GROUP

KARMACHARYA
BISCUIT

Great taste Great satisfaction



Letters



“The Maoists have exploited the hapless minors for tactical advantage”

BISWAS BARAL

De-coding “The Code”

I COMMEND MEENA KAINI FOR her book review on “The Da Vinci Code” (“Master of Intrigue,” Books, July 25). The novel is certainly a page-turner and an easy read at that. However, I feel that “The Da Vinci Code” is not your average run-of-the-mill thriller because, beyond all the chase and the suspense, the writer seems to have a singular purpose: to feed the unsuspecting reader shocking information about Mary Magdalene who was not a prostitute (as stated in the Bible) but the wife of Jesus! Dan Brown painstakingly highlights Magdalene’s significance in the Priory of Sion, as being similar to “Isis,” the Egyptian goddess of fertility and therefore, someone holding a prominent position in the history of Christianity and the Occult simultaneously.

As someone, possessing a convent education and having read the Christian scriptures with more than idle curiosity, I found Dan Brown’s “The Da Vinci Code” a shocker. Intrigued, fascinated and at the same time disturbed by the information, casually and yet deliberately woven into the fabric of the plot, I delved deeper into “The Code,” which led me to other books and researches dealing with the same themes.

The Priory of Sion, although founded in 1099, first came to notice in the English-speaking world through the best-selling “The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail” by Michael Baigene, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln. In its homeland, France, The Priory became public in early 1960. Through painstaking research and historical detective work, Lyn Picknett and Clive Prince, two researchers/writers of the famed “Turin Shroud: In Whose Image” discovered the codes within

Leonardo Da Vinci’s seemingly very Christian paintings like “Last Supper” and “Virgin of the Rocks,” which led them to their fascinating quest into the elusive life of the Renaissance genius, Leonardo Da Vinci. Their compelling search led them to mind-boggling but repetitive codes and hidden messages in Da Vinci’s art—all meticulously compiled in their book, “The Templar Revelation.”

For those sufficiently intrigued, shocked and seduced by “The Da Vinci Code,” “The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail,” “The Sign and The Seal” by Graham Hancock; “The Temple and The Lodge” by Baigent and Leigh; and most recently, “The Hiram Key” by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas are excellent reads.

KARUNACHETTRI
KATHMANDU

Political logjam

PROFESSOR LOKRAJ BARAL’S “Political Logjam” (“Political Logjam,” Viewpoint, July 25) is a telling indictment of the present-day political order and a fitting lament over the untimely demise of democracy in Nepal. It’s a fact that the Maoists are the result of the failure of the democratic system and, probably, they have rightly occupied the void left behind by the political parties. The



Maoists and the parties have much in common—both are supposedly fighting for the rights of the people. But will Baral's exhortations to the political leaders bring them to their senses? Will it have any impact on their collective mindset? That remains to be seen. However, there appear to be no grounds for optimism. A lot of mistrust and misunderstanding still exists between the two claimants to true representation of the voice of the people. If Baral does, indeed, believe in and subscribe to the idea of quirks of history and systemic evolution, let him be advised to wait patiently till "the wheel of time" takes its inevitable turn. I have, as always, found his article quite stimulating.

But one thing, however, remains unclear. Baral has condemned outright the "politics of compromise" in Nepal. Given the geo-political realities in the region as also the global context today and the historical imperatives of Nepal, could it have been any different? Is such a policy a necessity? Does Nepal have a choice? Should it have one? I would like to be clear on this.

N.N. SINGH
VIA E-MAIL

Bush bashing

I FOUND THE ARTICLE ON AMERICAN politics by Sushma Joshi liberally biased ("Reigning Story Teller," Movies, July 25). Perhaps the air in the left-wing state of Vermont (home of Howard Dean) influenced her not-so-objective analysis of the documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11" by Michael Moore.

I wonder how familiar the writer is with American politics. She has overstated the possible impact of the documentary on the presidential election later this year. Even if "Fahrenheit 9/11" makes \$100 million in the box office, it means about 10 million people will have watched it. And most likely, 9.9 million of them were liberals who would have voted for the Democrats anyway. It is highly unlikely that this left-wing ideology driven documentary will win over Republican voters and influence the outcome of the election.

BERGENDRA DHAKAL
KATHMANDU

Women at work

CONGRATULATIONS, NATION WEEKLY for your scoop on women in the Army ("Women At Work, Armed Forces," by Satish Jung Shahi, July 25). Let me add: the coverage of the security forces in the Nepali press has been heavily loaded against the people in uniform. All disciplined militaries round the world just obey the orders they are given and it is not for them to question or judge their political masters.

BHUPESH MALLA
THAPATHALI

Intelligence war

NO DOUBT, THE RESOURCES OF security forces have been stretched thin in their fight against the Maoists ("War Of Intelligence," Conflict, July 25). Guerrilla warfare, often hard to thwart with the best of security precautions in place, suits the insurgents. While the intelligence gathering methods of our security forces remain questionable in dealing with this type of war, it is worth reminding ourselves that the most sophisticated of war plans go awry in the situation as ours.

More than 150,000 strong U.S.-led troops are finding it hard to battle a handful of pro-Saddam forces in Iraq, who have resorted to guerilla tactics. So let us not be unduly critical of our forces for their failure in handling this complex war.

The use of children in combat, in any form, is totally unjustified. The Maoists have exploited the hapless minors for tactical advantage. Security forces should be wary of violating their rights by indulging them in their counter-insurgency measures—including, intelligence gathering. Indeed, the urban warfare, with increasing focus on soft targets inside Kathmandu Valley, has begun in earnest. Some glitches can be expected of our security forces. But the occasional shooting sprees, and the carelessness shown time and again by our security forces, cannot be condoned. The incident in Purano Baneshwor best highlights the gross disregard for individual lives: Ulas Baidya, who in fact had informed the security forces about an alleged Maoist extortion, died a needless death at the hands of the trigger-happy security personnel.

BISWAS BARAL
RATOPUL

nation
WEEKLY

Nation Weekly, The Media House, Tripureshor,
Kathmandu, Nepal (Regd. 113/059-060).
Tel: 2111102, 4229825, 4261831, 4263098

EDITOR: Akhilesh Upadhyay
editorial@nation.com.np

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Suman Pradhan
COPY EDITOR: Tiku Gauchan

STAFF WRITERS: Sushma Joshi, Satish Jung Shahi
PHOTOJOURNALIST: Sagor Shrestha
DESIGNER: Raj Kumar Shrestha

AD & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR: Krishna Shrestha
MARKETING EXECUTIVES:

Sarita Gautam and Rameshwar Ghimire
ad@nation.com.np

MARKETING CONSULTANT: Kreepa Shrestha

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Nripendra Karmacharya

SUBSCRIPTION: Bipin Raj Ojha
subscription@nation.com.np

PUBLISHER: The Mirror Media Pvt. Ltd

AD ENQUIRIES: Tel. 4229825, 4261831, 4263098
COLOR SEPARATION: ScanPro, Pulchowk, 5548861, 5552335
PRINTING: Variety Printing Press, 4278869
DISTRIBUTION: R.B. News, 4232784, 4244679

Nation Weekly is published every Monday by The Mirror Media Pvt. Ltd.
All Rights Reserved. The reproduction of the contents of this publication, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited without the prior consent of the publisher.

Vol. I, No. 15. For the week July 26-August 1, 2004, released on August 26

C O N T A C T

www.nation.com.np

nation
WEEKLY

We prefer to receive letters via e-mail, without attachments. Writers should disclose any connection or relationship with the subject of their comments. All letters must include an address and daytime and evening phone numbers. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and space.

E-mail: editorial@nation.com.np

Fax: 4216281

Mail: Nation Weekly

The Media House, GPO 8975, EPC 5620
Tripureshor, Kathmandu, Nepal.

SUBSCRIPTION

E-mail: subscription@nation.com.np

Nation Weekly, The Media House, GPO 8975
EPC 5620, Tripureshor, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 2111102, 4229825, 4261831, 4263098
Fax: 4216281

nation
WEEKLY

subscription

subscription@nation.com.np

2111102

POLITICS

SPORTS

ARTS & SOCIETY

OPINION

DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

CIVIL CONFLICT

BUSINESS

“... democracy is

only of use there that it may

Of the

pass on and come to

its flower and fruit in manners

in the highest forms of interaction

between people and

their beliefs

For the

— in religion, literature,

colleges and schools —

democracy in all public

and private life.”

Walt Whitman

By the

People



People



People



THE NOTION
OF THE NATIONHOOD.

EVERY MONDAY

Picture of the Week



FREEDOM: Students and teachers from two schools in Chhaimale village, Kathmandu, are released after two days in Maoist captivity

nation weekly/Sagar Shrestha



Crime And Punishment

Maoists are responsible for crimes against humanity and are liable to prosecution even outside Nepal

JOGENDRA GHIMIRE

Looking at the innocent face of Santosh Thakur performing the last rites of his father on the front pages of the newspapers last Monday, it was difficult to feel both sad and agitated.

Sad, because this was yet another instance of innocent death as a result of a deliberate targeting of civilians by the civilians. Seven-year-old Santosh is the eldest of the three children of Ganesh Thakur, 31, the barber who succumbed to the bomb blast orchestrated by the insurgents in Koteswore.

Agitated, because incidents like these have become common in our conflict-ridden society. So common that the civil society does not even bother to come out with critical statements any more condemning such cowardly acts of violence. And even when it does, newspapers don't deem them fit for publication.

Only two days before the Koteswore incident, an elderly woman died in a blast in front of the Nepal Telecom building in Jawalakhel. Then early last week, news coming out of Chhaimale, a remote village at Kathmandu-Makwanpur border, said that insurgents abducted dozens of students and teachers from two different schools—the first time such an abduction had taken place inside the Valley.

How did the civil society react? Its reaction was, at best, muted. We seem to have begun to take these incidents as a given.

To an extent, it is perhaps natural for societies in conflict to accept such instances as common happenings, which don't arouse the ire and condemnation with the same intensity that a similar violent act can be expected to arouse in a society in peace. However, the silence especially among the civil society actors in Nepal is deafening. Their ritual of criticizing the insurgents and the security personnel, putting them on the same plane, continues while the Maoist rampage goes unabated. This is not to suggest that the acts of violence committed by the security forces against civilians should be tolerated. Far from it. They should be brought to task, and towards that end the Nepali civil society has been fairly effective. They have vigorously opposed the missteps of the security personnel, and at times even forced them to mend their ways.

An important legal implication of the current actions of the Maoists, which has been discussed very little in Nepal's human rights circle, is the way international human rights law treats their conduct of targeting civilians. Surely, their actions of torturing, maiming and killing of civilians for justifications, which are beyond comprehension, constitute crimes under the municipal legal system of Nepal. Each of those actions violates the criminal code of the land, and the perpetrators can be tried in a court. However, considering the political magnitude that the insurgency has

achieved, an average Maoist worker and even its leadership perhaps feels secure in the knowledge that the insurgency will not come to an end without a political settlement. And amnesty from punishment for all past crimes will inevitably be a pre-condition for such a settlement.

That may be true under the Nepali criminal justice system. But once we enter the international legal domain, things could get more complex and there is every possibility that the perpetrators of crime against humanity—whosoever that is—inside the national borders could still be tried outside. It is this deterrence that the Nepali civil society, the media included, has done little to highlight.

The current state of international law does not tolerate impunity, be it with reference to the crimes committed by state actors or by non-state actors. Starting with the Nuremberg trials conducted immediately after World War II, deliberate targeting and killing of civilians in war times as well as in peace times has been recognized as a serious crime against humanity. It is no defense whether the violence is state-sanctioned—as in the case of the security forces—or not—as with the Maoists.

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing recognition that perpetrators of crimes against humanity are international criminals who cannot buy

their safety merely by negotiating amnesty or immunity with the state in question. Crimes against humanity attract universal jurisdiction. Augusto Pinochet, the former Chilean dictator, was one such example that came to global attention. A principal defense in his case, while he was contesting the execution of an extradition order issued by a Spanish court for his extradition from England, was that he had negotiated a lifetime of immunity and amnesty with the state of Chile. And therefore, the argument went, he could not be tried in a British or a Spanish court. International legal opinion, and the British House of Lords, felt otherwise.

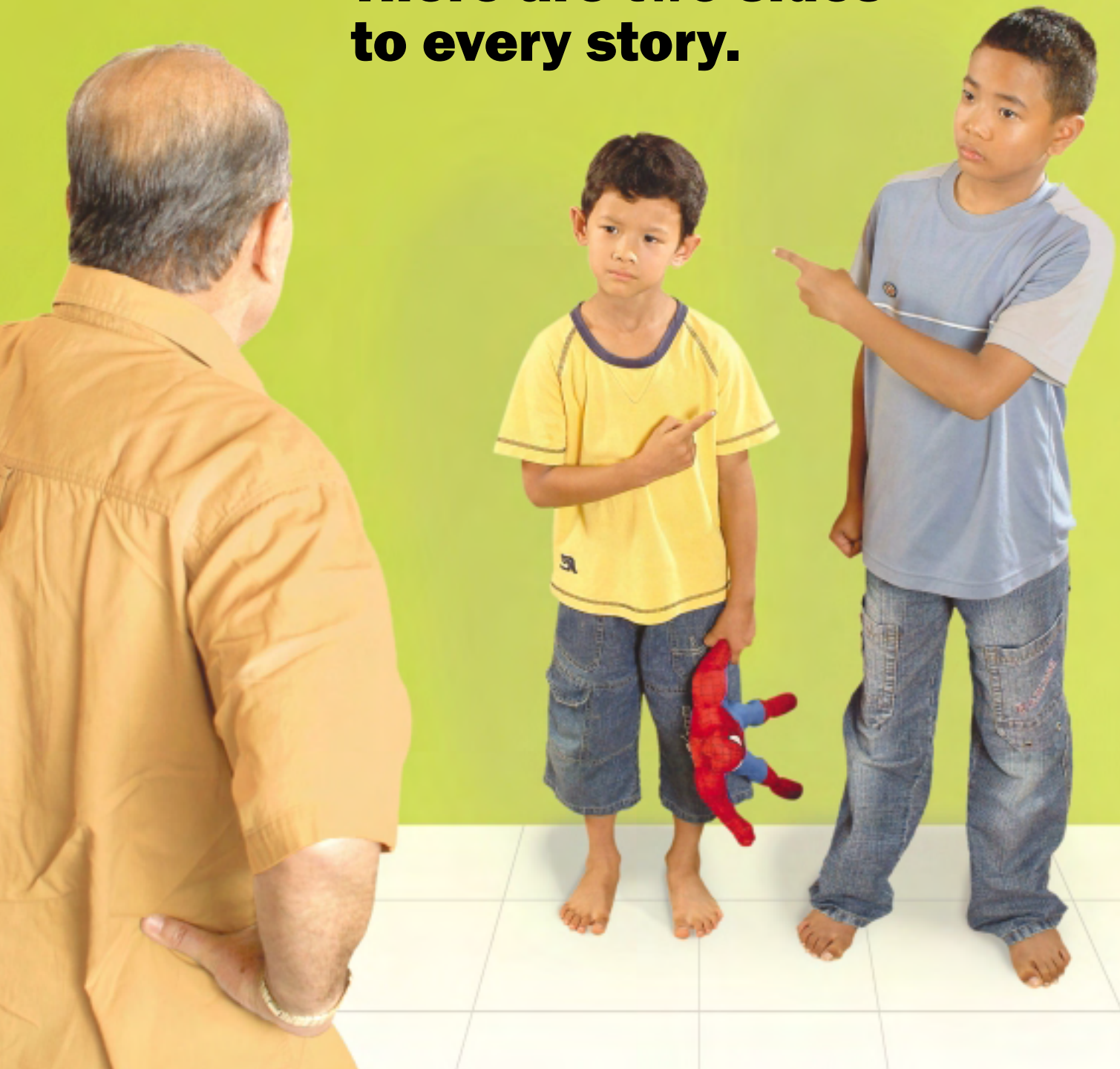
By targeting innocent civilians and workers of political parties who do not follow their ideology, the Maoists have clearly laid out a plan to decimate their political opponents. This act falls within the definition of crimes against humanity, one of the three principal crimes recognized by the Statute of the International Criminal

Court (ICC). One can argue that as a country that has not signed the statute yet, such acts committed in Nepal may not fall within the jurisdiction of the ICC. But states, which are party to the ICC, can always initiate actions against perpetrators in Nepal—just as it happened in the case of Pinochet. The Chilean dictator had committed no crime in England but English prosecutors would have none of it. The arrest of Pinochet in England highlights an important point: As adherents of global criminal justice system, states have the responsibility to prosecute perpetrators of international crimes, irrespective of the place of the crime. **N**



NO RUNNING AWAY: Chilean dictator Pinochet

There are two sides to every story.

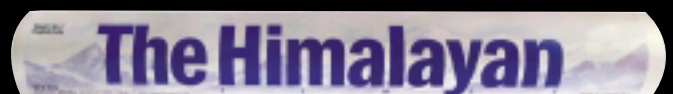


Business Advantage/THT/04/07

There are always two sides to every story. Who's right and who's wrong does not depend on which side you're on. To a third person, there may not even be a right or wrong, just a difference of opinion.

The important thing is to move on, change and adapt while keeping your goals intact.

The Himalayan Times is not about taking sides. It is about positively expressing the view of both sides.



A GREAT NEWSPAPER



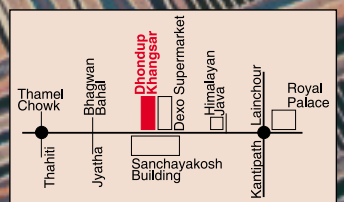
Dhondup Khangsar

Handicraft Center



FINE CARPETS & DECORATIVE ARTS

Tridevi Marg, Thamel,
Opp. of Sanchayakosh building
Tel: 4416483, 4417295
E-mail: wapema@wlink.com.np



A better life

In the latest UN Human Development Report, Nepal recorded 0.504 points on the Human Development Index (HDI), up from 0.499 in 2003. It now ranks 140th in the pool of 177 countries. The HDI is based on three factors: life expectancy, literacy and school enrollment, and income. Life expectancy grew from 59.1 years in 2003 to 59.6, and adult literacy from 42.9 percent to 44 percent. Nepal however was the worst performer in primary education. Overall, Nepal's HDI stands at a dismal sixth position among SAARC countries, only ahead of Pakistan.

No truce

Maoist supremo Prachanda dismissed any possibility of an immediate truce and negotiations with the government. In a press statement, Prachanda said the government was unwilling to revise its position of finding solutions to the current crisis from within the framework of the present Constitution. The statement also alleged that the government was pub-

licizing false information about peace talks.

Quick repatriation

Bhutan is eager for a quick repatriation of refugees, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Prakash Sharan Mahat said. But there is a condition attached. Bhutan has reportedly sought security guarantees for its officials while they carry out their duty of refugee verification in the Nepali camps. Early last week the new U.S. Ambassador, James F. Moriarty, expressed his concern over the refugee stalemate. "They need to be repatriated," he told reporters. "We have an economic stake and we want to see the camps closed." The United States provides about 25 percent of the funds that go into running the camps.

Revenue rise

Department of Customs said that customs revenue rose to Rs 15.57 billion during the last fiscal year, which was higher than the budgetary target of Rs 14.44 billion. The Department Director, Krishna Hari Baskota, attrib-



SHINING STARS: Three Star won the Martyrs Memorial ANFA Cup. It was the only team to remain unbeaten right through the league this season.

NW/SS

uted the rise to administrative reforms, installation of Automated Systems of Customs Data technology and enforcement of the three-year customs work manual. As an incentive to comply with WTO requirements, the government has slashed customs duty on batteries, furniture, plastic pipes, chemicals and similar products from 40 to 35 percent. Likewise, duties were also reduced for sugar, IT equipment, petroleum and aerated drinks.

Foreign management

Employees of Nepal Bank Limited opposed the decision to renew the bank's management contract with Ireland's

ICC Bank. The Nepal Rastra Bank, on July 18, renewed the management contract signed with the ICC two years ago, for another year. The ICC was awarded the contract with an aim to reduce non-performing assets to five percent. The employees however argue that the ICC Bank could not fulfill its obligation.

Captives release

The Maoist released 84 students and teachers they had abducted from two schools in Chhaimale village in Kathmandu. They had taken the captives to an unidentified location somewhere near the border with Makwanpur. "We cried the whole night," said the father of an abductee.

New limbs

Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) started rehabilitation program for the conflict victims, especially to those who have lost their lower limbs in the violence. Funded by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the program aims at providing artificial legs. The NRCS branches in all 75 districts have started collecting data of amputees. The victims would be provided clutches through Hario Kharaka Hospital, Pokhara.

AG PANT QUILTS



NW/SS

Sushil Kumar Pant resigned as Attorney General after 10 months in office. Mahadev Prasad Yadav, former member of the National Assembly, has been named as Pant's successor. Pant was appointed by the Surya Bahadur Thapa government. News reports said Pant tendered his resignation when Prime Minister Deuba stopped conferring him on legal matters pertaining to the government. A week after Deuba's appointment as prime minister in early June, Pant had told Nation Weekly that he had relayed his desire to the new prime minister that he was willing to step down to make way for a new Attorney General.

Maoist warrant

Maoists have ordered the residents of Phidim, Paanchthar, to vacate the town by September 8. In a statement, the Maoists asked the residents to leave the town temporarily. They are reportedly planning to stage a "rehearsal for revolt." The Maoists are also planning a blockade of Phidim Bazaar from September 1-7 and general strike on September 8.

Gurkha drivers

A British bus company, 2Travel, has employed 21 ex-Gurkhas as drivers. A shortage of bus drivers led the company to recruit ex-Gurkhas, the BBC reported.



The Gurkha drivers have settled in well in their new lives since arriving in Wales, 2Travel's Managing Director Bev Fowles was quoted as saying. Bhim Rai, a Gurkha who was nearing the end of his 20 years in the British Army, has been appointed the company's traffic manager in Llanelli, Wales.

Disgraced judge

Krishna Kumar Verma, the Supreme Court judge mired in controversy, has resigned. Justice Verma and Baliram Kumar had given the controversial verdict acquitting British drug-peddler Gordon William Robinson early this year. Verma cited health reasons for his resignation. Meanwhile, the Judicial Council appointed Justice Bhairab Prasad Lamsal as a

member of the council, following Verma's resignation.

Scribe's ordeal

After eight months in Army custody, journalist Dhan Bahadur Magar was released. Magar was detained on suspicion of being a Maoist. "The period in Army custody was hell," The Himalayan Times quoted Magar as saying. Magar, an office secretary at the Federation of Nepalese Journalists in Kathmandu, said he was blindfolded with both his hands tied behind his back and was kept in solitary confinement, except while eating.

No peacekeepers

The Royal Nepal Army is unable to provide more troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions, the Army's public relations directorate said. The U.N. had requested for Nepali peacekeepers to protect its staff in Iraq. But the Army expressed its inability to immediately send troops citing its engagement within Nepal where they have been stretched thin.

Chopper trouble

The Maoists set off a bomb on a Sri Air chopper in Kodwada airport in Kalikot. A police constable, Laxmi Chandra Upadhaya, was killed in the explosion, and four Army personnel were injured. The helicopter, which was carrying ration for the security forces, was damaged in the explosion but could still fly back to the regional headquarters in Nepalgunj.

Drug haul

In one of the biggest hauls for a single day, the Narcotic Drug Control Law Enforcement Unit last week seized over 50kg of heroin from dif-

ferent parts of Kathmandu. Eight persons were arrested with the contraband when a police team, acting upon a tip-off, raided the hideouts. The contraband was found inside earthenware, vessels and ashtrays, The Himalayan Times reported.

Minor labor

Nine Nepali children, between eight to 14 years of age, working as laborers, were rescued in Mumbai. The Indian police handed over the minors to their Nepali counterparts at the Border Police Post, Balaiya, Rupandehi.

Nepali workers

Australian immigration officials in Sydney, who were targeting 20 businesses, have sent three Nepali workers along with 20 other illegal foreign workers to Vilawood Detention Centre following a crackdown, Australian news agencies reported. Among the detainees, 19 were in Australia unlawfully while four had expired visas. Arrangements are said to be underway to deport them to their respective countries.

Wagle's fall

CIAA demanded an immediate implementation of the



Special Court verdict against Chiranjivi Wagle. The anti-graft court had indicted Wagle on charges of corruption sentencing him to two and a half years in jail and fining him Rs. 27.3 million. Wagle can appeal against the verdict within 50 days.

Pool mishap

Three minors died when they fell into a pool in Bara. Shew Rawat Kurmi and Ram Niwas, both five year-olds, and Bhamara Raut, a four-year old, of Balirampur VDC-3 died after they accidentally slipped into the pool. The children, who went missing at around 2 p.m., were found floating over the pool two hours later, Kantipur Online reported.



FUTBOL: Engineering students compete with their gadgets at Robo Soccer, which took place at the Covered Hall, Dasrath Stadium. NCE won the tournament.

NEW PACKAGES FOR ASIA CELLULAR SATELLITE PHONES

AVCO International, the sole distributor for Asia Cellular Satellite (ACeS), has come up with an attractive package of Rs. 55,000 with pre-paid SIM card for ACeS phone sets. This latest offering is 30 percent cheaper than the regular price of Rs. 83,460. This package is being offered for a limited period of time.

ACeS phones are marketed as being cost effective and easy-to-install. The ACeS network covers the whole of the Asia and can be used in any part of Nepal. The ACeS phone has a dual-mode feature, which allows users to use their phones in GSM mode, which is the normal mobile mode, and GMPCS mode, which is the satellite mode. Both models (Fix sets and Mobile sets) have Voice and Data facilities. ACeS also plans to introduce new services such as videoconferencing, live telecasts, asset tracking and Remote Monitoring System soon.

EURO 2004 LUCKY DRAW

Gorkha Brewery Pvt. Ltd. conducted a lucky draw to determine the winners of the Carlsberg Euro 2004 Quiz Contest at the Marco Polo Business Hotel. Sports journalists and officials of the Manang Marshyandi Club were present. The quiz contest was open from June 5 to July 1. It was publicized through an advertising campaign in prominent dailies, weeklies and magazines throughout the period. There was a total of 25,267 entries for the contest resulting in 210 correct entries.

The first prize, a 21-inch color television, was won by Bipin Panthi of Anamnagar, Kathmandu. There were 10 second prize winners who received Carlsberg wristwatches and 19 third prize winners received Carlsberg footballs. The winners of the 100 consolation prizes for Carlsberg t-shirts were also selected.

Gorkha Brewery Pvt. Ltd. markets Carlsberg beer in Nepal. Carlsberg was the official beer for this year's European Championships in Portugal.

BEST BUY LAUNCHED

Emanon Nepal Pvt. Ltd. has launched "Best Buy," a monthly consumer-shopping catalogue. Best Buy is promoted as being the first complete shopping catalogue for Nepal; consolidating all special promotions, the best offers and market information of consumer products and services into one single point of access.

Thirty thousand free Best Buy catalogues are delivered to major households, businesses, institutions, expatriates, shopping malls, and

traffic intersections in the Kathmandu Valley. The catalogue is also distributed in all Buddha Air flights. The company is aiming to reach 200,000 people through its print catalogue and website. Information in the catalogue can also be accessed by visiting the website www.bestbuynepal.com



INDIAN RAILWAYS SELECTS ORIENT PARADISE

Orient Paradise Travels and Tours Pvt. Ltd., a member of the KL Dugar Group, has been appointed general sales agent for Indian Railways in Nepal. The agency will facilitate travelers to procure Indian Railway passes to travel to India by rail to their desired destinations. The company, which is soon going to start its operation in Kathmandu, also plans to start similar service in other major cities.

SBI BRANCH IN DHARAN

Nepal SBI bank has opened its new branch in Dharan, its 14th in the country. According to the branch manager, Kiran Tiwari, the bank has been opened in Dharan to facilitate foreign trade.

DUBAI SHOPPING FESTIVAL 2005

Nepal is for the first time, participating in the Dubai Shopping Festival, Global Village, to be held next year. With the support from Nepal Tourism Board, Maitreya Worldwide Traders will be representing Nepal in the event.

The event will aid in promoting Nepali culture, architecture and artistry in the worldwide market. Models will be constructed in the event for the promotion of Nepali architecture, handicraft, metalcraft and woodcraft.

There will be representatives from more than 50 countries. Around 700,000 people are expected to participate in the event which starts from January 12 next year. It ends on 31 March. Nepal has been allotted an area of 750 square meters in the event.

KUMARI BANK

Kumari Bank Ltd. has launched new products like SMS banking, e-Pay (Utility Bill Payment) and Super Savings. It will soon introduce new products like ATM, debit and credit cards, information kiosks, fund management for Non-Residential Nepalis, tele-banking and so on in the new fiscal year. In the last fiscal year, the bank opened two branches at Biratnagar and Birgunj. The bank is going to establish more branches at New Road and Pokhara in the new fiscal year.

A press release by the bank states that the bank has 149 promoter shareholders. After issuing Rs. 150 million worth of shares to the public this year, the total number of shareholders is 35,351. The bank has a paid up capital of Rs. 500 million and its net worth is Rs. 590 million. Total deposits at the bank have risen to Rs. 4.82 billion with an increment of 92 percent from last year. Its outstanding loan stands at Rs. 3.71 billion. The operating profit of the bank is Rs. 106.4 million, an increment of 83 percent from last year.



PHOTO: NWS

Comfortably
safe in reliable hands....



We are second to none when it comes to comfortable journey, punctual operation and high quality service. Our friendly staff are always at your service.

Buddha Air is the first and only private airline in Nepal to operate brand-new, straight-out-of-the-factory and currently in production **Beech 1900Ds**, each worth US\$ 5 million.



Buddha Air

Sales Hattisar: Ph# (977-1) 4436033, 4437677 Fax# (977-1) 4437025 Reservation : 5542494 Fax# (977-1) 5537726
Email: buddhaair@buddhaair.com ~ Website: <http://www.buddhaair.com>



charges were all baseless.” Parajuli is also the general secretary of the Nepal Cable Television Sangh, which has 13 of the capital’s 16 licensed cable operators as members. The other three operators belong to the rival Nepal Cable Television Association, which is headed by Space Time Network. Space Time is a major cable operator that also runs an influential media house and controls more than 50 percent of the cable market in the Valley. “It was plain dacoity,” alleges Parajuli.

Insiders say the raid was an extension of the longstanding battle between cable operators over the lucrative Kathmandu cable business. A Superintendent of Police went on record the same evening on Channel Nepal to claim that the raid was legal, for it had followed an application filed by the Nepal Cable

The Network’s General Manager Mohan Bhakta Mathema told us: “We don’t want to make any comments until the government committee would make public its finding.” Information Minister Mohammad Mohsin formed a six-member committee to look into the incident.

When Nation Weekly contacted the officer who conducted the raids, Superintendent of Police Deepak Ranjit, for comments, he maintained that the cable operators had evaded tax and that the police had a copy of an application filed by the Nepal Cable Television Association. “We don’t need to act on anyone’s influence,” he said, denying he was following orders from Space Time. “The police force has the full right to act upon those working illegally.”



The cable operators of the Sangh deny the charge. Sangh president Ranjit said all their taxes have been paid except for a few payments pending for the last one or two months. Parajuli told us that SUBISU had experienced three surprise raids from the revenue department since they obtained license for cable internet in 2003. He said SUBISU got clean chits on all three occasions.

Television Association. The association has denied making any such requests.

“It was a conspiracy by Space Time Network, as they were losing their market share,” says M. R. Ranjit, president of the Nepal Cable Television Sangh and owner of the Blue Himalayan Cable Television Network. Blue Himalayan’s office at Bhimsensthan suffered the most damage during the police raid. According to Ranjit, Space Time’s Channel Nepal broke the news of the raid on their 8 p.m. newscast, while the raid was still going on. He says the report had a lot of details and looked all planned.

Parajuli goes so far as to claim that the Space Time technicians were involved with the police in most of the raids. “The police have taken the most vital servers with them,” he says, “it is hard to believe that policemen can identify electronic equipment that only experts in the field can tell.”

Space Time Network’s Chairman Jamim Shah would not come to the phone despite our repeated requests.

“The police should be raiding Space Time instead. Space Time hasn’t paid its two years of VAT amounting up to two crores,” a Sangh official told us. “Plus, it hasn’t paid its dues to Nepal Telecom since the last four years for using its poles, and its agreement ended more than two years ago.”

The Nepal Cable Operators Sangh has moved to court and is demanding Rs. 10,000,000 as compensation and a stay order against further police action against them until the court decision is announced. Information Minister Mohsin said the police action came without his or Home Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka’s knowledge. The committee, Minister Mohasin formed, is currently making rounds of the cable operators’ offices where the raids were made.

“It looks like they’re only investigating if the police charges against us is true or not,” said SUBISU’s Parajuli. “They don’t seem to be investigating if the police action was really unlawful.” **N**

HOME, SWEET NEPAL



Liesel Messerschmidt KC



Jesse Brandt

As a young man of 20, Brandt came to Nepal with the Peace Corps in 1963. During his two-year assignment in Syangja, the mountains fascinated him, much like any tourist. But in 1970 he came back with a new mission, to explore Nepal and to do something more for the country

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

TREKKERS COME HERE for the mountains and return because of the people," wrote Andrew Stevenson in his travelogue, "A Nepalese Journey." That may be true for many expatriates, especially those who have stayed for a long time. What else keeps the estimated 5,000 foreigners here?

"I don't know if I would call it magic, but I think that for tourists it is the mountains, and for those of us who stay here for years it is the opportunities Nepal presents and the friendships we develop," says Liesel Messerschmidt KC, an American expatriate who has lived in Nepal for 11 years out of the last 23. Expats find Nepal different from other countries. Many say they constantly look for ways to come back to Nepal. There is no one reason.

"I feel quite at home," says Joel Garingalao Jr. who hails from Ilo Ilo City in the central Philippines. "It is like being at home with my family." Joel came to Nepal in 1999. He is typical of the new generation of expatriates, but there are also many who first visited this country half a century ago and stayed on.

"I was very much attracted to this country and its people," says Jesse Brandt, with USAIDS. As a young man of 20, Brandt came to Nepal with the Peace Corps in 1963. During his two-year assignment in Syangja, the mountains fascinated him, much like any tourist. But in 1970 he came back with a new mission, to explore Nepal and to do something more for the country.

Brandt has an adopted Nepali son, Sishir, who has settled in the United States. His mother died in Nepal and he looks after an elderly Nepali man whom he calls father—his boss 41 years ago. "I will probably tonsure my head, take him

to Pashupati and perform the last rites when he dies," Brandt says.

Nepali society provides a sense of belonging to many expats who have lived an individual life in their own countries. "We make them feel comfortable," says Kunal Lama of Café Mitra at Thamel, the tourist hub of Nepal. Nepali people are open and generous and easily embrace each other, including the expatriates, which gives them a sense of belonging. Perhaps this is why many have chosen to assimilate Nepali values. Many are fluent in Nepali.

"Expats are here for a number of reasons," says Lama. The cost factor is one. Nepal is an inexpensive place to live, especially for a westerner. An expatriate can have a comfortable life here for a few hundred dollars per month, far less than at home. Some who work for American schools and NGOs earn 10 times that much.

Being a white-skinned person can sometimes be an advantage, but that comes at a price. The common perception that all foreigners are rich can taint interactions at times. "Some people think you are filthy rich and tend to ask for dollars," says an expatriate insisting anonymity. Others agree. "We despise always having to pay a higher price simply because we have white skin," says Sara Duett.

There are some criticisms directed at foreigners too. Many Nepalis and even some expatriates fear that exposure to negative aspects of western culture will hurt Nepal. Despite the concern, it is hard to cite evidence that foreigners have harmed the country and easy to find instances where they have helped greatly. The contributions of Father Eugene L. Watrin, S.J., who passed away in February, will be long remembered. Father Watrin was an educator and social worker, who came to Nepal in 1955.

Like Watrin, other foreigners have lived here for years and contributed in their own ways to Nepal's development, though the government continues to make it very difficult for many of them to stay. "It's frustrating to undergo the same visa related hassles every time," says a British expatriate.

"I will probably die here," says Brandt, hopefully. That's if he can get a visa to stay that long. **N**

OPINION

Take Your Pick

BY KUNAL LAMA

Expats are encountered everywhere in Nepal. Spouting many tongues and in various disguises, they have become notable fixtures in our country, the same way the potato has become an automatic accompaniment to rice in the local cuisine. Some of the more recognizable forms of expats are:

Rooters: These expats love Nepal so much that some of them have grown deep roots. They readily chastize those—especially the unfortunate Nepalis who have grown soft from living abroad—when they make the tiniest of complaints. Whether in Nepal for years or just a few months, they are here to stay. The others can bugger off, complaining Nepalis included. Sworn enemies of the likes of Jeff Greenwald.

Mission-aries: Mission-aries are not only sometimes born in March or April, they are born with a zealous mission to better Nepal. They are busy building suspension bridges over rivers, or harvesting olives to rid cholesterol from the arteries of the locals.

The Abandoned: Once hippies or PCVs or trekkers or Gurkha officers, these expats have been abandoned by times and recent developments within their own countries. Hooked to Nepal, one way or the other, they linger around, with no hope or desire for exit.

Dharma Chhetras: To borrow a label coined by G2, DCs wander from temple to stupa, believing fervently that salvation comes from devotion to Shiva, Buddha or any of the 33 million and plus deities last found to be spiritually living in Nepal. Big fans of contorted forms of yogic meditations and rimpoches of contrived reincarnations. DCs of the proselytizing kind are the lowest of this order.

Ethical Ethnicians: Ethical Ethnicians usually sport a dhaka topi or a chintzy kurta-suruwal; 'namaste' left, right and center; bad mouth the vernacular so much that they themselves can barely understand it; and know more about the state of the state than the head of state. Squatting over local loos have empowered their limbs to the extent that they walk or cycle all over, righteously

Nonstickers: In Nepal for a reason, but the reason is definitely not Nepal. Confined to INGO compounds, embassy clubs or Group 4-guarded high-fenced residences, Nonstickers are totally immune to the charms or microorganisms of the country (thanks to CIWEC), and could be anywhere—Niger, Nicaragua, or Nepal.

Honeyeaters: Quick to take advantage of local hospitality,

cerely believe that the light colour of their skin imbues them with supernatural powers, such as intelligence. Usually seen barging through customs at TIA, driving the wrong way up one-way streets, or berating hapless waiters in starred hotels. Diplomatic Immunity serves them well.

Nepal Bashers: NBs talk up the alarming status of Nepal as a failed nation. E-mails are their favoured messengers; gossippy groupie dinners and friends on the outer perimeters of powerful circles their favourite sources of "news." Se-



NW/SS

fuming at the backs of SUVs and stretched limousines.

Social Shifters: Once in the country, Social Shifters quickly latch to the chiffons or tailcoats of the Ranas, Shahs and any other prominent personages, even their own kind. Usually busy attending gala dinners, fundraisers and rice-feeding ceremonies.

Post-career Sweeties: Weary with the rapacious commercialization of Phuket, Galle and Bali, these old men, hands resting on strong shoulders or delicious derrières, assiduously sweet-talk their companions into dinners at expensive restaurants, trips to Pokhara and farther afield.

naiveté, stupidity or avarice, Honeyeaters waste no time in gleaning information to bolster theses, bank accounts, promotion opportunities. Equally quick to claim being had by locals, Honeyeaters whinge constantly.

Frequent Flee-ers: FFs love Nepal but only as long as Nepal is lovable, and the going is good, for them. The first sound of a distant pressure cooker bomb, or a tremulous tremor in Dhankuta, they are off on the first plane out of Nepal. Not known to be frequent flyers of RNAC.

White is Might: Outright racists, and only fit to inhabit Namibia, Chile or America, these expats sin-

curity collapses, visa payments, GP Koirala, etc. send them into fits of ritualistic rhapsodic bashing of Nepal.

In spite of my somewhat uncharitable and unscientific typecasting of foreign residents whom we have come to love or hate so much, it is an undeniable fact that they will always be around, in one form or the other. Sprinkled amongst us natives, they have certainly made our lives much more colourful. In many cases, most of them become such good friends that when they do have to take our leave, we tearfully forgive all their trespasses, but we seldom forget them. Such is the nature of expats! **N**

Ke Garne?

BY JOHN CHILD

I arrive home with the sun beating down and not a breath of air. My first move is to the fan. Click, click. Nothing. “No lights,” exclaims Mohan, smiling brightly, “Ke game?”

My American brain is full of answers to the question. We believe as a matter of faith that all problems have solutions. American education teaches problem solving: how to identify a problem, think about solutions, pick the best one, try it and, if necessary, repeat until the problem is fixed. That doesn't happen here.

Ke garne, “what to do,” is not a question. It's more of an answer, an expression of deep currents in Nepali culture. Americans' belief is reinforced every day by seeing problem solving rewarded. It's a basic fact of life here that much of the time there's nothing one can do. At a gut level, most Hindus and Buddhists accept the doctrine of Karma. You are who you are today, the ancient teaching says, because of your actions in a previous life. Your actions in this life all bear fruit, some immediately and some in future lives.

If your circumstances are ordained by this cosmically fair system, if you are where you are because God wants you there, what is there to do?

It's hard to know which came first, Karma or politics. By the time the lighter-skinned invaders pushed into the subcontinent, the caste system became a very useful political tool for the, naturally, high-caste leaders. The deeply conservative caste system based on faith permits no choices: nothing to do. The leaders of Nepal—kings, Ranas and Panchas—understood the political value of that all too well. They promoted caste

and faith, limited expectations and choices and fostered fatalism.

Fatalism was at work in early America too. We called it predestination. If you were one of the elect, the chosen few whom God had called, you would be a success. God was going to show his love by letting you prosper. It called for great faith and prayer, of course, but also ingenuity and risk taking. God was going to put obstacles in your way.

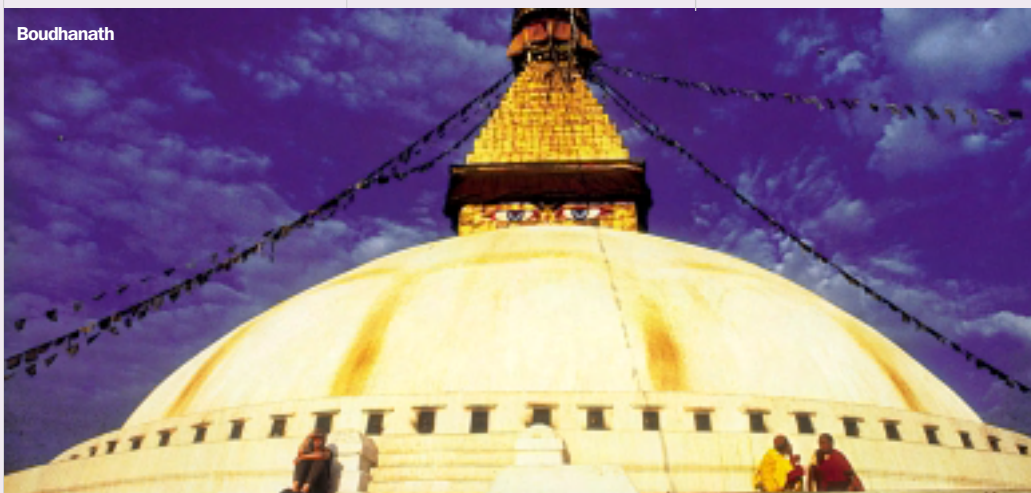
You were expected to surmount them, not merely accept them. “God helps those who help themselves,” the proverb says.

That's the critical difference between *ke game* being a question or an answer. Nepal's response is deeply rooted in faith and history. It's hard to cast off hundreds of years of tradition in a generation.

The difference is a source of frustration to most expatriates. If I had 10 rupees for every time I've heard a *bideshi* say, “Why don't they just...” followed with a well-meaning suggestion, I would be wealthy. But some people never adjust their expectations. My friend

Peter has been visiting Nepal for 20 years. He knows the visa regulations, the right counter to go to and which form to fill in. Yet every year he heads to the Department of Immigration with foreign expectations, and every year he becomes hopping mad over the process. How much simpler it would be just to assume it was going to take several hours.

“Why don't they just...” isn't going to change Nepal. What will change Nepal are the powerful ideas being imported along with the French wine and Japanese SUVs. The ideas of accountability and good governance, of free



Boudhanath

Moni Lama

5 THINGS I LOVE ABOUT NEPAL

1. POLITE TEENAGERS

It's an astounding thing for most foreigners to find that the average Nepali teenager is polite, helpful and respectful.

2. BEING ASKED, “HOW IS YOUR FAMILY?”

The difference here is that the questioner really wants to know. Americans live in a tight shell and carefully segment friends, acquaintances and workmates. In Nepal the use of the simple word *sathi*, “friend,” for all of those reflects a wonderfully open and egalitarian social sphere.

3. HISTORY

Two thousand years of history, legend and artifacts are here for the curious mind and wandering feet

to explore. It would take lifetimes to see and appreciate it all.

4. BASIC DECENCY

Westerners have learned to be suspicious and wary. My grandfather, I think, would have been comfortable a Nepali deal on a handshake or leaving a deposit for something without worrying about a receipt. My generation has almost forgotten how to deal with trust.

5. LATE AFTERNOON AT BOUDHANATH

The soft, painterly light at the end of the day adds to this special place's natural calm. There's no better drug than watching the pilgrims progress and the prayer wheels whirl.

enterprise and the worth of the individual are beginning to take hold. Education in English medium and the students' resulting exposure to the world of ideas outside are already changing Nepal.

A well-educated Nepal friend, who has spent almost as much time in my country as I have in his, asked me if I thought his experience of Kathmandu and mine were different. My answer was that our respective Kathmandus were quite similar. He laughed and confessed to having suffered culture shock when he returned from the United States.

I try to be careful about just how much change I wish for. **N**

Required reading: *Fatalism and Development, Nepal's Struggle for Modernization* by Dor Bahadur Bista. Available in most bookstores.

The Everest Experience



The Everest Hotel has been Nepal's symbol of luxury for years. Spacious & grand, it exudes the warmth of a rich Nepalese tradition that heralds the guest as a god. The Hotel offers everything that a discerning traveler would seek. Luxuriously & aesthetically designed rooms.

A myriad of business & meeting facilities. A sizzling dining experience with a choice of **Indian, Chinese, Continental & Nepalese** cuisine. Impeccable service. A lively and alluring casino & a sparkling discotheque. An experience that is a delight to behold and savor.



The Everest Hotel
KATHMANDU • NEPAL
everesthotel.com.np

U.S. IS NERVOUS ABOUT NEPAL

These are still early days for the new U.S. Ambassador, James Moriarty. But there is no escaping the fact that his performance—and remarks—will come under intense scrutiny in the days ahead, a fate no U.S. envoy in the present-day Nepal can possibly escape. In his first exclusive interview since he came to Kathmandu, Moriarty told *Nation Weekly* history of Maoist movements is “extremely bleak.”

In a nutshell, how would you describe the U.S. policy to Nepal?

To see a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Nepal. The question is how do you get there? And that’s basically: how do you design the tools to help Nepal get to that state where there’s a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Nepal? Now in normal times we have all sorts of options to think about. This is a very special time and there are special pressures. That’s why I am saying that Washington is more focused than it usually is on Nepal right now. There is nervousness.

...And why is that?

Because of the situation of the Maoists who obviously don’t want to see, or are acting in a manner that they seem to indicate they don’t want, a peaceful Nepal; they don’t want a prosperous Nepal; nor do they want a democratic Nepal. Our core objectives, in effect, are under siege right now and that’s why we’re worried about the country.

Do you expect a ceasefire anytime soon?

I don’t know. That again is a question of Maoist intention—if the Maoists have decided that we (they)’re not going to get much further from fighting and it’s now time to negotiate in good faith, acknowledge that Nepal for a foreseeable future is going to have a multi-party democracy under constitutional monarchy. If they reach that point, then ceasefire is very likely and will become a productive ceasefire where you can have good-faith negotiations. If not, then it’s tough to come up with a meaningful ceasefire.

What bothers the U.S. about the Maoists?

Their obvious tactics and their presumed intentions. Maybe you folks have a handle on their presumed intentions more than I do...I just go by their history and their current actions, and the history of the Maoist movements is very bleak. And that’s why I said it’s up to the Maoists to begin finding why their goals would take Nepal down that extremely, extremely bleak road towards a Maoist republic.

The U.S. doesn’t consider Maoists a bonafide political force?

A legitimate political force doesn’t resort to violence, terrorism, extortion, murder. I can’t think of a country where you call a group engaged in those kinds of activities insurgents; you could call them guerillas and those are the nicest terms you can use. And you could also call them terrorists.

Are you saying that they are terrorists?

Sure. Does that mean that there’s no hope in bringing them in? No. How? I said I keep getting back to the point that it will be when they recognize that they’re not going to win power and they decide at that point that they have to give up the use of violence.

You’re happy with the major parties onboard?

If you’re going to have peace in Nepal, you will need a degree of unity among the legitimate political forces, the Palace and the parties. You have to have a fairly similar, if not identical, views about Nepal. If you don’t have that sort of view, then how can the Maoists negotiate seriously with anybody? They can play off the differences between the Palace and the parties.

How does U.S. envision the role of the King?

We think that the King has an important role to play. If you look at Nepal’s domestic poli-

tics, you have three main actors: the Maoists, the political parties and the King. The King is a symbol of national unity and is a symbol around which many Nepalis rally and therefore he has an important role to play in moving this process towards peace...So, if the parties get obsessed with trying to get rid of the King, then they are obviously not going to be able to successfully address the threats imposed by Maoists.

Is the U.S. happy with the King’s role, especially post-October 2002?

We are happy to see that the parties have been involved.

Is the U.S. policy to provide more firepower to the government to allow it to negotiate from a position of strength with the Maoists or do you want to see an immediate ceasefire?

It’s up to the government of Nepal to say what is going to work...I would say a ceasefire with a reasonable chance of leading towards a meaningful peace is what Nepal should be looking for. And if the ceasefire is, to the contrary, used to allow the Maoists to do what they’re doing right now while not having to worry about any retaliation from the government...the security services, then you don’t have a ceasefire. It boils down to intentions.

Does the Nepali state have the power to sustain itself?

I think that the Nepali state has the capability of preventing the Maoists from taking over indefinitely, if it has the will.

How?

Basically, even in Beni, you saw that the Maoists really couldn’t take over a particularly well-defended position from the government forces. There is no way you can have a significant Maoist force march into Kathmandu. They just can’t do that as long as there’s a will on the part of the government. On the other hand, the current situation is obviously untenable for the Nepali people. The status quo cannot go on indefinitely. You said the vision of U.S. policy was strengthening the military to take on the Maoists successfully. I would say another important part of that vision is having the unity of the legitimate political forces, and also having unity in the outside world. We’ve seen steps forward by India. We’re going to need to make sure that no outside power is signaling to the Maoists that we view you as a legitimate group. They have got to be isolated. **N**



SS/W



INVOLUNTARY MIGRATION

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

KATHMANDU WAS JOLTED EARLY this month by the abduction of 43 students from Chhaimale, only 25km from Kathmandu proper. “Why have they abducted our innocent children?” wailed Saraswati Chapagain, mother of an abducted student, when we arrived at the village the day after the abduction. Other parents we met were in a state of shock. The incident shattered the myth that the schools in the capital were still safe. The students and their teachers were released but not before two anxiety-filled nights for their families.

The first mass abduction of students so close to the capital received the attention it deserved. But the less visible displacement of large numbers of people from their homes due to the conflict is perhaps far more serious. Both the Maoists and the state security apparatus are responsible for the involuntary migration of tens

of thousands of people, both within the country and across the border to India.

Gopendra Rijal was the headteacher at Ghurbise Secondary School in Panchami, Panchthar. He left his job and fled to Kathmandu along with his wife and two grown-up daughters. Roshan Subba is already a dead man to his family. He hasn’t visited or written to his family in Doti for the last four years. He fears that the insurgents would trace his letters. He says he escaped when a group of armed rebels came to take him away. “I may never be able to go to my home,” he moans. He doesn’t want his whereabouts revealed.

Thousands of people have been forced out from their homes. Hundreds of villages are now struggling due to growing numbers of men fleeing to the relative safety of district headquarters, cities and neighboring India. Unmarried women dress as if they were married to avoid abduction by the insurgents. “It is difficult

to stay in villages these days,” says Sandesh Pokhrel, 18, a resident of Phidim, Panchthar who now lives in Anamnagar in Kathmandu. “One has to support their ideology or at least pretend to do so.” While that doesn’t always placate the insurgents, it puts the villagers in harm’s way as the security forces assume that they are entertaining the insurgents.

The Maoists ejected family members of the security forces from Jogbudha and Shirsha VDCs in Dadeldhura in October last year and threatened to execute them if they came back. Families of security forces have also been forced to flee from numerous other places.

There is also evidence from informal surveys of NGOs in the Mid-west and other hill districts that the security forces have committed excesses too.

Although people have been leaving their villages for many years now, there is no credible tally of the displaced. “The state of internal displacement in Nepal



is in flux, and the numbers are largely unknown,” Michelle Berg, policy analyst with the Massachusetts-based U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) told *Nation Weekly* in an e-mail interview. “Although USCR estimates between 100,000 and 200,000, the government of Nepal indicated to us that there were some 350,000 internally displaced persons, according to an NGO survey.” Kundan Aryal of Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) says there are only 40,000 internally displaced people.

Displacement is not limited to movements from the hills to the cities. In January 2003 an estimated 120,000 Nepalis

crossed into India. In September, an estimated 2,000 persons per day were entering India: traditionally the migration flow was 300-400 per day, USCR reports. In his final press meet, the departing Indian ambassador, Shyam Saran, said there was a drastic increase in migration to India, adding: “In times of need do you go to friends or enemies?” Although there is a realization that large numbers of people are being displaced, a little more needs to be done to help them.

“We are working on it,” says James F. Moriarty, the new American Ambassador to Nepal, when asked if there were specific plans to help the displaced.

Immediate attention is necessary. USCR’s Berg says the condition is critical “given the high numbers and lack of services to the displaced. Most critically, the government [has] provided very little assistance to the displaced persons. Many displaced persons were reluctant to register for fear the government would accuse them of rebel sympathies.”

As the internal battle aggravates, more and more people will be squeezed out from their native homelands. With the state able to do little to help these displaced, lives of ordinary Nepalis is likely to become more agonizing. **N**

LURE OF LAHUR

A vast amount of time and energy is wasted competing for the 350 British Gurkha positions open each year, and unscrupulous operators are ever ready to seize the opportunity for profit

BY AJIT BARAL IN POKHARA

A FRESH GROUP OF BOYS HAS now started working out in the Gandaki Bodybuilding Center here in Nadipur. Every other morning they go to the Gandaki River with dokos and come back lathered in sweat with loads of stones weighing more than 30kg. These are the usual bodybuilding fanatics, right? Wrong. They are aspirants to Nepal's El Dorado, the British Army.

Every September, the British Army recruits more than 350 Gurkhas. But the rush for spots begins months in advance. Some enterprising fitness centers even cash in by claiming to provide the necessary training. One center in Balaju, Kathmandu, placed an alluring ad in Kantipur some days back: "Earn 6 crores in 16 years."

When asked how was that at all possible, a trainer said it was through the British Army recruitment. The center also insisted it provided training to improve IQ. "And if selected you will earn 6 crore rupees in 16 years, pension not included."

Every year about 3,500 youths give in to this "six-crore" lie while the social ramifications of Gurkha recruitment remain buried under the carpet.

regiments grew from these first volunteers and have been used as shock troops in some of Britain's bloodiest battles.

In recent years, protests against the recruitment have become a mainstream issue. A lawyer and a human rights activist, Gopal Siwakoti Chintan, for one, sees the recruitment of the Gurkhas as downright slavery. When asked why then is he fighting on behalf of the Gurkhas, he says, "I am fighting for equal treatment of Gurkhas in the British Army and against the injustice meted out to them." He adds, "The effect the recruitment in the British Army has on the family, children, the

The British Army has been recruiting Gurkhas for nearly two centuries. The original Gurkhas were people from a small but powerful principality in Central Nepal, Gorkha, who overran the mid-hills of Kumaon and Gadwal in their expansionist zeal. The Sugauli Treaty of 1816 with the British East India Company permitted the Gurkhas to volunteer for service in the Company's army. The famous Gurkha





42nd Gurkha Light Infantry, 1890
www.pharo.com



1st Gurkha Rifles, 1857
www.pharo.com

community, education and individual behavior often gets glossed over.”

Traditionally, the British Army attracts youths from four major ethnic groups—Rai, Limbu, Magar, and Gurung. Since “six crore” is at stake, there is intense family pressure on these youths to make it to the army. This comes at a price.

Gurkha recruits must hold an SLC certificate: many aspirants begin training as soon as they pass the exams. The fixation is so strong that many of these aspirants never bother to sign up for colleges after SLC, and those who do enroll devote more time and energy to training than to their studies. The low recruitment quota means many fail, and they often try for a second or third time, wasting several years during the prime of their youth.

Num Pun, resident of Nadipur, passed the SLC with good grades. He tried for the British Army for three straight years but failed, and he never enrolled in college. The lesson of Pun’s experience is lost on the young. “Both studying and joining the Army is for money,” says Ram Bahadur Gurung, who is training in the Gandaki Body Building Center in hopes of being selected in the British Army.

Those who join the British Army often retire early, some in their mid-

30, and many of them are either unwilling or find themselves unsuitable, to start a career in Nepal. As a group, the well-trained and world-wise ex-Lahures could be contributing greatly to Nepal after their service. Critics contend that too many ex-Gurkhas instead continue to work overseas or return to Nepal and squander their earnings rather than investing the money productively.

Apologists of the British Gurkha Army say that the recruitment provides steady jobs and helps the economy. But Chintan has a different view. He says the 350 openings that the Queen’s Army creates each year for the Gurkhas is very small and that the contribution of the British Gurkhas to the national income is negligible. Creating jobs within the country would be far wiser and productive, he argues.

Never the ones to miss opportunities for grandstanding, the Maoists too have been demanding that recruitment in the British Army be stopped. That is not possible in the short term, given a fast deepening conflict, and the attendant economic mess. But it is at least possible to rein in unscrupulous operators who profit from the recruitment rush. For now, the myth of the gold rush will continue—and at a very high social cost. **N**



BY SWARNIM WAGLÉ

PROSPERITY IS EPHEMERAL. IF a man behaves with patience and circumspection and the time and circumstances are such that this method is called for, he will prosper; but if time and circumstances change, he will be ruined... either because he cannot do otherwise than what is in character or because, having always prospered by proceeding one way, he cannot persuade himself to change.”

-MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, chapter XXV, circa 1516 AD.

There is something vulgar about the way former Minister Chiranjivi Waglé abused his public office for private gain over the last 12 years. More than his greed, lack of restraint, and shocking lapse of political judgement; his contempt for the laws, institutions and the collective opinion of the people of this land highlights the depths of hypocrisy that some “people’s representatives” are capable of sinking to. It was his cavalier attitude to public image, an exaggerated sense of self-importance within his political circle, and a belief that the

useful step in the direction of a healthier polity where no one is above the law. In a country where corruption is so prevalent, from the palaces to the peons, CIAA’s pursuit of due process to present that Waglé indeed amassed wealth illegally scores huge points by halting the nation’s diminishing faith in its indifferent institutions.

“It ain’t over yet,” says Waglé, and he is entitled to exhaust all his remaining legal options, but the fact that Waglé the big fish, a confidant of Prime Minister Deuba for 40 years, has been convicted is hugely symbolic.

“Fortune is the arbiter of half the things we do, leaving the other half or so to be controlled by ourselves. Fortune is one of those violent rivers which when enraged, flood the plains, tear down trees and buildings... she shows her potency when there is no well-regulated power to resist her, and her impetus is felt where she knows there are no embankments and dykes built to restrain her.”

-MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, chapter XXV, circa 1516 AD.

Born in Bungkot village into a relatively well-off family of educated males,

MACHIAVELLI AND THE FALL OF MR. WAGLÉ

country’s justice system would never touch him that undid a long career that was initially scripted to continue in fame.

The Special Court’s verdict of July 22 that Waglé be jailed for two-and-a-half years, and be fined over 27 million rupees on corruption charges is a historic victory for the people and the parliament of Nepal of which Waglé was a member right from 1991 through 2002. It was they who decided that enough was enough. It was they who passed the Anti-Corruption Act of 2002 to give sweeping powers to a constitutionally autonomous body to make a serious attempt at preserving the legitimacy of democracy as a system of fair governance. The court’s verdict on Waglé’s conduct of public life marks a

Waglé was sent to Kathmandu to study Sanskrit. In those days, boys from Gorkha carried sacks of homegrown rice, home-made ghee, and walked for five days through Dhading and Nuwakot to arrive in Kathmandu for an orthodox mix of lessons that did not include science, maths, geography, and English. The families expected the boys to matriculate, qualify for a civil service or teaching position, take a wife, and start a government career that compensated the modest salaries with social prestige tied to “jaagirs.” Waglé the early progressive shunned this route, disappointing his father, who fancied his second son being a pundit like himself. The Sanskrit high school and hostel in Ranipokhari were hotbed of activism in

the 1960s, and it didn’t take long for the likes of Chiranjivi Waglé to get drawn into student politics through the vehicle of the “Gandaki Chhatra Samiti.” Together with the current PM, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and former DPM, Ram Chandra Poudel, Waglé went on to form the Nepal Students’ Union.

Because B.P. Koirala had just come out of eight years in prison and exiled himself to India, it was K. P. Bhattarai who differed with his comrades in choosing to stay behind in Nepal, who mentored Waglé, Deuba and Poudel. Bhattarai taught democratic theory, demanded that the boys improve their English by reading The Times of India, and offered saintly advice on ways to lead a

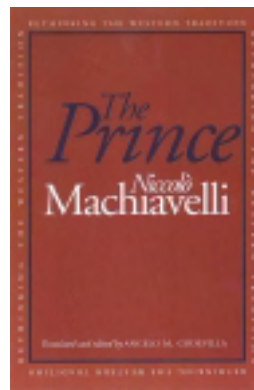


Sunder Shrestha

stratagem... and yet everyone, for all this diversity of method, can reach his objective... this results from nothing else except the extent to which their methods are or are not suited to the nature of the times... fortune is a woman, and if she is to be submissive, it is necessary to coerce her."

-MACHIAVELLI, *The Prince*, chapter XXV, circa 1516 AD.

When they finally brought democracy in 1990, men like Wagle had spent over eight years in jail for their political beliefs. Life wasn't meant to be easy after that either. As democrats, they were to go back to the provinces and win people's mandate before reaching for power. In his Gorkha constituency in the 1991 elections, Wagle ran a decent campaign on the strength of his past struggle, spent little money, and won a convincing victory. By the time he ran his third election campaign in 1998, he could only win through handouts to voters and brokers, and overt manipulation of state machinery. In less than eight years, Wagle, the suffering democrat, had turned into an unprincipled politician with criminal tendencies. And he knew it. They say power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. But can this really explain such dramatic reversals in one person's character and fortunes? Or does there exist in men, dormant but fundamental flaws that awake at the dizzy heights of arrogant power, and rest only after claiming their hosts' soul? So fantastic was his ascent that Wagle and allies couldn't handle the rise with grace or purpose—the awe, reach and gravity that accompany the authority of elected office overwhelmed him and his



many peers who are yet to be tried. This is the greatest tragedy of post-1990 politics. People who devoted 20 prime years of their youth to install democracy in the country didn't know what to do with it when they got it. With power comes responsibility, and the space to do good; but comes with it also the temptation to abuse and damage public trust. The lack of political direction in the 90s allowed good men with fine intentions to drift into the dark corridors of vice. At first they may not even have realized this. When they found that they had been claimed by the demons of their desire, as well as the rotten system, they lacked the will to spring back, to exit the ditch they chose to dig for themselves. They then tempted others for company—sons, relatives, colleagues, even innocent voters. And they scorned and ignored those who warned them by shunning them privately and publicly—distant young nephews who refused to meet them for nine years, or proud voters who wouldn't trade their sense of

betrayal for patronage of ill-gotten title or treasure.

The disgraceful fate of Chiranjivi Wagle shows that some dark clouds do have silver linings. The challenge now is to let this trickle turn into a flood that gives our dirty democracy a refreshing scrub and a wash—and not merely let spectacles around a few fallen men used by reactionaries to discredit a political system that is here to stay, reform, and thrive. **N**

(Views expressed in this column are personal, and do not necessarily reflect those of institutions the writer is affiliated with.)

painful youth of sacrifice. And the boys did just that for 20 years. They didn't take up government jobs, and campaigned incessantly for multi-party democracy, especially around the plebiscite of 1980 and Satyagraha of 1986. And as they saw some of their closest colleagues succumb to opportunism, tempted away by the Panchayat regime to cushy ministerial posts, Bhattarai's boys lived off borrowed money, and led humble lives in rented rooms, quite literally in the shadows of the tall walls of Singha Durbar. Their day would come.

"Men use various methods to pursue glory and riches. One man proceeds with circumspection, another impetuously; one uses violence, another



Sudhira Shah



athens2004.com

OLYMPIAN DREAMS

Nepali companies are beginning to learn the value of hitching their brand wagon to Olympic stars

BY JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

FOR YEARS NEPAL'S CORPORATE houses have tried to tap the passion that surrounds sports events. There have been a few successes, notably international banks and motorcycle distributors taking on mountaineers as brand ambassadors. Nepali business has a huge opportunity this summer in the form of Sangina Baidya, the first Nepali to qualify for the Olympic games. Will they get it right?

With the Athens Olympics just three weeks away, corporate giants around the world are desperate to make good on the marketing opportunity that comes around every four years. Some 20,000 athletes and sport officials from all over the world will converge for the three-week extravaganza. Fifteen thousand media representatives will also be present. Many stars will be born. For the company executives that sign public relations checks, such major televised events as the Olympics and

soccer's World Cup are just too good to pass up.

Top sponsors including IBM, Kodak, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Samsung, UPS, Sports Illustrated/Time and Visa International will each pay the International Olympic Committee \$50 million. In return they receive a range of privileges that they use to promote and market their businesses. Sponsorship benefits comprise exclusive marketing rights, the right to use official Olympic imagery on their products, preferential access to Olympic broadcast advertising, ambush-marketing advertising protection and on-site monopolies at Olympic events.

It's difficult to imagine Nepali companies matching those astronomical sums anytime soon. But it is heartening to see that our corporate houses have their own Olympic plans. For the sports community, which has seen only a trickle of corporate support, the growing presence of corporate sponsorship in this Olympic-year marks a new dawn. The

trick for the sponsors will be to get the right balance of promoting Nepali sport and themselves.

Last month, six of the country's leading business companies in various fields, Dabur Nepal, Vaidya Group, ICTC, Jyoti Group, Nabil Bank and Nepal Lever, appointed the taekwondo star, Sangina Baidya, as their brand ambassador. She will get expenses for travel, medical treatment, sports equipment and a daily allowance for her participation in the Athens Olympics. They have also promised Rs. 500,000 in endowment funding, the first such pledge to a Nepali sports star, once she returns home.

What has led these business houses to finally look beyond domestic sports events? Company executives answer the question carefully. "For us it's more about patriotic feeling than anything else," says Rajesh Lal Shrestha, director of the ICTC. Shrestha says he was getting tired of news of violence day in and day out. And he read that Baidya had achieved the feat of becoming the first Olympic qualifier from Nepal and the first Olympic taekwondo qualifier from all of South Asia. "That's where the whole idea sprouted," he says. "Sangina after all gives us something to cheer about." He explains

the company's e-mail box has been flooded with fan mails directed to Baidya, a SAF Games' double-gold medalist.

Although he insists that ICTC's decision to support Baidya was not driven by any commercial motive, he does acknowledge, "Both sports and corporate sector can gain a lot from each other." A marketing executive of a leading corporate house adds, "We are aiming to make a better impression on those who have already heard about us," also playing down commercial motives. But he points out, "It's only natural that the firm hopes to reap what it has sown."

Analysts and sponsors say playing up a sponsorship agreement can get tricky. The company has to get the right linkage between their business and the event or star. If a company doesn't push the relationship hard enough, it won't get the mileage for its money. If it pushes too hard, the company can seem to be an opportunist sullyng an amateur sporting event for its own gain.

Ashish Bista, marketing manager at the Gorkha Brewery, whose brand Carlsberg sponsors the national cricket team, says the key to striking a balance is to present the relationship in a tasteful and straightforward way. "Of course, we seek to promote our brand image," Bista says. "For now, this is a more important task for us than immediate sales."

"Through such presentations," Bista adds, "the company believes it is getting its message across without being either overbearing or overly demure about the marketing aspects of the relationship."

The Olympics begin August 14. We'll see then if Baidya's six sponsors get the balance right. ■



It's Party Time

BY YASHAS VAIDYA

Looking for a weekend bash in Kathmandu? Want to know the big concert you missed? Want to check out how you looked at the party at 1905 last week? Open your web browser and do what nearly 18,000 people do everyday, log on to partynepal.com, Nepal's premier clubbing and partying portal.

Most regular visitors, though, would be surprised that the site came to its present form more by chance than by calculation. When Robin Situala registered the domain name in 2002 from Delhi, come-who-may weekend bashes weren't exactly what he had in mind. "I had just landed in New Delhi after backpacking all over the world. I wanted to establish a site to promote the underground trance scene and Nepali DJs," says Robin.

The idea however lay idle for a year until he met Mandil Pradhan, a 19-year-old freelance web designer. "What immediately struck me was the name (PartyNepal)," recalls Mandil, now 21. "There was just something in the name. I knew we could do things with it." A third member, Bhusan Thapa, who had a background in event management, came into the scene later. Bhusan and Robin were friends from their undergrad days in Sydney.

After the three got together, PartyNepal really took off. And the rest, as they say, is history.

PartyNepal was officially launched on New Year's Day of 2060 (April 2003). It has since taken news about parties and events, once mostly a word-of-mouth affair, to a whole new level. Two months after their launch, PartyNepal began to organize events as well. And the big sponsors are beginning to stand up and take notice of what they have been doing. In their recent projects the trio has been backed by such big

names as Gorkha Brewery, Jack Daniel's and Heineken.

"How can you have a party without beer?" asks Mandil defending their association with such companies. "We're only giving the people what they want." And people, it seems, can't just get enough of what PartyNepal has to offer. The site has become the ultimate source of all party-related information in Nepal, not only for people here but also abroad. Visitors from overseas make up nearly 30 percent of the faithful legions who visit the site. One such PartyNepal regular Yashna Tamrakar says, "I make it a point to visit their site everyday. And their parties are the one 'happening' thing in Kathmandu."

"Happening" is what the three from PartyNepal are all about. They already have quite a few successful events under their belt. They organized Australian band Pty Ltd's gig in Kathmandu, the recent 1974 AD concert, Retro Night and the Surya Grind. But they consider Project Peace, a street dance festival organized in November last year, the high point in their venture in the past year. Organized in association with Funky Buddha and with help from the Thamel Tourism Board, the festival attracted thousands of people, an esti-



RM/SS

mated 40,000 say the trio, to the streets of Thamel. "The program started at around two in the afternoon. For a while, the people simply stood there listening to the music," says Robin. "But as the afternoon wore on, people slowly started dancing, then more people poured in, and soon there were people dancing everywhere. You had street urchins dancing alongside hip-hop kids, people walking around on stilts. Everything was just spontaneous." They also were the first in Nepal to broadcast an event live over the web. The broadcast of the event "Digital NRY" was viewed by nearly 3500 people on PartyNepal.com

This hip trio is a complete team. Web designer by profession and socialite by nature, Mandil manages the PartyNepal site and designs artwork for events and parties. He also doubles up as a photographer. His photos of events are the ones you see on their site (check out the one above). Robin manages the various events that PartyNepal organizes. He is in charge of churning out concepts for parties and laying the groundwork. For turning the plans into real events, Bhusan finds sponsors and takes care of the media for the events. The team attributes their success to the understanding they have between them.

In just over a year, these young entrepreneurs have managed to make their mark and have also had a blast while they have been at it. Now, they are planning to step out of the usual Kathmandu-based events. Plans are on for a "party-tour" that will start from Kathmandu and hop to different locations: PartyNepal is taking the party to Nepal. "There are still a lot of good parties to come," says Mandil. "We will make sure there's never a dull moment." **N**



Meeting point.



Probably the best beer in the world

TechMedia Presents **INFOTALK**
The 1st I.T. - based T.V. Program of Nepal

Produced by Tech Media House Pvt Ltd,
INFOTALK is a television show being telecasted by,
 **Nepal Television, every Tuesday at 8:00 AM.**
 **The repeat telecast can be viewed on Image Metro, every Sunday at 2:00 PM.**

The followings are the highlights of this week's episode:
Asain College of Engg. & Mgmt. Baneshwor, KTM
Advanced College of Engg. & Management, Lalitpur.
Providing a quality education in Nepal.

INFOTALK is an entirely technical TV-program based on information technology (IT). Including a wide range of computer technology based features like software, hardware and IT education in Nepal, the program presents thought-provoking interviews with leading entrepreneurs, professionals, academicians and engineers in the field of Nepalese information technology. INFOTALK presents a brief exploration into the Nepalese software and hardware market, its vendors, quality and feasibility in each new episode. INFOTALK is the only IT show of its kind, presented by Nepalese computer engineers. Nepalese audience can take a good advantage of the technical program on TV since the target audience is the consumers of IT products, services and education available in Nepal.

For Contact:
Email:- info@techmediahouse.com.np
Website:- www.techmediahouse.com.np
Techmediahouse Pvt.Ltd.
P.Box.No. 21685 KTM, Nepal
Cell: 98510-63178

In Vino Veritas

Wine imports are barreling ahead as consumers heed the ancient Latin dictum, “wine is truth,” but Nepal’s only vintner is struggling

BY SATISH JUNG SHAHI

Nepal’s only commercial vintner, Maheshwore Lal Ranjitkar of Nesy Food and Beverage, has been selling tasty and innovative fruit wines for more than four decades. A flood of cheap imports, the insurgency and indifferent government officials threaten to drive this unique venture out of business, but Ranjitkar remains hopeful.

Wine is normally made of fermented grapes grown in famous vineyards far, far away. The Himalayas don’t have the special climate zones where wine grapes grow best, but Nepal still has wonderful fruits. Ranjitkar’s winery in Sankhuwasabha, for example, makes unique fruit wines, Hinwa and Nesy, from raspberries, oranges, peaches and berries that would otherwise go to waste. His innovative ways however haven’t changed the way officials view his business.

“The government has been charging Rs. 56 excise duty plus 10 percent VAT per liter on my indigenously brewed wine,” says Ranjitkar. “How am I supposed to remain in competition and manage wholesalers, retailers when I have to pay the same tax as cheaper foreign wines and still keep my sales price below theirs?” Taxes aren’t his only problem.

“The locals cannot enter the jungles like before for raw materials such as raspberries, for which I pay Rs. 25 per kg,” he says. “Sometimes it’s the Maoists and sometimes the Army that could shoot them dead.”

He requested the government to allow him to transfer his winery inside the Valley, but the officials declined, saying it would affect the Valley’s environment. “How can they say that when they’re the ones who are dumping Kathmandu’s junk along riverbanks and polluting the Bagmati?” He says “brewing wine from fruits is environment friendly, and the

residue can be used to make jam and candy or even be fed to pigs.”

In 2001, Hinwa’s factory in Sankhuwasabha received a major setback: Maoists shut the brewery at gunpoint for two years. Ranjitkar lost an international contract with a London company that wanted to import his wines. Production is now under-



SS/MS

way again, though at a slow pace.

Ranjitkar says the factory has lost its network and momentum. But he isn’t giving up. At his Chobar residence he is testing the production of wines made from nettles that are abundant in the villages. He has also been making Nesy juices and sending them to supermarkets.

“I am still struggling,” he says. “I am still to gain what I yearned for in life.” Ranjitkar’s determination is an important sign of hope, a small light in the darkness for those who have lost hope. **N**

A toast for good health

When Nepalis raise a toast and “cheers” for good health, it is increasingly likely that there will be real wine in their glass. Wine sales are booming and the wines even feature at marriage parties, where whisky, beer and soft drinks once held sway. “We used to sell 10-20 bottles of wine per day when we just entered business. The figures now has reached almost 400 per day,” says Amit Agrawal, Managing Director of Kantipath’s Greenline Cente, one of the country’s leading wine importers. The most popular wines are the less-expensive French Vin De Table and Vin De Pays selections, commonly called table wines, available for Rs. 240-400. Not far behind are 5-liter tetra-packed wines from Australia, very

popular for parties and large gatherings.

The popularity of wine is due to rising wine awareness and the general belief among drinkers that a glass of wine is good for the heart. Importers like Agrawal say that wine has taken Nepal by storm, as varieties of red and white wines go well with Nepali food. Increasing meat consumption has also supported wine drinking. Greenline imports over 1,000 varieties of wine, all of them, they boast, as good as buying directly from the famous vineyards in France.

“You can get great Appellation Controle (certified) wine varieties from Bordeaux, Beaujolais or Cotes-du-Rhone vineyards for as little as Rs. 500-700,” says Agrawal. “In fact, good wines are cheaper

here due to lower duty structure on imported wines compared to other countries.” A rough sampling in the local markets show the prices can go up to Rs. 5,000, depending upon the grape variety, source and vintage.

The only Nepali wines on the menu in a local restaurant were Hinwa and Nesy, both brewed by fermenting wild berries in Sankhuwasabha. They cost Rs. 200-240. Nepali wines are estimated to have only five percent share of the domestic wine market, importers say, due to the availability of cheap imported wines.

Large liquor importers like Greenline estimate that wine consumption has taken at least 30 percent of the total liquor market. Let’s raise our glasses to that. **N**

Fair & Lovely



presents **the boss
VOW**

VOICE OF WOMEN

A platform for discussions, debates, seminars, talks,
enhancing communication skills, leadership, hobby clubs,
personality development and more....



The event will also
celebrate the achievements of

**THE 10
MOST
INFLUENTIAL
WOMEN
OF NEPAL**

Register for your exclusive pin

Launching
August 7, 2004

For details
call **Yeju : 4780394**

Bullish Banks

All sectors are bearish except the banks. Is there something that doesn't meet the eye?

BY SUDESH SHRESTHA

Heighting insurgency and political mess witnessed by our nation in the last few years have undoubtedly taken a toll on the economy. The economic fiber in the rural and semi-urban areas has been ripped apart by frequent bandas, blockades and violence. Development money has not flowed through to the projects. Exports have declined. Trade has suffered owing to tariff adjustments by India. The government data that tourist arrivals have picked up does not reflect the financial woes of large tourism establishments. Majority of the businesses have dwindled or at best are struggling to maintain position.

But one particular industry has seemingly emerged stronger: Banking. In spite of growing number of banks and a sluggish economy, virtually every private sector bank has posted good profits and business growth. Is it too good to be true?

A few enterprising businesspeople have been bullish enough to maintain and even expand their businesses. Migrant workers and servicemen have been sending money home to their families in increasing sums. Salaried employees of government and private organizations earn more today than what they did a few years ago. The micro aspects of the economy are healthy. But are these factors strong enough to compensate for the fallout of declining business environment? Maybe not.

The issue here is of risk management. A few banks may have benefited from starting late and therefore are able to avoid lending to ailing sectors of the economy. What about the banks that have been around for sometime? Do the banks possess risk management capabilities strong enough to have managed around the increased risks of the last few years? There is more to it than meets the eye.

Firstly, the general public should understand that operating profits published by banks conceal more than they reveal. Typically, income tax and loan loss provisions take away large chunks of the operating profit leaving accretion to the balance sheet significantly lower relative to operating profit. For example, a bank reporting an operating profit of say Rs. 10 crores may need to pay income tax of Rs. 2 crores and set aside Rs. 7 crores on account of non-performing assets (NPA) leaving a net profit of Rs. 1 crore only. Loan loss provisions are created in accordance with the overdue profile of the loans a bank carries in its book.

This leads to another question: Are banks reporting accurate overdue profiles? I have serious doubts about a number of banks (if not all) strictly adhering to loan loss guidelines stipulated by the regulator. This is also a reflection on the regulator's capability of effective supervision and a consistent approach on all banks. One gets to hear about banks

rushing, just prior to financial year-ends, to clean up their lending books by restructuring problem loans or transferring an existing bad loan under a different counter-party in order to manage the overdue profile and therefore charge-off lower provisions. I have also heard about banks and financial institutions engaging in NPA swapping. What is an NPA for one bank becomes a good loan for another. The first bank can buy back the loan at a later date after the loan has been "cleansed." Some banks are thus able to project "better than actual" pictures of their profitability and financial standing.

Investors and the public at large should also be aware of risk management capabilities of the banks. Majority of the banks can be considered weak in risk management aspect. The Nepal Rastra Bank is known to have recently asked at least two banks that have been in operation for 10 years or so to write their credit policies (because they didn't have one all these years) and have them endorsed. Banks are in the business of taking risks; one wonders what kind of risks these banks took without even having a credit policy in place. The loans which go bad for the sole reason that due diligence was not conducted beg a question whether the shareholders have been unduly advantaged by distribution of unearned profit—especially in case of banks which have reported large profits in the past years and are now making extra provisions against those very loans. And then there are banks which do not reassess and review their borrowers on a periodic basis—how would one tell if quality of such loans continue to be acceptable.

Questions should also be raised about how aggressively banks go about disbursing loans. There are banks that have achieved phenomenal growth in their lending business over the last two or three years. Of late, even government-controlled banks under foreign management have shown a great deal of aggression in lending money at very flexible terms. Such aggression is completely out-of-sync with prevailing market conditions. When the financial year-end was round the corner, some of these banks were chasing up with their borrowers with equal aggression—this time for repayment of the overdue loans.

It is natural for promoters and investors to expect quick returns on their investment. But excessive pressure to distribute dividends is bound to take a toll on the management—assuming promoters have given them adequate "free hand." It plays counter to the fundamentals of the banking business. Banking is a long-term proposition and must be viewed as such. Strong banks in more developed economies have histories going back several decades, sometimes centuries. I do not see many of the Nepali banks going that distance if they do not work on their fundamentals now. **N**



CITY This Week

EVENTS

E-commerce training

A five-day training on e-commerce, specifically for handicraft products, organized by E-Sewa. The training will cover topics such as web designing, online transactions, and website marketing and promotion. Date: July 25 – 29. For information: 4414670, esawa@catgen.com

Celebrating 25 Years

At Shangri-la Hotel, Lazimpat. G & R: Grills and Roast Fusion. Date: July 31 and August 1. For information: 4412999

Films @ Lazimpat Gallery Café

Free Admission. All profits from food and drinks will go to PA Orphanage Nepal. Time: 7 p.m. For information: 4428549

JULY 27: TROY

An adventure drama based loosely on Iliad, one of Homer's epic poems.



Cast: Brad Pitt, Eric Bana, Orlando Bloom, Sean Bean, Rose Byrne, Diane Kruger, Brian Cox. Director: Wolfgang Petersen

JULY 29: INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

An old-school Hollywood romantic comedy from the Coen brothers. Cast: George Clooney, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Geoffrey Rush, Billy Bob Thornton. Director: Joel Coen

Summer Grind

Beat the scorching summer heat away with the Summer Grind. At Mahendra Police Club. Date: July 30. Time: 12 - 11 p.m. Tickets: Rs. 300.

Paella Night

Enjoy the Spanish mood created to draw you in. At Dwarika's Hotel. Date: July 30. Time: 7 p.m. Tickets: Rs. 699, includes Paella & BBQ Dinner, and a shot of Jack Daniel's or a special cocktail. For information: 4479488

Martin Chautari

Discussions at Martin Chautari, Prasuti Griha Marga 509, Thapathali, Kathmandu. Participation open to all. This week at Martin Chautari:

MANGALBARE DISCUSSION (JULY 27):

Time: 5 p.m. Topic: Decline in Hill Agriculture Development. Pundit: Madhukar Upadhaya, Nepal Water Conservation Foundation.

MEDIA DISCUSSION (JULY 29):

Time: 3 p.m. Film @ Chautari: Premier show and discussion of Nepali film Lakshya. Pundit: Manoj Pandit, director.

YOUTH DISCUSSION (JULY 30):

Time: 3 p.m. Youth Initiative in collaboration with Martin Chautari organizes Youth Discussion Series.

POLITICAL DISCUSSION (AUGUST 1):

Time: 3 p.m.

ART EXHIBITIONS

Colors of Monsoon

An exhibition of paintings by senior artists. Gallery Nine, Lazimpat. Till July 29. For information: 4428694

Tibetan Craft

Antique and replicate fine exquisite Tibetan boxes on display. Susan's collection, Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. Till August 31. For information: 4700632, 9851055435.

ONGOING

Executive Lunch

Executive Lunch available for Rs. 170. At Bhanbha Ghar Restaurant, Kamaladi. For information: 4225172

Dwarika's Thali

Enjoy Nepali cuisine, hospitality and heritage. At Dwarika's Courtyard, Dwarika's Hotel, Batisputali. For information: 4479488

Thakali cuisine

Enjoy a Thakali lunch with two kinds of curry and great phapar Dhindo from Mustang and many other items. At Thakali Thasang Kitchen. Time: 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. For information: 4224144.

Earthwatch

Have a farmhouse breakfast with birds, lunch with butterflies and dinner with fireflies, at Park Village. At Park Village Restaurant, Budhanilkantha. For information: 4375280

Nepali Tunes

Folk tunes of Nepali drums and flute. At The Explorer's Restaurant, Hotel Vajra. Every Wednesday and Saturday. Time: 6:30 p.m. For information: 4271545.

SPIDER-MAN 2

"Spider-man 2" is based on the Marvel's comicbook superhero "Spider-man" and is the sequel to the 2002 movie. Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) returns as Spiderman but things aren't going too well for our hero. The insecure high school student we know is now a university student. He is more helplessly in love than ever with Mary Jane Watson (Kirsten Dunst), his childhood crush. His friend Harry Osborn (James Franco) hates Spider-Man, blaming him for the death of his father (a.k.a. the Green Goblin). He's not able to hold his jobs and doesn't fare too well at the university. Aunt May faces financial woes, and things do not look too bright. After his web-spinning and wall-climbing abilities start to fade, he decides to do away

with his superhero alter-ego. The antagonist is played by Dr. Otto Octavius (Alfred Molina) who has a personality spilt like our hero in the form of the evil Doc Ock. The film's strong storyline is backed up some excellent CGI, the train sequence deserves mention. With all said and done, the film is special audience can identify with their hero—his troubles, heartaches, weaknesses. This movie about the unlikely superhero Peter Parker will strike a cord with most audiences. A superhero movie for those who necessarily don't like or watch superhero movies. Showing at Jai Nepal from July 23 onwards. For bookings: 4442220. www.jainepal.com Timings: 12:15, 3:15, and 6:15 p.m.





Three Rupees Worth Of Democracy

What keeps America, in spite of its flaws, still a functioning democracy is its in-built check and balances to authority

BY SUSHMA JOSHI

In Nepal there is a lot of talk—one might almost say too much—about “democracy.” Newspapers devote entire columns so theorists can pontificate on it (look at how much space *Nation* is giving to this pontificator!), international non-profits with money to burn fund seminars and workshops to discuss how to do it, people burn tires on the streets as a means to get it. If we had a self-help publishing industry, “How to Instill (and nurture) Democracy: And see if it can flourish in a semi-feudal society” might be on Nepal’s best-seller list. (Oops: our non-existent bestseller list.)

In America, the word “democracy” also raises passions and hackles. It gets people to give up their jobs and join the election campaign. It gets Congress to pass billions of dollars in funding to start wars in Afghanistan. It is enough to inspire people to support wars and send their children to die in foreign countries. In other words, it is as loaded as it is in Nepal.

A minority would argue that America is in fact, not a democratic country. That democracy flourishes better in countries where there is not such a massive disparity between the rich and the poor. For me, democracy in America kicks in when a right-wing person can sit down to dinner and break bread with a left-wing person without having to shoot them dead or chop their hands off. Surely, you think, that might be feasible in Nepal one day? Can people with different political opinions actually find themselves within the same system and think of living together without having to bomb each other into submission?

Perhaps our problem is a lack of space where people can express their opinions safely. Speech in our country has become actions: voicing opinions can become an act of suicide. Mention one favorable word towards the Maoists and you might end up being “disappeared.” Mention one word of support towards the monarchy and you might end up with your throat slit open. Why does this not happen in America? Plenty of people are plenty aggrieved at Bush, and plenty of them hate John Kerry. What keeps the people of the most militaristic society in the world from shooting each other dead due to difference of opinions?

Spates of extreme but small scale violence regularly rocks America. Anti-abortion fringe groups from the right have bombed abortion clinics because they do not believe in abortion. Cults like the Klu Klux Klan kill their opponents. The difference in America may be that violence of this nature is seen to be unusual, and perpetuated by marginal groups—

things that regular people do not do on a regular basis. Regular Republicans do not pick up guns and shoot Democrats dead for having sex with their interns. Regular Democrats do not pick up grenades and bomb Bush for starting an unnecessary war (although they might throw eggs and rotten tomatoes).

In our country, violence has become the way we hold conversations with each other. Shootings, bombings, disappearances and assassinations have become the norm. Whether we confess to it or not, this has become the state of our nation. And each incident, each moment in which a bombing or an “encounter” becomes normalized in the press, we forget we are moving closer and closer to a state where violence becomes the natural state of nature. Amidst all the weary litany of deaths, it is a challenge to keep seeing the strangeness in violence. This is not people’s normal state of being.

The other aspect that keeps America, in spite of its flaws, still a functioning democracy is its in-built check and balances to authority. Nepal may be one of few countries where a politician is still allowed to run for office after holding it for four or more terms. The U.S. president gets kicked out of office after two terms, or eight years. Clinton recently gave an interview to *Oprah in O* magazine where he talks about how much he

loved being in office, and how he had to mentally prepare to leave it. Who doesn’t love being the head of state? Now he has to wait on runways and in New York City traffic. Americans are prepared to step down from public office once their terms are over, no matter what their political orientation. We, on the other hand, are fixated with authority. We give them life-long power over us, like they are our fathers. We allow our politicians to be disgustingly greedy, and forget

to remind that public service comes with a time limit.

Being in graduate school in America reminds me that teachers and students mingle on the same level. We break bread at the same table, we eat the same food, we even share the same conversations. If I have an opinion that is worth its salt, my professor will hear it – never mind that I am a young, minority woman, and they are old white men. This ingrained sense of democracy that is instilled in academic institutions in the United States, I would say, is the third wheel of democracy.

The proponents of democracy in Nepal need to work towards these three goals: to stop normalizing violence, to stop deifying our leaders and start making them accountable to the public, and to start building towards a more egalitarian relationship between different groups of people. **N**



nw/ss

DEMOCRACY: Nepali style



TEX. WORLD

*A mark of
high quality*



Species of the fabric as unlimited as fish in the sea,
from the daringly different, to the timeless tradition.
Unexplored colours unexpected co-ordinates you
will find unlimited possibility for your limited budget.

Spread your net at the Tex-World and spend some
quite hours fishing through our collection you will go
home with a great catch.

Luzhou Medical College Sichuan-PR China

Founded in 1951, WHO, CMC recognized, English medium course based on TU syllabus course, taught by South Asian Teachers.

5.5 years MBBS. Internship in Nepal. International exchange and co-operation with 9 countries such as Japan, Germany, U.S.A. etc.

39 teaching hospitals 500 research programs 15500 patient's bed 17000 students have graduated from LMC.

- You don't want to make wrong choice!
- You don't want to waste your precious time!
- You don't want to spend more than necessary!
- And you want the best and we shall give you our best!

PRACTICALITY

INITIATIVE

HARMONY

DILIGENCE

SPEED INTERNATIONAL PVT. LTD.

(SOUTH ASIA REPRESENTATIVE)
Churchill Complex, China Town Market, Bagdurbar
Tel/Fax: 977 1 423 2896
E-mail: speedinternational@consultant.com

Study in **GERMANY** on Full Tuition Freeships

Join us for exciting careers

- in any desired academic field -
from Bachelors upto PHD level



Mr B K Shrestha
Int'l Director - Memorex

will be available for
FREE COUNSELLING
AND INTERVIEWS

at **The Memorex Centre**
Naag Pokhari - Hattisaar
Call: 4422988 / 4424839

- * Intensive German course (20h/wk)
- * International study groups
- * Recognised by all German Universities
- * University application support
- * Conditional letters of admission
- * Free tuition at all German Universities
- * Accommodation with local Host families
- * Individual support for students
- * Health, accident and liability insurance

So many students are
Working and Studying on
Full Tuition Freeships !!



- You could too!! -

WARNING:
Please beware of
false marketing
gimmicks.....we can
help you choose the
right University



**FREE TRIAL CLASS BEFORE
ADMISSION**



Languages
GRE, GMAT, SAT
Abroad Counselling
Visa Preparation
Abroad Counselling
TOEFL
IELTS

Why should you believe us?

- Everyday different class with handouts.
- Regular new-tech audio-video class.
- Combined course of American & British English.
- Free sufficient materials for each student.
- Modern well equipped & convenient classroom with not more than 8-9 students.
- To check your improvement weekly testing system.
- Effective super learning system.

We haven't had a record of even a single student who joined Axis Int'l Education became desatisfied from our services.



AXIS
Int'l Education

Putalisadak (opp. Share Market)



MIGLIT SIGN

for all kinds of digital signboard
&
computerised vinyl stickers

P.O. Box: 8975 EPC 5588
Bagbazar, Kathmandu
Tel: 424 67 52 / 981043401
email: migma@enet.com.np

KATHMANDU INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE
CELEBRATES!



The Middle States Association Commission on Secondary Schools has announced that KISC is FULLY ACCREDITED. Accreditation:


- Encourages and facilitates school improvement
- Provides a reason for public accountability
- Ensures that KISC meets Middle States twelve internationally recognized professional standards for schools
- Enables KISC to issue High School Diplomas

ACCREDITED BY
THE MIDDLE STATES
ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES AND
SCHOOLS



For information or registration a donation contact:
The Principal, Kathmandu International Study Centre
Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977 - 1 - 4786004, 4781776
Email: admin@kisc.edu.np

KISC is also a UNIVERSITY OF COLLEGE International Education Centre.




Belle Momo

ROYAL SAINO

RESTAURANTS & BAR KEYMAN
Dubar Marg, Tel: 4230890

More than 25 Varieties of momos



Wonderfabs

The Enchanting World of Fabrics

FABRICS • SALWAR KAMEEZ SETS • SAREES • ACCESSORIES

The widest range of fabrics to simply change your wardrobe

Handloomed cottons and silks in amazing weaves & prints

Linen- The fabric of the millennium in various blends.

Salwar Kameez sets- The ultimate collection.

Exquisite Silks, Brocades, Chiffons, Satins & Crepes in a kaleidoscope of colors and prints


Embroidered, Hand painted and innovative fabrics with shawls, stoles and scarves thrown in.

Come and Create Your own Style

384, 3rd Floor, Super Market (Bishal Bazar), New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4242250 Fax: 977-1-4258678 E-mail: wonderfabs@yahoo.com

AKARSHAN

Wrought Iron Furniture



For details: 5545055, 4274615, 4782224
email: akarshanfurniture@hotmail.com
www.akarsan.com.np

The Tibetan Furniture Warehouse

A collection of the finest authentic Tibetan furniture. Only original pieces - nothing repaired.



Everything is guaranteed and has been carefully cleaned & expertly restored, ready for your home.



Also available old Tibetan rugs, Tibetan & Himalayan objects.

Monday-Sunday by appointment
Tel: 4405602
www.kachalintia.com
info@kachalintia.com

above KALINIA
PICTURE FRAMING
East side of Royal Palace
Nag Pulaha, Kathmandu



KISHOR KAYASTHA

PHOTO CLUB ☎9851052778

NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY



Main Showroom: Soaltee Mode (On the way to Hotel Soaltee)
Thamel Showrooms: Opposite Sanohyokosh building
Tel: 4-273292, 277023, 283644 | Fax: 4-270092
Email: npi@mos.com.np | Web: www.Nepalpashminaindustry.com

1 STEP SOLUTION

A professional INTERIORS & EXCLUSIVE SUPPLIERS



- ❖ Foam Carpet
- ❖ Curtain
- ❖ Mattress
- ❖ Bed Cover
- ❖ Wall Paper
- ❖ Drapery Rod

❖ Exclusive Furnishing Fabric
❖ Venesing & Vertical Blind

Royal Securities

P.O. Box: 21914, Maitidevi, Kathmandu
Tel: 4421756 Fax: 977-1-4420517
URL: www.royalchoice.com
e-mail: roliquor@ntc.net.np

Miss Nepal Man



SS/MS

The Hidden Treasure, the event management company, returns to the limelight each year in August with its Miss Nepal contest. But since 1994, when the contest started, The Hidden Treasure and the contest have been in the news for other reasons too. Each year the event is marred by protests by women rights groups. Their charges: the contest depicts women as a commod

ity. But that hasn't stopped Girendra Man Rajbanshi, the Managing Director of Hidden Treasure and his team in their mission to select young, beautiful and, as he puts it, intelligent women to groom them for the contest which then acts as a dress rehearsal for the Miss World and Miss Asia Pacific pageants. The tenth contest, Dabur Vatika Miss Nepal 2004, will be held on August 7 at the Birendra International Convention Center in New Baneshwor, the usual venue for the event. Rajbanshi talked to **Satish Jung Shahi** of **Nation Weekly** about the preparations, the glamour and the regular controversy.

How are the preparations?

We have chosen 23 finalists out of 58 applicants. Out them, 18 will be featured for the final event on August 7. They are being groomed on personality development and public speaking. Classes are being held on fashion, photography and beauty at the International Club in Sanepa. We have also arranged guest lectures three days a week on important issues such as tourism, communications and so on to enhance the knowledge of the participants. It is interesting to see how our training has helped them gain a lot of self-confidence.

Are the participants getting better each year?

If you are talking about quality, it is difficult to measure. But at least I am happy that the contest has been able to generate social awareness in the last 10 years, and more and more young women have started taking up the Miss Nepal pageant as a platform for career develop-

ment. However I cannot boast we're doing a great job, as we don't have the basic infrastructure like India does. Participants there are more fashion conscious and undergo grooming in private institutes for two or three years prior to participating.

What about the protests against the pageant that take place every year?

They are just doing their job, as we do ours while respecting their right to protest. All I want to say is that holding Miss Nepal isn't bad and should be taken positively. We are grooming 15-20 participants each year to be cultured citizens. You have to take this event as a platform for these participants to show their talent, like dancers take to the stage and sportspersons to the stadium.

All I want to say is that holding Miss Nepal isn't bad and should be taken positively

How has the contest helped the participants?

We don't want to claim anything, but it has definitely helped many grow into independent women and to use this platform to develop their career. Ask any former Miss Nepal participant, and they'll support this thesis.

Do you make money from this event?

The Hidden Treasure is a registered company but we've never made any

money by organizing Miss Nepal. In fact our members are involved in various other professions and they chip in when we run out of cash to host any event. We all support Miss Nepal because, as concerned citizens of Nepal, we want a Nepali to represent Nepal in the international arena. We have organized more than 20 other events already, but I don't know why we are so tied to Miss Nepal in the media. Probably because a lot of glamour is involved, and we also hold the franchise for Miss World and Miss Asia-Pacific in Nepal.

So the top two winners will participate in Miss World and Miss Asia Pacific this year too?

Yes, and we also have plans to send another to Miss Earth. In addition to the regular smaller titles, we have also added "Vatika My Choice," where everyone will get to choose their Miss Nepal 2004 by voting through mail or e-mail.

Any plans for a Mr. Nepal contest?

We don't want to hold a monopoly and would like other organizations to take the initiative, though we hold the franchise for Manhunt and Mr. World pageants. Our popularity is due to the pageant's continuity, and we haven't worked for money. Many other event management companies suddenly come in the limelight once, and then they disappear. But I tell you, organizing the Miss Nepal pageant is too hectic and takes up six months of our time for planning. None of the events are possible to hold unless the sponsor is willing to pay for the fanfare. **N**

HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL

The author Bipin Adhikari is a lawyer with the expertise in the areas of constitutional law, human rights, and legal reform initiatives. The book “Building Capacity of National Human Rights Institutions: The Case of Nepal” is based on his experiences with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) where he worked as a human rights capacity development advisor for two years.

The book provides a glimpse into the workings of a national human rights institution in the face of increasing human rights violations in the country. It talks about the role of national human rights institutions presently growing in number

around the world; the NHRC being one of them. The NHRC is highlighted in the book as it deals with analysis of the commission’s achievements and shortcomings. It also looks towards the future and the challenges that lie ahead. Also included are a number of documents produced by the NHRC.



With the country veering towards chaos and violence, with bombings, killings becoming a daily occurrence, human rights violations are becoming all too common in

our country. Those who are interested in the role of human rights institutions in an increasingly conflict-ridden society would find this book useful. **N**

THE SINNER AND THE SAINT

The book “Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul” begins when Tony Hendra, as a 14-year-old boy, is caught red-handed having an affair with a married woman.

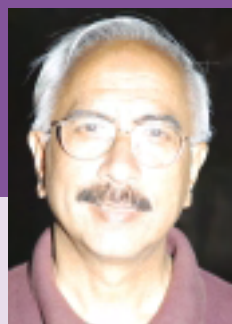
The woman’s husband, instead of flying into a fit of rage, sends him to an English Benedictine monk, Reverend Joseph Warrilow, or Father Joe as he is better known. The young boy expects cruel treatment from the priest just like the monks in his Catholic school. But he is surprised to meet instead a cartoonish figure—big flat feet in sandals. In his very first meeting, Father Joe tells the impressionable young boy that sex is not a sin and his passion is



more a crime due to its selfishness nature in readily taking advantage of another human being. From that moment on, the priest not only becomes Hendra’s confessor, but also his

long-term personal mentor and spiritual guide. He helps the author through his formative years at Cambridge and as he forges a career as a writer. Hendra later becomes the head

writer at “National Lampoon.” But Father Joe is also there to help Hendra through his troubles as he jumps ship from one failed marriage to another, only to be struggling in that too. He also helps the author deal with his substance abuse and his iniquities as a parent. **N**



Book Mark

Kedar Bhakta Mathema is a former Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University and has served as the ambassador to Japan. An educator who holds a doctorate in English literature, Mathema reads a lot of poetry—Spanish and French translations, Nepali poetry and even Haiku.

Your early readings?

I used to love the fairy tales of Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen in my early days as a reader. I was fascinated with stories about knights and dragons, beautiful princesses rescued by heroes. Then I moved on to “Treasure Island” and “Robinson Crusoe,” mostly adventure novels as I progressed through the years.

What about more serious ones?

When I was doing my Bachelors, I read more classical literature from authors such as Jane Austen. “The Tale of Two Cities” by Charles Dickens is one book I remember well. Another is “Tom Jones” by Henry Fielding.

Your reading habits these days?

It’s more of a mixed bag. I read all kinds of poetry these days—Spanish and French translations, Nepali poetry and also Haiku. I’ve also tried my hand at it.

What about novels?

I have an interest in existentialist novels. I enjoyed the books of French existentialist writers such as Jean Paul Sartre and Jean Genét, translations of course. I found them both beautiful and philosophical.

What was the last book you read?

“The New Production of Knowledge,” a collection of articles. It deals with how the creation of knowledge is being moved away from traditional bases such as universities.

Any interest in non-fiction and the like?

I like to read non-fiction as well, as I find it informative. I recently read “Globalization and Its Discontents,” by Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist at the World Bank. The book presents various aspects of the debate on globalization.

What are the books that you want to read, but have not had the chance?

“Markings” by Dag Hammarskjold, a former Secretary General of the United Nations, who was killed in a plane crash. I also would like to read Will Hutton’s “The State We Are In.”

You read a lot of translated works. Doesn’t that present a problem?

Sometimes. Translations are like the other side of a brocade. It’s hard to bring out the same beauty in the translation. The best translations are when the sentiment, essence of the original is brought out by the translator, who needs to be good writer himself. **N**



To You Mr. Robinson

Mr. Gordon William Robinson must be basking on the beaches of Bali, where he is a supposed real estate man. Or is it in Bombay, where according to records he has had insidious business links and has made frequent visits? In December 2002, the infamous drug trafficker (a British national) was handed a 17-year sentence (and penalized Rs. 1 million) by a Special Court in Kathmandu: he was caught red-handed with more than 2kg of brown sugar at Tribhuvan International Airport. He was on his way to Bali, and walking around with a limp. It turned out that he was carrying the contraband inside his shoes other than in his briefcase.

Then early this year, the Robinson saga got even more interesting. In April, he was mysteriously given a clean bill by the Supreme Court and released from a Kathmandu prison. According to a story, the jailer at Dillibazaar Sadarkhor, Ramuraj Kadaria, was so completely thunderstruck when he was handed over a court notice of Mr. Robinson's acquittal that he would have none of it. When the jailer called the court to confirm the acquittal, an official who answered his phone told him that he was as perplexed by the acquittal.

And so were we. Fortunately, the judges who ordered Mr. Robinson's release have been put in the dock ever since. One of them—Krishna Kumar Verma—resigned last week amid constant pressure from the media, civil society and, not the least, his Supreme Court colleagues. It was one decision that was long overdue. For once, the judiciary can hold its head high that it has got rid of an extremely controversial senior judge (Verma was third in the Supreme Court hierarchy).

Verma of course has consistently hit the headlines since the two-member bench (the other member is Baliram Kumar) acquitted Mr. Robinson in April. By all accounts Mr. Robinson is a

seasoned pro. When he was arrested at TIA on August 17, 2001, he had the heroin hid in a false compartment in his hand-held suitcase and ladies shoes inside, including in his own shoes. He would purchase the drugs in Mumbai before traveling to Kathmandu, which he used as a conduit to send the drugs to the west.

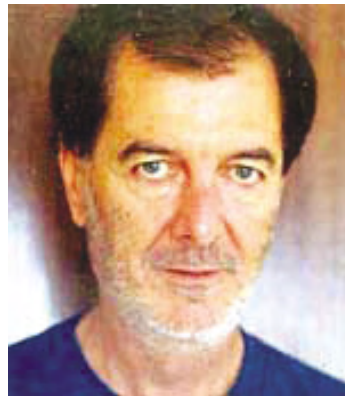
While welcoming Verma's resignation, we also call on Kumar (the second member in the bench) to follow suit. His continued presence at the Supreme Court will do enormous damage to the judiciary's reputation, which isn't particularly stellar. Though Kumar has called in absent ever since the controversy flared up in April, he is still officially tied up with the court. We like to remind our readers that our columnist, Jogendra Ghimire in his column ("Honorable Exit," Legal Eye, July 18) went so

far as to ask the King to exercise his special authority under Article 127 if the judges refuse to step down. Though we have expressed strong reservations in these pages over the King's use of executive powers, we see Ghimire's point. The Supreme Court judges, after all, are immune to action or in-

vestigation by any State organ. The only State organ that can discipline them is the Pratinidhi Sabha, which has the right to impeach them. But the parliament currently stands dissolved and elections for one are not slated for the near future.

Kumar should, therefore, expressly step down without further ado. And this for another reason too. Unlike Verma, whose retirement was only months away, he has another 10 years in office. Since we aren't particularly keen to see the King intervene, Kumar could do himself and the judiciary a huge favor by calling it quits. That, we are afraid, is his only salvation.

Akhilesh Upadhyay, Editor



*Binu's Cinderella
Beauty Parlour*

Institute of Hair and Beauty Care

**MAKES YOU LOOK AND
FEEL THE DIFFERENCE**

**Our responsibilities only for
female**

- Soft and glossy facial treatment
- Attractive inviting hair-do and make-up
- Perfect nature of body and face
- Courses professional and personal

**An official Beauty Parlour
of Miss Nepal 1997-2003**

Binu Shrestha (Beauty Specialist)
Trained from W.W.I. Delhi, India
Alessandro germany
Line A-System Theraphy, Germany
Official Beautician of Miss Nepal

**We R in the heart of Kathamndu
City to Conquer Your Hearts.**

Mt. Makalu Building (2nd Floor), Dharmapath
GPO Box: 10607, New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 423-2488, 422-3955 (Parlour)

*Please note that we do not have any
authorized agent in Nepal yet.*

**GUARANTEED
Search Engine Placement**



Find more at
www.dreamsandideas.com



Service Provider of Web, Print & Multimedia

Tel. 4260969 Mobile: 98510-32708, 98510-47447
info@dreamsandideas.com, Media House, Tripureshwar

Reduce Your Medical bill. Plan For Your Good Health Now.



Our Health Schemes are designed to give you just what you want.

We are experts at designing managing and administering customized health & benefit plans through insurance & self-funding schemes.

This supports your unique health objectives and addresses one of your toughest health care challenges (both at corporate & individual level).

We provide quality health care services through network hospitals while containing the bottom line impact of skyrocketing health care costs.

Our Services:

Cost Control, Telemedicine, Call Center Service, Ambulance Assistance, Cashless Hospitalization, Discounts in Doctor's Consultation and Pharmacies, Discounts in Diagnostic Services, Health News and Camps, Preventive Health Checkups, Lifestyle Counseling and Stress Management, Health Insurance, Claim Administration of Health Insurance Bill.


MEDICOVER
Consultancy

Radha Bhawan, Saraswoti Marga, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal ,P.O.No.2463
Tel. No: 4227793,4227791, Mobile: 9851078058, 9851078059, 9851078060, 9851033393

Club Himalaya

Windy Hills

"Chiso Chiso Hawama"

(Nepalese and Expatriates Package)

Ktm/Nagarok/Ktm+Room+Dinner+ Breakfast: Rs. 2800 For Single
Rs. 3400 For Double

चिसो चिसो हावामा, हिमालको काखमा, नगरकोटको डाँडाँमा.....

ACE HOTELS & RESORTS

e-dress: acehotels@acehotels.com.np

www.nepalshotel.com Tel: 4410432 / 4414432

CLUB HIMALAYA

N a g a r k o t

Tel: 668-0080, 668-0083

e-dress: club@mos.com.np

