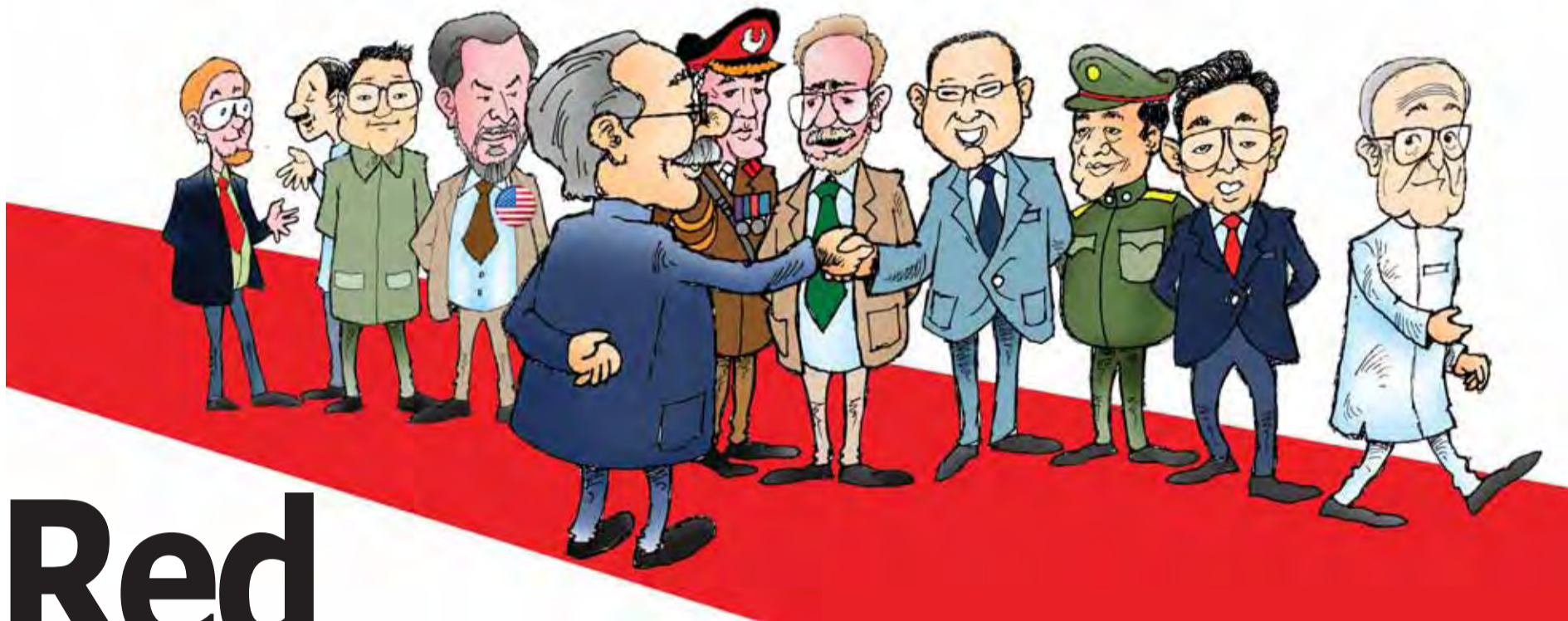




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BILASH RAI

Red carpet

If Nepal's tourism slogan ('the visitor is god') is anything to go by, we've had an entire pantheon of foreign dignitaries passing through Kathmandu in the past weeks.

Starting with the visit here by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in October, there have been four ministers from India, Britain, Denmark and China. The Chinese sent a military delegation and the British their army chief.

Most visitors expressed concern about delays in the peace

process, army integration and lamented the lack of consensus politics. They urged the Maoist-led government to deliver law and order, prove its commitment to democracy and the free press and ensure industrial security.

Sources tell *Nepali Times* that Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal candidly admitted to visitors that there are problems—both within his party and with the opposition—but that the peace process is on track. But, he said he was committed to

democracy, the rule of law and in curbing militant unions that have crippled industry.

Some visitors said privately they saw a gap between what the Maoists were saying and what they were doing. There was concern that Nepal, which two years ago was hailed a model country for conflict-transformation, was about to slip back into anarchy.

Western governments are also wary that the Maoists are reviving 'Mahendrapath'—king Mahendra's policy of playing China off against India. Some sections of the Indian establishment, in particular, seem concerned that the Maoists are getting too cosy with the Chinese.

In the past, Beijing was happy to let Nepal be in India's sphere

of influence and allow New Delhi to 'handle' the Americans here. However, the Chinese have been rattled by the activities of Tibetan protesters in Kathmandu earlier this year and saw US and European involvement in them. Prime Minister Dahal is said to have assured the Chinese foreign minister Wednesday that he would take a tougher line on pro-Tibet demonstrators.

The Indo-US nuclear deal and the Indo-Japanese security pact also appear to have changed the status quo in trans-Himalayan relations between India and China. Rival powers have historically always supported one or other faction within Nepal's parties, and this trend is expected to deepen as regional rivalries grow. The fissures seen

in the Maoist plenum last week could indicate there are splinter groups answerable to competing foreign powers.

Nepal had a great opportunity after the peace accord to restore stability and be stronger internally. But the country now seems to be going in the other direction. The only way to dissuade foreign meddling is to build consensus during the transition period and to cooperate in the constitution-drafting process.

If the Maoists who lead the government can't do this, opposing geopolitical blocs will start getting jumpy and try to influence political decisions. When that doesn't work, they will interfere directly. ●

CKLal

Times nepalnews.com
 Weekly Internet Poll # 428

Q. The Nepali Congress' current activities are:

Total votes: 3,185

- Destabilising and counterproductive: 35.1%
- Legitimate opposition politics: 35.3%
- Doesn't make any difference: 29.6%

Weekly Internet Poll # 429. To vote go to: www.nepalintimes.com

Q. The number of foreign visits to Nepal is:

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Be safe

If it were men who had unwanted pregnancies, there wouldn't be such a big debate about abortion

In the final analysis, it is one's attitude towards sex that determines individual perception towards abortion.

There is the traditional moralism in our society that makes this a crime. And then there is the modern attitude that makes sex outside marriage



GUEST COLUMN
Rekha Thapa

increasingly common, which has also transformed society's attitude towards abortion.

It's not a big deal these days for young women who marry not to be virgins. Even students in Grade Six are experimenting with sex and have relations at an ever-earlier age. These dramatic changes in societal mores have meant that the laws of the land and the perceptions of adults also need to change.

When premarital sex becomes

common, awareness about safe sex, about contraception has to keep pace. But in Nepal it hasn't. Teens usually have nowhere to go with questions on sexuality. It is usually not taught properly at school, many parents are bound by taboos of silence and young people usually turn to peers.

Information and communication is vital in preventing sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS as well as conception. Education about safe sex and contraceptive use in schools has become literally a life or death issue.

This is where societal attitudes towards abortion also need to change and it is not sufficient to pass a law making abortion legal.

Women should know that it is better to go to hospitals allowed by law to perform safe abortions. But, just because there is an option to safely abort an unwanted pregnancy doesn't not mean that one is lax in taking

precautions. An abortion is the last resort: the idea should be not to have unwanted pregnancies at all.

When a girl thinks about abortion, she is more concerned with the social stigma attached to it rather than her own health. The personal health of young women should always be the priority—her

physical health is more important than what society thinks.

Even today, in urban areas among educated young women, there isn't enough awareness about where to go to find a specialised centre for abortion and where to find an authorised doctor. If young women are to make informed decisions, they should be told through the mass media where they can go.

There are people who are against abortion and who look down upon women who have taken the decision to make that choice, but this is a very conservative view. If it were men, and not women who got pregnant and needed abortions there wouldn't be such a big hoo-ha, and society would likely accept it as a common practice. The controversy about abortion is due to the fact that we are still a patriarchal society where gender discrimination is rife.

Nepal took a big stride by legalising abortion, so there is no need to have endless debates about this. The focus now should be on awareness about safe sex, preventing unwanted pregnancies and in case young women do get pregnant where they can get an abortion without risking their lives.

With the law on their side, it is not necessary for a single Nepali woman to lose their lives visiting quacks. The law has freed women from the compulsion to perform secret back-alley operations by untrained people. ●

Rekha Thapa is Nepali film actress. This opinion piece was adapted from an original in Himal Khabarpatrika.

RED HERRINGS

The Maoists have once again made a perfunctory proposal to the NC to join the special committee on army integration. In return, the kangresis have reminded the Maoists about their lapsed nine-point memorandum. So the fates of combatants in temporary camps continue to hang in balance as the ruling coalition and main opposition party pretend to haggle over terms of integration. The delay, however, appears increasingly to be part of a greater design. No one, not even the comrades, really want the armies integrated. But they have to make it look like that is the core issue of the peace process.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal is under pressure from his cadres to rush the entry of ex-guerrillas into the Nepal Army. But he is acutely aware of its consequences. During the party conclave in Bhaktapur, Dahal reportedly lamented the failure of army integration exercise in Namibia, saying that although the leader of the rebels leads the army, the rank-and-file still sleep in separate barracks. It is that what we want he is reported to have asked.

One needn't be a conspiracy theorist to see that no one, except perhaps the guerrillas in the camps, really wants integration. The army doesn't want it, the parties don't want it, the neighbours don't want it, neither it seem, does the Maoist leadership. Earlier, PKD told GPK (a man he almost admires): If all our cadres join the army, how will we wage electoral battles with you in future?

It is now looking more and more like integration is a smokescreen to hide the Maoists' real intention of having a battle-ready parallel paramilitary to run with government money. This can happen if a new security unit is raised to accommodate Maoist combatants. Even if former militants continue to languish in temporary camps, the leadership loses nothing as the exchequer bears the cost of upkeep and training of their hardcore cadres.

NC stalwarts fear the insurgency will go into relapse and probably feel that the continued presence of UN monitors is the only defence against the Maoist takeover of the state. Once the combatants in camps have been rehabilitated, UNMIN will have to pack up, and the kangresis don't really want the UN to leave even though they bad-mouth them all the time.

All this posturing over integration of Maoist militants into the Nepal Army is therefore sounding like a lot of hot air. And Nepalis are beginning to see through the games being played through the media headlines. They should get serious about integration and start saying what they mean. And they should concentrate on the issues of common concern: drafting a new constitution and improving lives.



SAM KANG LI

LETTERS

WASTE OF TIME

The coalition Dahal heads is a transitional entity with three jobs: take the peace process forward, assist the CA in framing a new constitution and ensure a functioning government. Everything else is either a diversionary tactic or sheer waste of time. Well said (Editorial 'Waste of Time', #426). The Maoists have perfected the art of talking through both ends of their mouth to other political parties, foreign diplomats and the UN. It is time we told PKD he can fool some of the people some of the time but not all the people all the time.

S B Pandey, email

is time Nepal's foreign policy mandarins understood this and charted out a strategy that is pragmatic and not suicidal nationalism. Unless we understand the geopolitical sensitivities of our two giant neighbours we will not be able to get what we want from them. It is counter-productive to try to play one against the other, it has never worked and never will.

Jang B Thapa, Lazimpat

YAM

I couldn't agree more with Prashant Jha (Still a yami, #426) about Nepal-India-China relations. It is clear that China is sensitive about Tibet, and India wants to keep Nepal in its sphere of influence. It

WINDOWLESS NEPAL

It was a very happy moment for all of us in the Free/Open Source Software Community of Nepal (FOSS Nepal) to see the informed and well-written coverage on Free Software in Nepal

(Towards a Windowsless world, #426). FOSS Nepal has won the Best Software

Freedom Day (SFD) event prize for 2008 and we were among the top three teams out of more than 500 from over 120 countries. With this, we have secured back-to-back victory in the competition. In 2007 too, FOSS Nepal was among the top three teams from all over the world. Nepal is now appreciated by the larger global community of Free

Software activists.

FOSS Nepal needs more support and participation from Nepali consumers of the technology to make possible the

ushering of a new age of freedom. In a digital world, our basic human rights, civil liberties and freedom are only as strong as the technology we use.

Bibek Paudel, FOSS Nepal

● Paavan Mathema's article on FOSS Nepal was very well-written and a much needed one for a country like ours. The FOSS movement needs more media dissemination like this in future. I especially liked the catchy title of the article: 'Towards a Windowsless world'.

Subir, email



CORRECTION

The editorial 'Rebels without a cause' (#426) erroneously stated that half of Nepal's population is below 30. The age threshold is closer to 20.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

The unreal estate

Forget the NRNs, let's protect our NWA's

TOKYO—There are at least three Indian restaurants near Roppongi here in the Japanese capital. Moti is the favorite haunt of connoisseurs, Japanese salarymen prefer Samrat for its quick curries and then there is the Jewel of India's buffet lunches for the working class.

STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

But all three desi eateries have one thing in common: nearly all their service staff are from Baglung and most are cousins. It is their easy-going and hard-working nature that make it easy for the Nepalis to find jobs here. So many Baglunges work abroad that Baglung is called a Lahure district.

Unlike many Nepali immigrants in Australia, Europe and the US, Nepalis working in Asia tend to keep sending their savings home. Nepal's relatively healthy balance of payment and foreign currency reserves are mostly the creations of the NWA's—Nepali Workers Abroad. Remittances kept the national economy afloat during the Lost Decade of the Maoist insurgency. The contribution of remittances to economic development isn't new. The Chinese, Koreans and

Japanese used the savings of their skilled workers abroad to create a capital base for expansion of trade and industry. The experience elsewhere in Asia, however, has been less inspiring. The remittances of guest workers from the Philippines and Sri Lanka have done little more than boost conspicuous consumption back home.

Beneficiaries of hundi transfers from West Asia in Kerala build palatial beachfront houses. In Bangladesh, recipients of remittances buy gold jewelry. Lavish parties for extended family members of the workers toiling in the Gulf region are quite common in Karachi and Lahore.

Land prices in Baglung are some of the highest in the country. Every other shop in the bazar is a jewelry store, English schools are popping up everywhere. The money sent home has done little to improve infrastructure or create jobs. Baglung seems to have embraced the Kerala Model—spend generously on food, shelter, education and health, but stay away from risks of investing in productive sector. All their savings go into buying land, not only in Baglung and Pokhara, but also in Kathmandu.

Baglung is exceptional in sending a very large proportion of

its most productive people—educated youth in their prime—to work abroad. But it's no exception when it comes to the use of the money they send home. After the family starts eating noodles instead of corn bread for breakfast, and drinking beer in the evening, the desire of a migrant worker's family is to take ageing parents to private nursing homes for treatment of asthma, gout, poor eyesight and bad teeth. Then to the jeweler's to buy heavy rings and necklaces. Once these needs have been fulfilled, the hunt for a suitable plot of land begins.

Investment in land is risky. Unlike gold, plots of land don't have a standardised pricing mechanism. Real estate is worth only what the next person is willing to pay for it. At least some workers in Japan are aware of the real-estate bubble burst. They worry about their savings in Nepali banks and finance companies. The least the government can do to secure their savings is to closely monitor Nepali financial institutions that have invested heavily into real estate.

NRNs can take care of themselves quite well. NWA's, however, need assistance to cope with the shocks of global recession. ●

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Don't blame politicians

It is the season for politician bashing. Enraged Indian citizens, fuelled by hysterical television channels, have gone after their political class following the Mumbai attacks.

The Indian politician is facing a myriad of accusations: not governing and protecting lives, sowing divisive politics, being callous and insensitive, not paying heed to the needs of the security establishment and using the incident to cultivate new voters.

Contexts differ, but holding politicians singularly responsible for all our troubles is a tendency across South Asia. Abusing netas for being corrupt, for ruining the country and for other real or perceived ills is a favorite Nepali past-time, too. And the attack on politicians is infinitely more malicious and less informed among Kathmandu's chattering classes than in the tea-shops in villages and towns. It would be more helpful to look with empathy at the tough life of

politicians before dismissing them with such contempt.

Let's begin from the top. In a private conversation, a senior CA member was giving a break-down of his monthly



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

remuneration of about Rs 45,000, which seems generous given the average Nepali income.†

Rs 5,000 goes right back to the government as tax. In his case, Rs 7,000 is a compulsory donation to the party. Another Rs 10,000 is spent entertaining guests, constituents, paying for meals and tea, crucial to building and maintaining political relationships. After years of travelling on buses and cabs, the member recently bought a second hand small car and got a driver. He spends up to Rs 15,000 on fuel and other expenses. Rs 10,000 goes to visiting his constituency once a month. 'This is the bare minimum I have to spend if I want to invest in a political future,' he says. So his entire salary is finished off without any household expenditure: no money for rent, or school fees for children. The case may not be representative but it gives a glimpse into the invisible challenges faced by leaders.

We are all collectively at fault for the state of the country

What does a politician do then? In the best case, he starts off a business or NGO on the side and uses his political links indirectly to develop it. Or he may use power and his proximity to push deals, act as an intermediary or take a kickback if he helps get someone a job or admission. Can an instant moral judgement be made about this behaviour in this grey zone? The system and incentive structures have left him with limited choices.

The disdain for politicians also side-steps the struggles they have to wage on the ground. This is particularly true of non-Maoist politicians for their rise is often a tale of individual enterprise. The Maoist leaders and cadre had it tough during the war. They are motivated and work harder, but they always had a larger party framework which provided constant support, nourishment and guided the politics. The fact that they are paid full-timers gives them an enormous advantage. Given the organisational disarray and personality-centred nature of the NC, Madhesi parties and also the UML to a lesser extent, a village or district level politician is on his own.

Getting into student unions, hanging out as a crony for a national politician with the desperate hope of getting noticed, aspiring to become a district committee member, waiting to be selected as a general convention representative, getting a ticket to fight polls, helping with tedious organisational work—most politicians have made long journeys through difficult stages. Investing years in a fragile, unstable and increasingly violent political framework without strong institutional support requires courage.

And can politicians alone be blamed for ineffectual governance? Those at the helm of the state at any point must take a larger share of the responsibility. But a fragmented polity with multiple interests, a change-resistant bureaucracy, a system just not geared up to deliver public goods on a wide scale and the demands for private goods among citizens (a recommendation for a personal job is valued far more than a village welfare program) are equally responsible.

Our politicians did not create the social contradictions, economic inequality and discrimination existing in the country. To only blame them is to miss the point and indulge in escapism. Let us look into the mirror first. ●



ANUP PRAKASH

"Find solutions through consensus"

Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Møller was in Kathmandu last week on a two-day trip during which he met with senior government leaders. He spoke to *Nepali Times* about his assessment of the peace process in Nepal as well as Danish development aid.

Nepali Times: What was your assessment of the status of the peace process after meeting Nepali leaders?

Per Stig Møller: I felt positive about it. You have been through a sea change which normally is very difficult. You have done it through an election and it seems accepted by all parties. You have got a Maoist as a prime minister, whom I met this morning, although there isn't much Maoism left in him.

Did you tell him that?

I said that to him, yes, you don't sound like a Maoist? (Laughs) I also met the president and the foreign minister and they are all fully aware that they have to find solutions through consensus that will address the broad section of the country. I can see that there is the political will and the process is working. You have started the difficult process towards constitution building. You are in agreement that the judiciary shall deal with the perpetrators of past atrocities. It is very important that there is no impunity. You are dealing with the problem of restitution of property, which had been confiscated. I think you are dealing with the things you have to deal with, but how it is going to turn out I don't know.

So, did it worry you that there was no consensus among the political parties?

It's not for me to say if the Nepali Congress should join the government. In every parliamentary system you need a strong opposition to be the check and balance the policies of the government. It is not in itself a problem that you have a strong party outside the government. Also, people have something to choose in the next election. But of course there should be the rule of law, the confidence in the police should be restored and as long as you continue to not deal with corruption it will hamper development.

How much of an obstacle is army integration in your view?

You can have only one army in the country and it must be in the control of the government. You can't have armed groups outside the government control. So you have very very difficult challenges ahead of you.

Did the issue of federalism come up in your discussions?

Yes, of course. Our position is, and I think it is broadly shared here, that the policies and decisions have to be made as close to the people as possible— which means decentralisation or regionalisation. And, because Nepal is a very diverse country with a lot of different ethnicities and languages, you also need a strong centre if you don't want the country to fragment. Whether it is a strong president or a strong prime minister, it's up to you but you have different systems in this way to keep the cohesion of the country. Also, you can't be cohesive if parts of the country are excluded.

As one of Nepal's main development partners, are you satisfied with the way aid is being handled?

We have been very involved with helping the reconciliation process. We are also extending support to education and the environment. With the foreign minister and the prime minister we also discussed the climate change problem. Denmark is hosting the climate change conference next year and your prime minister said he would come, which I was very pleased to hear.

Denmark is one of the countries resettling Bhutan refugees. Doesn't this let the Bhutani regime off the hook for its human rights violations?

We have said we will take 500. It is a very, very difficult issue. In the Middle East, the problem has not been solved by keeping people in refugee camps. The refugees could wait a long time, and as long as you don't have an agreement their problems would not be solved. And it seems to be very difficult to get that agreement. So, with third country resettlement you are freezing the situation and also addressing the humanitarian issues in the camps. It is better for the refugees. We have tried to say that Nepal should also take some of the refugees besides the US, Denmark and others. But I have also spoken to the Bhutanese. The problem is 17 years old and the first time I took it up with the Bhutanese was back in 1990.

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Best banker

Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) was recently awarded Bank of the Year 2008 by London-based magazine The Banker. This is



the third time that the bank has won the award, which is given for overall performance in terms of assets, return, strategy and growth. NIBL has the largest capital base among banks in Nepal.

New players

Surya Nepal has introduced the Miss Players range of clothes for women after its success with John Players. The new autumn-winter collection was recently unveiled in a fashion show at the Hyatt Regency in Kathmandu. The range features work, casual and party-wear and is available in John Players outlets in Kathmandu and a few other select stores.



Branching out

Machhapuchchhre Bank Limited (MBL) has opened a new branch and ATM in Butwal, Lumbini. This is the 22nd branch of MBL, which already has another one in Lumbini. All regular services are available at the branch.

Winning scratch



Neoteric Nepal, the authorized distributor of Nokia has introduced a new offer of a scratch card with every purchase of a

Nokia phone. The scratch card is automatically included in a lucky draw for Nokia N series phones and a Maruti car, along with a possible cash prize. The offer is valid throughout Nepal.

Debit offer

Bank of Kathmandu has introduced Visa debit cards, which will be valid in Nepal and India. Interested customers will get an introductory package of free usage for the first three months.



Lessons from Terror

We in Nepal have lots to learn

New Delhi: The Mumbai blasts brought the mayhem of a South Asian city to our living rooms, sending a chill down the spine of every urbanite. Any city could be a target and terror does not pay any regard to identity, religion or nationality. In the hotel lobbies



ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

of Delhi guests and staff looked anxious, some mourning the loss of friends, relatives and acquaintances.

The Mumbai mayhem has taught us many lessons and surely Nepal will not be unaffected by the events that unfold. This Beed often wonders what has cursed our tourism industry. Every time we see the tourism scenario improving, events outside our control affect the industry. With India being subject to strict travel advice and warnings, there's bound to be a direct ripple effect on tourists coming to Nepal. The shutdown of the Bangkok airport did not help either as Nepal's gateway both from the east and west was affected.

Nepali political leaders who have taken security lightly resulting in increased criminal activities in the country, need to take this as a wake-up call. There is a thin line that separates crime and terror or revolution and terrorism. We need to understand not to take criminal activities or the violation of rule of law lightly. This Beed has also been harping on about our



preparedness to tackle the aftermath of disasters be they natural or terror-made. A serious plan needs to be prepared for such events without delay.

The Mumbai blasts are also going to provide a great business opportunity to security and weapons companies - hopefully the United States will not use this as one means of digging its way out of its current recession. Post 9/11 there were numerous multi billion dollar companies created in the name of tackling security and terror. Hopefully the region will not follow suit and will rationally distinguish between products that are must-haves and products that are superfluous to needs.

For the hydropower developers the bad news is that following the Mumbai attacks, insurance costs are going to increase. With Nepal having no credit rating and no dedicated insurance market, premiums are going to shoot up drastically.

The Mumbai attacks send another clear example of young

people who are lured in to put their own lives into danger, be it for ideology or quick bucks. The ten year people's war showed how young people are willing to actually pick up a gun for people who promise them the world. Nepal already has a history of supplying mercenaries in foreign uniform. Surely it does not want to become the next recruiting ground for insane fighters. This will not only damage the image of the country but leave a mark that can make you really stigmatised. Ask young Pakistanis in the UK.

Every big jolt provides plenty of lessons to learn from. It should make us realise the vital need for intelligence, effective security apparatus, a quick response to disasters and the necessity of rule of law and for governments to take their duties seriously. It draws attention to the damaging effects of unregulated competing television channels and most importantly, the pitiful state of South Asian politics where death and mayhem are always used for political capital. ●



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A marriage of consensus?

Rameswhar Karki in Dhading, *Naya Patrika*, 29 November

With the wedding season in full swing in Nepal, another wedding shouldn't be such a big deal. But the wedding last Saturday in Mahadeb Besi bajar in Dhading wasn't just any ordinary wedding. With discussion about the integration of the PLA and the Nepal Army forming a backdrop, a Maoist PLA and a Nepal Army soldier tied the knot. †

On 11 November 2003, Dhading based Salisha Aryal's father, Indra Bahadur, was arrested by the then-royal Nepal Army, accused of being a Maoist informer. From that day on he still

hasn't been found.

Studying in grade 10 at that time, Salisha left school and fled to a Maoist shelter with one aim: to avenge her father's disappearance. She became a guerrilla in the Maoist army.

Salisha, who was based at Chitwan's Satikhori cantonment, had

returned home to Dhading to pursue leads regarding her father's disappearance. When she was asking for help, she was introduced to a soldier of the Nepal Army Srikumar Acharya. From then on they started dating. He fell in love with his character and his behaviour, she says Salisha.

When asked whether marrying a soldier from the Nepal Army would change her belief in Maoist principles, Salisha says, "I believe in the Maoists just as I did before and I will continue to." Among the guests were Dhading's Maoist CA member Pushpa Bikram Malla, PLA's 4th division commander Yam Bahadur Adhikari and district secretary Akansha. Malla says: "This wedding does not only have cultural significance but it has political significance too."

Her uncle Bharat says, "The time and situation have changed. If we want to change society, looking for revenge won't work."



Kantipur, 1 December

कान्तिपुर

Strikes are synonymous with tyre-burning and road-blocking in Nepal. But 56 labourers at Hulas Steel in Bara protested against the management for having failed to agree to a 17-point agreement by donating blood.

Central secretary Ananda Thami of the labourer's union said that he wanted to do something new to gain the attention of the management. Under Thami's leadership previous protest campaigns have included planting flowers in a protest against a pharmaceutical company. Says

Thami: "Protesting doesn't mean that you make other people's lives difficult."

The labourers have formulated a code of conduct to make their strike respectable. The rules specify that alcohol consumption, vandalism, traffic blockage as well as other activities are prohibited. The code specifies that the protest must be polite and disciplined and must not involve disturbance of basic services such as electricity, water supply and security-guards at the industry.

This is the first time that production has been stalled due to labourer-prompted protest at Hulas Steel, established by Golchha Industries in 1982.

King G speaks



Soundbites from an interview of ex-king Gyanendra by Deb Prakash Tripathi in *Ghatana Bichar*, 3 December

घटना-विचार

- "I am now an ordinary Nepali citizen. I want to live and die as a Nepali in Nepal. But will Nepal remain? All I want is for Nepal to remain as a nation and for us to live as Nepalis."
- "The Shah kings never went against the wishes of the people and never will. If the people see a role for the monarchy in the nation's integrity and democracy, that won't be unusual."
- "In those days people used to say the country is in a bad state. I undertook the February first move to restore peace. When the people didn't like what I did, I let it go."
- "When I tried to set things right, there was opposition. I guess things are all right now."
- "If I wanted to create obstacles for this government why would I have left Narayanhiti so easily?"
- "No Nepali will tolerate unnecessary interference by outsiders in our internal affairs."
- "Terrorism has no boundaries."



closeup

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Support to Participatory Constitution Building s in Nepal – UNDP

The Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal/UNDP is looking for experienced and qualified Nepalese citizens for the following positions with substantive experience, in order to support the Constitution Building Resource Centre operations.

Post Title : **Premise Management Associate- SB3- Peg III**
 Contract Type : Service Contract
 Duration : One year, initially (renewable)

Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of the National Manager of the Resource Centre, the incumbent is responsible for supervising and coordinating all tasks related to the office space management of the Resource Centre. The specific duties include the following.

- Oversee the entire premises of the Resource Centre and ensure its best physical conditions.
- Oversee the work of internal and external cleaners, plumbers, electricians in view of keeping the office neat and clean at all times and reports to the National Manager on daily basis.
- Ensure appropriate security arrangement of the office premises 24 hours, supervise messengers.
- Maintain a small inventory of the cleaning and electric supplies and arrange replacement as and when necessary, arrange for minor maintenance and repair of the building, partitions, hinges, knobs, door locks, and desk locks, etc. in close coordination with Admin and Finance Officer.
- Assign duties to messengers for the clearance of the mailboxes, and pigeon-holes.
- Keep updated expenditure record relevant to the management of the premises including office rent, phone, electricity, water consumption and submit the bills to the Admin and Finance Officer for processing the payment.
- Liaise with service providers including air-conditioner maintenance contractor, PABX contractor to keep the office equipment in good running conditions at all times, draft essential memos and letters related to the job.
- Act as a focal point to contact the building owners for lease related matters, assist to arrange, relocate, and/or to move the office furniture and equipment of the project as per the need of the staff, undertake any other tasks as directed by the supervisor.

Qualifications Requirement

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, or any other relevant discipline.
- At least 5 years of experience in administrative, financial and logistic tasks.
- Past experience in doing similar work in UNDP or any international agency would be an advantage, good planning and coordination skills to undertake a wide variety of activities at any given time.
- Ability to carry out multiple tasks in an efficient and economic manner, often under pressure, familiarity with building management activities, good communications skills in Nepali and English.
- Good computer skills, especially knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, ability to work in a multi-cultural team environment.

Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 830,353 approximately.

Post Title : **Librarian (1) - SB 4- Peg II**
 Contract Type : Service Contract
 Duration : One-year, initially (renewable)

Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of the National Manager of the Resource Centre, the incumbent is responsible for developing and managing a library and information system aiming to support the constitution building process in Nepal. The specific duties include the following.

Library system

- Developing the library policy, statute and rules, developing, managing and supervising procedures to maintain the library, including the databases, filing/cataloguing system and data security.
- Developing, managing and supervising knowledge and acquisition processes, proactively identifying and collecting new library resources, and properly classifying, filing/cataloguing, and disseminating them.

E-catalogue system

- Designing and maintaining the library's e-catalogue system, continually improving and updating the catalogue's overall design, functionality and contents in close collaboration with the available IT Service.
- Establishing and maintaining efficient links and liaisons with other libraries and catalogue systems in Nepal.

Library operations

- Advising and supervising assistant librarians, providing assistance and service to users and responding to requests for information and reading needs.
- Modifying the library content as required: Tracking, collecting and filing of relevant and state-of-the-art data/documents/books from national and international organisations, publishers, etc.
- Contributing to research on various topics as per the requests from RC clients, proactively engage in building client relationships and gathering users' feedback on the library operations.

Qualifications Requirement

- A Master's degree or equivalent in library, or other relevant discipline.
- At least three years of working experience as a librarian or in a relevant field.
- Proven expertise and familiarity with the technical aspects of library setting and development in Nepal, proven expertise and familiarity with the formulation of policies and strategies for establishing and developing a library and information centre.
- Past experience in developing and/or maintaining e-catalogue systems and familiarity with the relevant principles and technologies, excellent English and Nepali skills (written and spoken).
- Ability to work and deliver outputs under pressure, excellent skills in building and maintaining good relationships with clients
- Good communication and presentation skills and ability to work in a multi-cultural team environment ; good understanding of and familiarity with issues related to peace process and constitution making in Nepal would be an advantage.

Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 10,88,315 approximately.

Post Title : **Assistant Librarian (2) - SB 3- II Peg**
 Contract Type : Service Contract
 Duration : One-year, initially (renewable)

Responsibilities

Under the overall guidance of the National Manager of the Resource Centre and the direct supervision of the Senior Librarian, the incumbents are responsible for assisting to develop and manage a public library and information system aiming to support the constitution building process in Nepal. The incumbent will be required to work on shifts in order to provide services throughout the Resource Centre's business hours. The specific duties include the following.

Library system

- Assisting the Librarian to manage procedures to maintain the library, including the databases, filing/cataloguing system and data security.
- Assisting the Librarian to manage knowledge and acquisition processes: Tracking, gathering, classifying, filing/cataloguing, disseminating etc. of new accruals, assisting the Librarian to update the overall design, functionality and contents of the library's website and e-catalogue in close collaboration with the available IT Service.

Library operations

- Providing assistance and service to users and responding to requests for information and reading needs, providing guided information tours to the users.
- Providing daily support to the librarian in maintaining the library and managing its content, assisting the Librarian and other Resource Centre staff in conducting research on various topics as per requests from clients.

Qualifications Requirement

- A Bachelor's degree or equivalent in library, or other relevant discipline.
- At least three years of working experience in a library or in a relevant field, good computer and information technology skills (i.e. web sites, e-catalogue).
- Excellent communications skills in Nepali, and good command in English (written and spoken), excellent skills in building and maintaining good relationships with clients.
- Ability to work in a multi-cultural team environment, familiarity with issues related to peace process and constitution making in Nepal would be an advantage.

Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 6,40,958 approximately.

Post Title : **Transport Associate (1) - SB 3- III Peg**
 Contract Typ : Service Contract
 Duration : One-year, initially (renewable)

Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of the National Manager of the Resource Centre, the incumbent is responsible for the following.

- Manage all aspects of shuttle service provided by the Resource Centre, including planning, operation and coordination, supervise drivers and maintain duty rosters of drivers.
- Oversee the provision and maintenance of the vehicle fleet, maintain a daily log of vehicle use.
- Ensure that proper inventory of all components of vehicles are maintained and checked frequently.
- Full compliance of UN/UNDP rules and regulations, policies and strategies on travel management and ensure that RC vehicles are used in accordance with UN Rules and Regulations and that vehicle usage data is correctly recorded.
- Implementation of transport policy approved by the management, propose improvements in the existing transport system, be responsible to implement the pick & drop schedule of CA members from prescribed points.
- Undertake any other tasks as directed by the supervisor.

Qualifications Requirement

- Bachelor's degree in any discipline.
- Minimum 5 years of relevant experience in the areas of transportation operation and management, past experience in doing similar work in UNDP or any international agency would be an advantage.
- Specialized training in transportation management is desirable, demonstrated ability to manage diverse transport operations
- Ability to review alternative options and select most effective and cost-efficient mode of transport.
- Basic computer skills, good communication skills and ability to work in a multi-cultural team environment.

Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 830,353 approximately

Post Title : **Receptionist (2) - SB 3- I Peg**
 Contract Type : Service Contract
 Duration : One-year, initially (renewable)

Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of the Sr. Administrative Assistant, the incumbent is responsible for the following tasks. The incumbent will be required to work on shifts in order to provide services throughout the Resource Centre's business hours.

- Meet and greet all visitors to the Resource Centre, and provide necessary assistance for visitors by providing directions and accurate information related to RC. Ensure delivery of high standard services to guests, monitor all visitors to the Resource Centre.
- Answer all incoming calls promptly and politely, perform general clerical duties to include but not limited to: photocopying, faxing, mailing preparing bills related to office work.
- Maintain the general filing system and file all correspondence, assist in the planning and preparation of meetings, conferences and conferencetelephone call, management and planning of the front desk coverage.
- Collect and update RC staff information on a monthly basis, ensuring all data and information is accurate, provide office support services in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness within the RC, assist in other duties as needed and directed.

Qualifications Requirement

- Intermediate degree with three years of related experience. Experience in UN or other bilateral organization will be an added advantage.
- Ability to perform a variety of standard tasks related to front desk service, telephone communications service and updating of staff information, general computer proficiency with good command in Microsoft Office.
- Good communication skills in Nepali and English, excellent interpersonal skills and ability to work in a multi-cultural team environment.

Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 451,380 approximately.

For detailed Job Description of the position, please visit the following UNDP website: <http://www.undp.org.np/vacancy>

Applications should be submitted no later than **23 December 2008** by email, to: hrru1.np@undp.org or in a sealed envelope to UNDP Operations Department (Ref: SPCB/UNDP), UN House, Pulchowk, P.O. Box 107, Kathmandu, Nepal
(Only Applicants who are short-listed will be contacted)

Applicants must submit the updated standard UN Personal History Form available from the UN House Reception at the UNDP webpage <http://www.undp.org.np/vacancy>

Work experience and/or academic knowledge in relation to gender and social exclusion will be an added advantage.
 Women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, people with disabilities, and other minorities are especially encouraged to apply.

UNDP has a policy to have a gender balance in its staff at all levels by 2010.

UNDP, as a matter of practice, does not charge any application, processing or training fee at any stage of the recruitment process. If you have any questions as to vacancy announcements you may have received, please refer to our website.

UNDP is currently aware of fictitious vacancy announcements that are being circulated through the internet, the purpose of which is to get people to register for a training and send in a fee. If you believe that you have received such a notice, please forward it, and any other related information you have received, to scamalert@undp.org. Since logos, emblems, names and addresses can be easily copied or reproduced, you are advised to take particular care in applying for vacancies, including undertaking all appropriate measures to protect against the unauthorized use of any personal information you may have provided as a result of the scam.

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Himal Southasian's December 2008 issue is now out!

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 Surabhi Pudasaini & Smriti Mallapaty

A cow is a cow
 Sadanand Menon

Abu in London
 Mark Bryant

Dancing with demons
 Manjula Padmanabhan

In addition:
 Finger in the dike - Dinesh Kumar Mishra
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 What about rangzen? - Ashwini Bhatia & Carey L Biron
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The big

Iconic French leader Charles de Gaulle once questioned how anyone could govern a nation that produces 246 types of cheese. Nepal shares many of France's great attributes: beautiful mountains, fantastic growing conditions, diverse countryside, an aptitude for animal husbandry. Now, it seems, it is developing a (some may say worrying) palate for cheese.

Traditionally Nepal is a nation of yak cheese eaters. The famous yak cheese, much of which is actually made from zopkyo milk, is produced in the high mountains. One version of it is the khurpi, which is not really a cheese at all. In Ilam, they make cheese from cow's milk, and everywhere in between it is from the high-fat water buffalo milk. Lately, goat's cheese from Chitlang and cow's milk cheese in Tokha is proving popular with Kathmandu expats.

"When we started selling cheese, most of our buyers were foreigners, but locals have developed a taste," says Nirmal KC of Hermann Helmers Bakery in Sanepa.

The cheese industry in Nepal officially started in 1953, when the government-run Dairy Development Corporation (DDC) ventured into producing yak cheese with the support of the Swiss. Sumendra Shakya of DDC says: "Nepal is one of the few places in the world where yak milk is used for making cheese. It has almost become a souvenir product."

"Nepal is perfect for cheese production. You couldn't ask for more."

While the cheese produced by DDC is the dominant seller in the market, there are a number of small-scale cheese makers with the holey Swiss Emmenthal and French Cantal being produced in Langtang and Ilam.

Swiss cheese connoisseur Jean Paul Corboz says: "Nepal has perfect conditions for it to develop as a cheese producer. It has the right climatic conditions, the grasslands and people who are traditionally into animal husbandry. You couldn't ask for more."

He reckons the cheese selection here is quite good. While most of the varieties have a mild taste even strong flavoured ones like Ekisho are available.

Surprisingly, Nepal doesn't export cheese. Iswori Prasad Adhikari of DDC explains, "Right now, the demand exceeds the supply, especially in the case of yak cheese."

According to Corboz, the export could pick up if the consistency in the taste and the quality of the local cheese could be maintained although producers will also have to satisfy strict hygiene and veterinary regulations.

However, Nepali cheese is 'unofficially' exported by expats. "Nepal's yak cheese or other varieties are so popular that there are many foreign customers who take more than 7kg abroad at a time," says KC.

If Prime Minister Dahal really plans to turn Nepal into another Switzerland, then the cheese industry is one place he could start. ●
Paavan Mathema and Shradha Basnyat

French connection



cheese

In the hills above Tokha and in the shade of Shivapuri lies the hamlet of Chandeshwori. From there it is a 15 minute hike through woods and over streams to the simple stylish home built by 30-year-old Frenchman Francois Driard (pictured right) two years ago.

When he had to decide how to make a living in Nepal he hit upon cheese-making because it was the single thing he missed most about his native France.

The French are pretty superior about their cheese and Driard, who consumes 2kg of the stuff a week, is no exception. For him cheese must have a rind and it must call for a glass of red wine. While higher quality wine was becoming increasingly available in Nepal, non processed cheese was still lacking.

Having recognised his ambition he went to the Savoie Valley in the French Alps for traditional training.

Last December he made his first batch of Tomme (though he still owned no cows and was buying in the milk) and after leaving it to mature in his cave for the required one month at 12-14 degrees Celsius and 95-98 per



cent humidity he tried it.

“I vowed that if it wasn't good I would stop immediately,” he says, “I taste every batch of cheese I sell and if it's not to my taste I ditch it.”

One year on from that first cheese he has a small herd of Jersey hybrids and Holsteins. But the popularity of the luxury cheese means demand has quickly outgrown supply.

It has been a steep learning curve. His herd is producing 60 litres of milk a day which makes

six kg of cheese but he needs to up that which may necessitate moving elsewhere to get pasture for the animals.

His ambition is to start making other cheeses so he can offer a whole platter, perhaps beginning with the quintessential soft French cheese Camembert on which he gorges himself whenever he goes home.

Driard is also now making salami with the aim of expanding into other forms of charcuterie. • *Katy Elliott*



escape

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With Christmas right around the corner, there is one thing that most, who celebrate, must already be worrying about—presents. With most shops embracing the festive spirit, the capital is now awash with gifts and decorations. But for time-poor shoppers who are struggling for ideas for that perfect gift, *Nepali Times* has made it easier by picking out a few potentials.

We selected our items from the 11th Fair Trade Fair hosted by UWTC on the 1-2 December. Participating in the fair were both members and non-members of the Fair Trade Group of Nepal. The event, held to raise awareness about fair trade and promote Nepalese handicrafts, exhibited a wide range of items from beautifully crafted hand-made Christmas decorations to woollen clothes perfect for the winter.

Most of the exquisitely-made Nepalese handicrafts or other items here are sold with a purpose of raising money for various social causes. This fair has finished but those interested can still go to individual shops, such as Dhukuti, Mahaghuti to find these items. Happy Christmas shopping! ●

Shradha Basnyat



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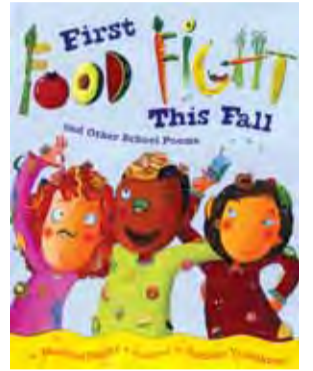
ALL PICS: MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Books to fill the stocking

There is no need for English speaking children in Nepal to be starved of the very best of contemporary children's literature.

For pre-schoolers, six delightful new books from Bloomsbury Paperbacks include the eagerly anticipated *The Bear in the Cave* by Children's Laureate Michael Rosen who also wrote the timeless classic *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, which is part of every three-year-old's library. Toddlers from a year up will love the repetition, onomatopoeia and bold illustrations though it lacks the unique charm of *Bear Hunt*.

Another choice for up to sixes is *Does a Sea Cow Say Moo?* by Terry Webb Harshman with its witty illustrations and storyline. But for 3-5 year old girls it has to be the *Charlie and Lola*-style *Princess for a Day* by Sarah Dyer, featuring demanding little Clementine and her long suffering brother Mungo who eventually gets his revenge after a day of being bossed around. It even includes a pink shiny crown to wear.



Night of the Veggie Monster is a slightly tired format throwing the spotlight again on a boy who doesn't like his greens but it's a humorous portrayal of a child's tantrum - and one does have to feel for a child who has such grey and sadomasochistic parents.

Marvin Gets MAD! by Joseph Theobald is a sweet and funny tale of a friendship between two sheep that is put to the test, while *Where's My Cuddle?* by James Mayhew is a beautifully illustrated story of one little boy's game of chase to retrieve the cuddle he refused to take from his mum at the school gate.

But if it's all sweetness and light that you seek at Christmas and we are talking sickly, saccharine sweet then *The Christmas Angels*, published by Little Tiger Press, is for you. Parents may cringe but the rhyming couplets and sparkly two drawings could prove to be winners with four year olds. You have been warned.

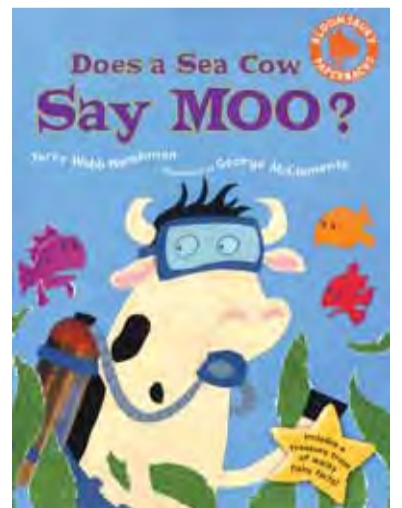


Still on a Christmas theme young children will love hunting for and counting all the brightly coloured animals in *The Twelve Hidden Days of Christmas*, published by Sterling Press. But to truly invoke the spirit of Christmas what could be better than the beautiful

children's classic *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* - the story of the visit of St Nicholas, published by Walker Books.

The over seven's will enjoy an anthology of school themed poems, supposedly written by the kids themselves, collectively titled *First Food Fight This Fall* and published by Sterling. As the title suggests the book is American making it tricky for non American children to identify with the poets and school, but it's pretty amusing all the same and boldly illustrated.

For 9-12 year old girls, *My sister Jodie*, the latest book by prolific award-winning British author Jacqueline Wilson would be sure to hit the right note. It's about two sisters - quiet and studious Pearl and bold and brash Jodie who is adored by Pearl. When their parents get new jobs at a fusty old boarding school, Jodie really doesn't fit but Pearl excels both academically and socially and doesn't need her sister as much as she used to. But when a tragic event occurs, Pearl realises how much she does need her big sister.



And for inquiring minds who want more from a book than reading, there is a growing number of interactive titles and activity books with an educational bent including *501 Science Experiments* published by Hinkler Books and *Body IQ* which includes a glow in the dark skeleton and board game, published by Priddy Books. ● Katy Williams

All titles are available at Ekta Books which is opening a dedicated books for Christmas floor on 15 December

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Dirty clouds over Asia

BEIJING—Cities from Beijing to New Delhi are getting darker, glaciers in ranges like the Himalaya are melting faster and weather systems are becoming more extreme, in part, due to the combined effects of human-made Atmospheric Brown Clouds (ABCs) and greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

These are among the conclusions of scientists studying a more than three km-thick layer of soot and other man-made particles that stretches from the Arabian Peninsula to China and the western Pacific Ocean.

The team, drawn from research centres in Asia including China and India, Europe and the United States, announced their latest and most detailed assessment of the phenomenon in Beijing last week. The brown clouds, the result of the burning of fossil fuels and biomass, are in some cases and regions aggravating the impacts of greenhouse gas-induced climate change, says the report.

This is because ABCs lead to the formation of particles like black carbon and soot that absorb sunlight and heat the air and gases such as ozone which enhance the greenhouse effect of CO₂. Globally however brown clouds may be countering or 'masking' the warming impacts of climate change by between 20 and up to 80 per cent, the researchers suggest.

This is because of particles such as sulfates and some organics which reflect sunlight and cool the surface. The cloud is also having impacts on air quality and agriculture in Asia increasing risks to human health and food production for three billion people.

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said: "One of UNEP's central mandates is science-based early warning of serious and significant environmental challenges. I expect the Atmospheric



A new UN report on the Asian Brown Cloud (ABC) predicts accelerated melting of glaciers and delayed monsoons

Brown Cloud to be now firmly on the international community's radar as a result of today's report".

The phenomenon has been most intensively studied over Asia. This is in part because of the region's already highly variable climate, including the formation of the annual monsoon, and the fact that the region is home to around half the world's population and is undergoing massive growth.

But the scientists today made clear that there are also brown clouds elsewhere, including over parts of North America, Europe, southern Africa and the Amazon Basin which also require urgent and detailed research.

"Combating rising CO₂ levels and climate change is the challenge of this generation, but it is also the best bet the world has for Green Growth, including new jobs and new enterprises from a booming solar and wind industry to fuel efficient vehicles, homes and workplaces," said Steiner.

Prof Veerabhadran Ramanathan, head of the UNEP scientific panel which is carrying out the research said: "This report brings ever more clarity to the ABC phenomena and in doing so must trigger an international response—one that tackles the twin threats of greenhouse gases and brown clouds and the unsustainable development that underpins both."

One of the most serious problems highlighted in the report is the documented retreat of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan-Tibetan glaciers, which provide the headwaters for most Asian rivers, and thus have serious implications for the water and food security of Asia.

The new research, by identifying some of the causal factors, offers hope for taking action to slow down this disturbing phenomenon, but it should be cautioned that significant uncertainty remains in our understanding of the complexity of the regional effects of ABCs and more surprises may await us. ●

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Date of First Publication 4 December 2008
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The HIV/AIDS Programme Management Unit, UNDP is looking for an experienced and qualified Nepalese Citizen for following positions with substantive experience.

- 1. Post Title : Surveillance Officer** **Level :** Service Contract –SB4/Peg II
Duration : One year with possible extension **Duty Station :** Kathmandu
Reports to : Director, NCASC
 Annual Gross Remuneration: Rs. 1,088,315.00

Duties and Responsibilities

Under the supervision and guidance of the Director of NCASC, the Surveillance Officer will be primarily responsible for the following:

- Provide technical assistance to NCASC/ MOHP in the conduction of epidemiological surveillance of HIV/ STI as required, in close collaboration with Strategic Information Technical Working Group, Family Health International and other key stakeholders.
- Take a lead role in collecting data on all voluntary counseling and testing services including NGO services for MARPs and general population, VCT integrated in ANC and from health facilities providing care for opportunistic infections and ART services and agencies conducting Integrated Biological Behavioral Surveillance.
- Assist in strengthening existing HIV/AIDS/STI services reporting systems and evaluation of the health sector response with regards to HIV/STI in Nepal.
- Plan, organize, and conduct orientations/meetings with government officials, professional organizations, health staff, health volunteers, local leaders, non-government organizations and others to promote understanding of, support for, participation in, and effective implementation of activities related to HIV/AIDS surveillance.
- Maintain up-to-date HIV case data and share it with other counterparts. Analyze and interpret case data for follow up actions.
- Develop and maintain close working relationships with District Health Officer/Public Health Officer and the Regional Health Director in designated area, as well as with other individuals and organizations related to the HIV/AIDS response.
- Submit reports of activities, and perform other duties assigned by the director

Qualifications required

Masters in Public Health with specialization in epidemiology or demography or other related field

Experience

- At least 5 years experience in HIV project/programme implementation
- At least 3 years experience in HIV/AIDS/STI surveillance
- Currently involved in the monitoring and providing technical support to the projects and/or programmes with regards to HIV/AIDS/STI
- Experience in coordination and liaison with different partner agencies

Skills required

- Understanding of statistics, data management and monitoring and evaluation
- Excellent analytical and synthesis skills
- Good communication/negotiation skills
- Must be prepared to spend time in the field with district health offices and other partners
- Fluency in written and spoken English
- Very good computer skills (including Microsoft Word & Excel, Access or other data base/ statistical soft ware).

- 2. Post Title : Policy Officer** **Level :** Service Contract- SB4/peg II
Duration : One year with possible extension **Duty Station :** Kathmandu
Reports to : Director, HIV/AIDS Control Board
 Annual Gross remuneration: Rs. 1,088,315.00

Duties and Responsibilities:

The Policy Officer will be dedicated to the strengthening of all related policy initiatives of the national programme in Nepal. Under direct supervision of the programme coordinator and the overall guidance of the Director, the Policy Officer will be primarily responsible for the following:

- Support initiatives for the advocacy and policy dialogue, and mobilize a wide range of institutions and actors, beyond the health sector, in the response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal
- Working with HIV/AIDS Control Board, District AIDS Coordination Committee (DACC), NCASC, other national and district level stakeholders and implementing partners identify relevant policy issues related to HIV & AIDS and conduct policy research and analysis
- Lead and Coordinate the policy related aspects and provide ongoing policy related support to DACCs, wider stakeholders and implementing partners.
- Lead and/or coordinate the development of core policy recommendation (documents) and other tools related to HIV/AIDS.
- Facilitate and cultivate relationship with DACCs, implementing partners and other national and district level stakeholders coordinating, liaising, analyzing HIV & AIDS policy issues at all levels
- Provide advocacy support and advice to wider organizations and stakeholders
- Provide policy analysis and information to wider organizations and stakeholders
- Initiate/and or coordinate efforts to communicate policies including, for example, providing training and advice for stakeholders, and overseeing the development of core communication tools, such as Fact Sheets and Frequently Asked Questions
- Support the collation and utilization of data to inform policy and strategy on HIV/AIDS, including the mobilization and allocation of resources.
- Assist in facilitating interaction between DACCs, Policy Makers and other Programme Implementers
- Oversee the performance of DACCs and other national and district level stakeholders in the policy work stream.
- Represent the Board in key stakeholders coalition activities
- Other duties related to Policy Work stream of the Board and as directed by Board Director.

Qualifications required

Masters degree in Public Health or social science

Experience:

- At least 5 years of public health related experience including significant experience in policy research and analysis
- Understanding of advocacy issues related to HIV/AIDS
- Good understanding of development issues and of the role of public policy in development
- Experience in coordination and liaison with different partner agencies

Skills required

- Ability to write reports and policy briefs
- Good communication/negotiation skills
- Must be prepared to spend time in the field with District AIDS Coordination Committees and other implementing partners
- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- Very good computer skills

- 3. Post Title : Programme Coordinator** **Level :** Service Contract- SB4/Peg II
Duration : One year with possible extension **Duty Station :** Kathmandu
Number of Position : 2
 Annual Gross remuneration: Rs. 1,088,315.00

Duties and Responsibilities:

The Programme Coordinator will be dedicated in strengthening the coordination of the national HIV/AIDS programme in Nepal. The two positions will be based at Ministry of Health and Population and at HIV/AIDS Control Board respectively. Under direct supervision of the Director of MOHP or SAE the Programme Coordinator will be primarily responsible for the following:

- Support initiatives for the advocacy and policy dialogue, and mobilizing a wide range of institutions and actors, beyond the health sector, in the response to HIV/AIDS in Nepal
- Coordinate and liaise with the CCM and other external and internal stakeholders, line ministries including, UN partners, and other donor organizations engaged in the field of HIV/AIDS in Nepal to ensure optimal integration of efforts.
- Actively foster and facilitate overall collaboration and cooperation among wider stakeholders to avoid duplication, for clarity and successful implementation of HIV/AIDS National Action Plan.
- Ensure proper incorporation of health systems function in the National HIV/AIDS programme delivery.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in National HIV/AIDS Programming and recommend solutions to improve them
- Advise programme implementers on strategies to be put in place to facilitate results-based implementation of programme activities.
- Prepare and disseminate periodic internal and external updates/status on National HIV/AIDS programme to government partners, stakeholders, non governmental implementing partners and general public.
- Disseminate best practices for management of HIV/AIDS projects at the local level.
- Promote mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of information and experiences at all levels
- Provide concrete recommendations for continuously enhancing effective and productive relationship with government authorities and all relevant stakeholders.
- Provide technical assistance to strengthen District AIDS Coordination Committee to make it functional in coordinating the HIV/AIDS response effectively at district level.

Qualifications required

Masters degree in Public Health, Sociology or Business Administration

Experience:

- At least 5 years of work experience i/o extensive work experience with governmental and non-governmental institutions at national and local level. Experience of coordination and management of activities with participation of several organizations is compulsory
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate implementation of detailed work plans/timelines for major-time sensitive and complex work projects that are dependent on contributions from multiple agencies
- Demonstrated teamwork and leadership skills
- Demonstrated ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with multiple partners
- Good understanding of government health systems in Nepal

Skills required

- Ability to research and analyze information
- Good communication/negotiation skills
- Excellent communication (both written and oral) skill in English and Nepali
- Strong Problem Solving and analytical skill
- Ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously, set priorities, and meet deadlines.
- Strong leadership and diplomacy skills

Applications should be submitted no later than 24 December 2008
 by email, to: hmu2.np@undp.org or in a sealed envelope to
 UNDP Operations Department (Ref: HIV/UNDP), UN House, Pulchowk, P.O. Box 107,
 Kathmandu, Nepal
(Only Applicants who are short-listed will be contacted)

Applicants must submit the updated standard UN Personal History Form available from the UN House Reception or the UNDP webpage <http://www.undp.org.np/vacancy>

Work experience and/or academic knowledge in relation to gender and social exclusion will be an added advantage.
 Women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, people with disabilities, and other minorities are especially encouraged to apply.

UNDP has a policy to have a gender balance in its staff at all levels by 2010.

UNDP, as a matter of practice, does not charge any application, processing or training fee at any stage of the recruitment process. If you have any questions as to vacancy announcements you may have received, please refer to our website.

UNDP is currently aware of fictitious vacancy announcements that are being circulated through the internet, the purpose of which is to get people to register for a training and send in a fee. If you believe that you have received such a notice, please forward it, and any other related information you have received, to scamalert@undp.org. Since logos, emblems, names and addresses can be easily copied or reproduced, you are advised to take particular care in applying for vacancies, including undertaking all appropriate measures to protect against the unauthorized use of any personal information you may have provided as a result of the scam.



Date of First Publication 29 November 2008

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The HIV/AIDS Programme Management Unit, UNDP is looking for an experienced and qualified Nepalese Citizen for following positions with substantive experience.

Position: Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (SB -4/ pag 2)

Location: National HIV/AIDS Control Board & Ministry of Health and Population, Kathmandu

Position: Two

Duration: One year, renewable (three months probation)

Major Duties and Responsibilities

The principle role of the above positions will be to make the national guideline operational in Nepal. These officers will be dedicated to the strengthening of all related monitoring and evaluation activities of the national programme in Nepal.

Specific responsibilities:

1. To coordinate the monitoring and evaluation activities of the national HIV/AIDS programme in Nepal
2. To operationalize the national programme Monitoring & Evaluation system.
3. Liaise with District Officers, partners and M&E staffs.
4. Support the collation and utilization of data to inform policy and strategy on HIV/AIDS, including the mobilization and allocation of resources
5. Provide support in the preparation, collation and dissemination of major national HIV/AIDS reports.
6. Support monitoring, analysis and synthesis of the national programme contribution to the national response among others.
7. Ensure that M&E plan is incorporated in all HIV/AIDS programs including agreements with the implementing agencies.
8. Assist to organize periodical review and evaluation activities and prepare and document M&E progress reports.
9. Other duties related to the monitoring and evaluation function of the national centre.

Qualifications required

Master's degree in Public Health/epidemiology/sociology/demography/population studies and statistics.

Experience

1. At least 5 years experience in HIV project/programme implementation
2. At least 3 years experience in M&E and/or Management Information Systems
3. Training and experience in logical framework, project management and monitoring & evaluation
4. Experience of setting up monitoring (and evaluation) system in health
5. Operational research background and experience desirable
6. Currently involved in the monitoring and evaluation of projects and/or programmes
7. Experience in coordination and liaison with different partner agencies.

Skills required

1. Understanding of statistics, data management and monitoring and evaluation
2. Excellent analytical and synthesis skills
3. Good communication/negotiation skills
4. Must be prepared to spend time in the field
5. Fluency in written and spoken English
6. Very good computer skills (including Microsoft Word & Excel, Access or other data base/statistical soft ware).
7. Understanding of financial management and budgeting of development programmes desirable

Monitoring and Evaluation Associate (SB -3/ pag 2)

Location: National HIV/AIDS Control Board and HIV/AIDS PMU, UNDP, Kathmandu

Position: Two

Duration: One year, renewable (three months probation)

Duties and Responsibilities

The Monitoring and Evaluation Associate will provide overall support to the M&E Officer and will also directly report to the M&E officer.

1. To manage database for HIV/AIDS programme monitoring and support improvements in the design of the database.
2. To collect relevant data on key HIV/AIDS/STI service delivery from all implementing partners, stakeholders, NGOs and INGOS working on HIV/AIDS
3. To collect selected data for key M&E indicators included in the national guidelines related to prevention.
4. To carry out the data entry into the database on a regular basis and to provide specific analyses.
5. To assist the Monitoring Officer to prepare monitoring reports on selected areas of HIV/AIDS service delivery and implementation.
6. To provide support to other technical staff at SAE in relation to data collection, management and analysis.
7. To provide support in the preparation of reports, newsletter and papers on HIV/AIDS
8. To identify gaps and weaknesses in statistical data received on HIV/AIDS/STI and signal these to the M&E Officer and relevant technical focal point at the SAE for corrective action.
9. To support other data management and statistical work as suggested by Director
10. Disseminate data collected and their analyses to relevant partners including UN agencies, donors, NGOs, civil society, line ministry and other stakeholders.

Qualifications

1. A Bachelors Degree in social sciences or closely related qualification
2. A minimum of 3 years in HIV/AIDS programme; preferably in data analysis, and management.
3. Proven ability to operate within a close team working environment, producing multiple outputs and meeting deadlines;
4. A broader firm grounding in programming with practical experience in implementation will be a distinct asset
5. Demonstrable understanding of the flow of data and statistics.

Applications should be submitted no later than 17 December 2008
by email, to: hmu2_np@undp.org or in a sealed envelope to
UNDP Operations Department (Ref: Field Officer/RC), UN House, Pulchowk, P.O. Box 107,
Kathmandu, Nepal

(Only Applicants who are short-listed will be contacted)

Applicants must submit the updated standard UN Personal History Form available from the UN House Reception
or the UNDP webpage <http://www.undp.org.np/vacancy.htm>

Work experience and/or academic knowledge in relation to gender and social exclusion
will be an added advantage.

Women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, people with disabilities, and other minorities are especially
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scam

Head in the sand

Instead of pointless debates about a people's republic Nepal should be preparing for the after effects of global recession

There are two collective global crises at the moment. One is financial, the meltdown of capitalist economics as we know it. The other is a vast collapse of imagination by leaders and elites everywhere. This includes (Nepal take note) the political left.

The tendrils of the economic black hole spreading outward from Wall Street are oozing into all aspects of life, almost everywhere. Banks are teetering on the brink of, well, bankruptcy. Famous American car brands are on the verge of disappearing, throwing millions out of work. Shops are going without customers and eventually out of business.



NOW AND THEN
Daniel Lak

Governments seem powerless to intervene and the much-vaunted free market is proving a sick joke. What should have been obvious, that it was too free, has hit home too hard and too late.

The fundamentalists who championed deregulation and excess freedom of finance are taking their bonus billions and building higher walls around their mansions, to keep out the newly created rabble.

The world as we knew it, all of us in the global cash economy, is changing beyond all recognition

What remains intact is the mediocrity and incompetence of those who govern us. Leave aside George W Bush and his rapacious Republican political party, the chancers and bandits whose looting exacerbated this mess to breaking point over the past eight years.

Forget Tony Brown or Gordon Blair or whatever his name is in London, or Sarko of France. Never mind the faceless placemen who head our woefully underfunded multilateral agencies: the men who were supposed to protect capitalism from its worst excesses but presided instead over expansions of inequality and runaway market madness.

In America, it's a new political epoch so we must look to Barack Obama, president-in-all-but-name-already, and his economic team of Bill Clinton retreads, bankers and academics. Still, give them a chance I hear you say. Let them take office in January and start spending their way out of this swamp of toxic assets and failed casino economics.

Thing is, they won't. There is no money to borrow, pull from a secret savings account or print at the US Federal Reserve.

The United States is the spendthrift deadbeat in a troubled neighbourhood of slightly more thrifty households. It was kept afloat by cheques, easy loans for years but has now blown the gaff. No more kiting checks just to pay the bills, let alone to rebuild the house and landscape the garden.

So Obama, however well intentioned, can but be a reassuring presence in a nation and global economy in indefinite decline as chickens come flapping home to roost in a threadbare coop.

His fine words and charisma will reassure empty stomachs and anxious hearts for only so long, and then the real crisis of confidence sets in, when America realises that there is no quick fix.

This is when it gets grim for Nepal and other poor nations deluding themselves that their lousy economies and minimal exposure to global finance are all of a sudden an asset. Aid and development spending, already a pittance of national budgets, are easily slashed by desperate donor governments looking for pennies to pinch. Well paid consultants and expat lifestyles will go. Nepal's tourism, painfully resurrecting itself after years of war, will dry up, however eco-friendly and unique the attractions of the Republic.

Most crucially, the country's most important source of income looks set to plummet.

Remittances keep this country's economy float in every way and the Persian Gulf is feeling the pinch of contracting demand and low petroleum prices. Along with declining revenues, there'll be returning workers aplenty, back from their global dreams of saving enough for a plot of land with little more than some loose change and the manpower company baseball cap.

How will this country absorb an influx of potentially angry young men like that? Integrate them into the Nepal Army or the PLA? Let's hope not. So with such obvious impacts looming, what is our government doing? They're debating pointless points of communist terminology and regulating alcohol sales, raiding casinos and lighting lamps at ceremonies all over Kathmandu.

Oh yes, and still dreaming of making this country the Switzerland of Asia, even as its key sources of prosperity are blasted by economic tsunamis. There are leftists who chuckle with glee at all of this but very soon there will be little to laugh about. ●

Daniel Lak resumes his column from this week. His latest book is India Express.



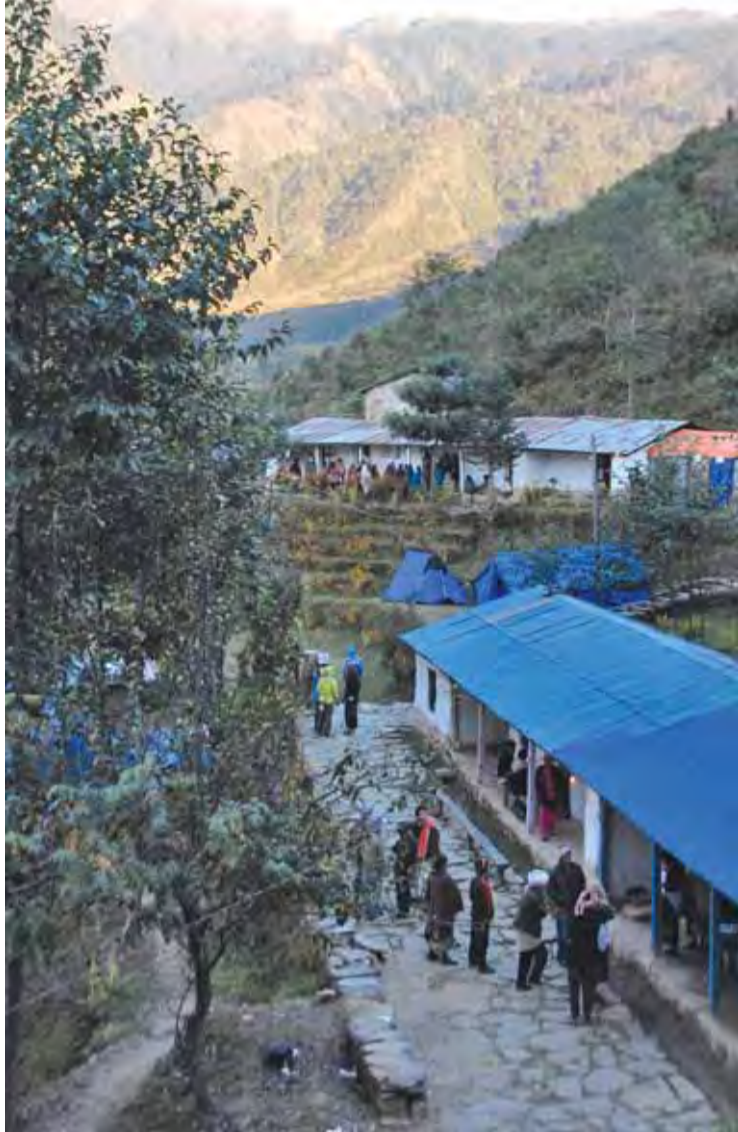
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So near yet so far



LOUIS J. DECARLO

LONG WAIT: Locals wait in line to be checked at the government sub-health post in Tipling, supplemented by a private organisation working in the area.

You don't have to go to a remote corner of Nepal to see government neglect

ROMA ARYAL in DHADING

From here in Tipling in northern Dhading, Kathmandu is so close you can see its glow down on the south eastern horizon at night. But in terms of health, education and life-expectancy you may as well be on another planet.

There is one government sub-health post in Tipling, but there are no health workers. The primary school is basic, the enrolment rate is low because most children help their parents in the millet fields. Drop-out is high.

"Dhading is so close to the capital, but it may as well be as remote as Humla," says Sharad Parajuli, founder of a non-profit agency, Himalayan Healthcare, working in the region. From Kathmandu, Tipling is only a 17-minute helicopter ride, but it is a three-day hike to get here from the nearest road near Trisuli. There is no electricity, no phone and no presence of the government.

Apart from chronic

government neglect, part of the reason for Dhading's lack of development was the war. Along the trail, there are electricity transmission lines cut by local rebels. The wires have long been stolen. Teachers, health care workers and other government officials fled and have only now started coming back.

This remote northern belt of Dhading below Ganesh Himal has a lot of catching up to do, but it also has tremendous potential. One of them is the spectacular scenery and unspoilt villages which remind visitors of Nepal as it once was 50 years ago, before tourism. An eco-tourism project like ACAP in the Annapurnas would benefit locals directly and create jobs so villagers wouldn't have to migrate to Kathmandu or India.

Chhabi Bhattarai has been working in the region for the past eight years. Things are changing, he says. "Dhading may be extremely poor, but it has come a long way. There is now a new sense of taking command over one's destiny."

Health care is a priority for local people. Even simple infections can kill children, the nearest hospital is days away in Trisuli. Parajuli and Bhattarai work with Himalayan Healthcare to improve the facilities at health posts in Tipling and surrounding areas. Other organisations are helping build suspension bridges and solar lamps. Christian groups bring in investment but are also actively converting locals.

Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel told *Nepali Times* that the lack of facilities, even in terms of health, may be due to inadequate pressure by the people. "To an extent, they have the responsibility of making their own villages, and we are willing to help," he says.

But local official Rajendra Pandey says the government must take the lead in making up for past neglect of places like northern Dhading. He says: "Unless government-led development is carried out, these mountains will continue to be forgotten." ●

Mobile power

PayBill introduces mobile payment service, turning a cell phone into a personal cheque book



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

With all the innovative features and accessories, it seems that now there is little that a mobile can't be used for. A mobile is not just a phone but your day planner, your music player, your camera, your gaming partner and for some even a mini PC.

Well the good news is, soon you will be able to use your phone to pay your bills as well. All you need is a bank account, a mobile phone and a registration with PayBill. For the first time in Nepal, PayBill has introduced an SMS-based payment service. "Now you can use your cell as your debit or credit card," says Manish Subba, founder and CEO of PayBill.

The new service is being launched following over a year of research and testing in partnership


with the Indian company PayMate.

"Nepal and India share many social and cultural attributes. The mobile proliferation seems to be increasing here as well," explains PayMate India founder Ajay Adiseshann. "This is a great time to launch a solution that adds value and convenience to the services a mobile provides." After just two years in business, PayMate has over 760,000 customers and over 13,000 partners. It has also extended its reach into the US, Sri Lanka and UAE.

PayBill launched its services in partnership with Everest Bank and Nepal Telecom. In its first phase, the service is limited to the NTC pre-paid SIM users who will be able to recharge their phones. "But positive discussions with other


banks, utilities offices, supermarkets and restaurants are underway," says Subba. Hopefully, this service will be extended to paying utility bills, purchasing movie tickets, tickets for flight and for online or retail shopping.

The concern for most is of course the level of security. If your mobile becomes your credit card as well, then what happens if you lose it? When asked, Adiseshann replies: "The security in this concept is a notch above the credit card. Each client is given a permanent PIN number and a different alpha code in every transaction. Without the two, the money in your bank account does not go anywhere." He smiles and assures that until now they have not faced any problem of abuse or misuse of their services. ● *Paavan Mathema*


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Explosive remnants of war

Long after the ceasefire, people continue to lose limbs

As the world prepares for states to sign the Cluster Munitions Convention in Oslo this month, Nepalis still face the threat of being maimed by unexploded mines.

In October 2006, shortly after his Bhai Tika ceremony in a village 15km from Pokhara, Ram Chandra Biswakorma, a regular 15 year-old teenager was helping friends powder some small explosives for fishing.

No sooner had they begun the process, the plastic bucket which bore the chemicals exploded. When he opened his eyes, Ram found himself in hospital, wrapped in plasters and his two legs amputated. Six other boys were injured.

Today, he is no longer the fun-loving youngster that he was. He used to be good in studies, but is now lagging behind. He worries a lot about his future and feels sad that neither he nor his friends had ever received any education on the risks posed by mines



ICRC

Like a lot of mine and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) victims, Ram Chandra did not realise that he and his friends were in danger. The Maoists had formerly used their house as a storehouse for explosives and his story is repeated in the plight of many mine victims around the country.

The ten-year armed conflict has come to an end but it has left the threat of explosive remnants of war in its wake. In the first 10 months of this year alone, 58 people have been injured by mines in Nepal—most of them are children.

As part of its mandate to protect civilians from the effects of the conflict, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is working to prevent injuries, assist victims and reduce the socio-economic impact of this lethal debris on civilian populations. It provides assistance for emergency and hospital care, secondary surgery and physical rehabilitation services to the victims of conflict if they fail to get support from the government.

The ICRC is working with the Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre (GPH&RC) in Pokhara, where Ram Chandra has been treated. Today, he has artificial limbs and can walk to and from school even without crutches. He is catching up with school work. His aim in life is to help put an end to the stigma the disabled face in Nepal and around the globe.

As part of the ICRC's Micro Economic Initiative (MEI) project, which provides cash for income generating projects for conflict-affected people, Ram Chandra's family received Rs 10,000 in kind. This grant can fund livestock, small-scale farming, trade or vocational training. Since it was launched in 2006, approximately 3,500 families in 35 districts have benefited. ●
Moheindu Chemjong

See also: 'This land is mined land', #171 'Children in a minefield', #411



Still high and dry

No relief in sight for the marooned east till spring

MANOJ SHRESTHA
in SUNSARI

What chronic strikes and shutdowns could not achieve, the Kosi disaster has managed to do.

Nine districts of eastern Nepal have been cut off from the rest of the country since August because the river has severed the East-West Highway. The Itahari-Biratnagar industrial corridor is crippled, and tourism from Darjeeling and Sikkim to Nepal

has been affected.

Three months after the Kosi breached its embankment, the river is still flowing through villages in Nepal and India. Some 52,000 people in Nepal and three million in India are still displaced. Meanwhile, at the barrage, the Kosi is just a trickle.

Indian engineers have been busy building a cofferdam to plug the 2.5km breach in the embankment and divert the river through a channel to a western branch of the river.

Last week, when Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee inspected progress on the diversion, engineers said they could complete this work by March when the flow in the river is lowest.

Most of the 13km section of the highway have now been filled over, however there is a 500m section near Laukhi where the main channel of the Kosi cuts through the highway.

The army and private operators run a ferry service in

You are no

ROMA ARYAL

Eight young filmmakers were chosen in an open short film competition by the USAID to create films for HIV/AIDS prevention. The result was eight short films, mostly eight minutes long that offer compelling and unique perspectives of the issue. The eight films, which feature a celebrity cast, encapsulate a number of regional languages besides Nepali including Maithili, Dutteli, and Achhami along with story lines that are firmly based on small realities but are equally relatable.

The length of the films manages to keep the story lines clean and unadorned by the dramatisation that HIV/AIDS is often portrayed with. HIV is shown to be something that can be lived with and because the examples are so grounded, the message does not come across as didactic: no one will be spared by the virus. The filmmakers cover settings unjudgementally across several different layers and regions of Nepali society.

One of the films that comes strong in its simplicity is *Horn Please*, which tells the story of a conductor who dreams of becoming a driver and exceeding his boss' overt promiscuity. He changes

Short experimental films on AIDS show ignorance is not





ALL PICS: MANOJ SHRESTHA



DANGEROUS CROSSINGS: The Kosi barrage is nearly dry as the river has completely bypassed it since August (top, left). Motorcycles being ferried across a 500m stretch of washed off highway in Lauki (top) and an overloaded boat crosses the Kosi in Chhatara where the river breaks out of the mountains.

this section. They take bus passengers, motorcycles and sometimes even small cars across.

Sunsari CDO Durga Bhandari is getting impatient with the delay and doubts if the work can be completed by March. "There is a lack of sense of urgency to the work," he told *Nepali Times*.

Indian engineers say they are waiting for the low-water level in January February to complete

plugging the embankment, and in the meantime have finished digging a 9km canal across to the Kosi main channel. Only after this happens can the work to rebuild the 500m section of the highway begin.

Meanwhile, the 52,000 people displaced by the floods in Sunsari are still living in 29 shelters run by various aid agencies. It is not clear if they can

go back to the land once the river is diverted since the fertile soil is covered with sand and all property boundaries have been obliterated.

"We will see who wants to go back to their homesteads and who wants to settle elsewhere," Bhandari says.

Besides tourism to the Kosi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, the biggest loss has been suffered by the industries and plantations in Morang, Jhapa, Ilam and Dhankuta. These towns have been shut off both from their markets and their supply of raw materials.

Some 500 manufacturing units employing 100,000 people in Morang have been affected, with most reducing production by 60 per cent. The power cuts are even worse in the east because the floods washed away a 132 kVA transmission pylon and power import from India has been affected. And if things weren't bad enough, shutdowns like the Limbuwan banda in eastern Nepal and highway blockades by Madhesi militant groups this week have increased the misery of travellers and further crippled business. ●

exception

his mind when his boss contracts HIV because of his ignorance and the boy loses his job.

Sonam follows a charming panwala and the people he meets at his shop to tell the story of a girl who works at a dance bar, whose lovers are unaware of her promiscuity. Each of the lovers are convinced that having unprotected sexual contact with ones lover will not be harmful. The film puts across its message although HIV is never mentioned—that is, no one can be trusted to be faithful.

The issue of transferring HIV from the husband to the wife through an unfaithful partner, mainly men who have several partners and having sex without condoms where they work in the city is

featured in *Bhok*. A wife un-knowingly transfers HIV to her lover after being infected by her unfaithful husband. Another film *Kamala* follows a woman who is infected by her husband who comes back from the city. She finds salvation in Mithila art and her child who is born uninfected.

The filmmakers undertake youth culture in urban Nepal in a lighthearted manner. Although some issues could have been delved into more deeply such as intravenous transfer of HIV, teenage sex and blood transfusions. Whatever has been shown exposes the ignorance that underlies the vulnerability to the disease.

The directors are careful not to present the characters without making any attempt to engage in petty finger-pointing or in sugar-coating reality with a thick layer of false pity. This makes them all the more compelling because they do not attempt to draw the attention of the audience with theatrical emotion but rather tell the stories of their characters and their suffering in quiet dignity.

One of the films will be awarded in a ceremony on 13 December 2008 at Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza. The program, along with the eight films, will be telecast live on Avenues and Sagarmatha television channels from 4.30 PM onwards. ●



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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **A liÉpreuve du monde**, a photo exhibition, Russian Cultural Centre until 5 December
- ❖ **Himalayan Changing Landscapes**, an outdoor photo exhibition organised by ICIMOD at Hanuman Dhoka Darbar Square, till 8 December. 4256909
- ❖ **Autumn Collection**, a group exhibition by six women, Park Gallery, 12 December, 11AM-5PM. 4419353,

EVENTS

- ❖ **Park Art Fair 08** at Park Gallery, 5-7 December. 5522307
- ❖ **Kusisqa Waqashayku**, a film at Indigo gallery, 5 December, 7PM
- ❖ **Alliance Francaise** presents 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, till 6 December
- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bajar**, 6 December at the Hyatt Regency, 10AM-4.30 PM
- ❖ **For the Elimination of Violence Against Women**, film screenings till 9 December, 12PM, US Embassy. 4007200



- ❖ **6th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF)** from 11-15 December at the Rastriya Sabha Griha and the Nepal Tourism Board. 5542544
- ❖ **Fargo**, a film by the Coen brothers, 11 December, 6.30 PM, Lazimpat Gallery CafÉ. 4428549

MUSIC

- ❖ **Donatois Last Stand**, Sunday live music, 7 December, 6.30 PM, Lazimpat Gallery CafÉ. 4428549
- ❖ **Kathmandu Chorale** presents Tis the Season, a Winter Concert, 13 December 2008 at 3.30-6PM, The British School
- ❖ **Tuesday Melody** at Jazzabell CafÉ, Happy hour 6-8PM. 2114075
- ❖ **74 Twister** playing live every Tuesday at Moksh, Pulchowk. 5526212
- ❖ **Robin and the New Revolution** playing live every Tuesday, 7.10 PM onwards at Bamboo Club Restaurant, Thamel. 470157
- ❖ **Some like it hot** every Friday BBQ and live music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds, 7PM onwards, Rs 899 at Fusion, Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Happy cocktail hour**, 5-7PM, ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jatra CafÉ & Bar
- ❖ **Live Sensation**, live performance by Yankey, every Saturday, 9PM, Hyatt Regency. 4491234.
- ❖ **Dance and Cocktails** at Cube Bar, Kamaladi. 4438017
- ❖ **Fusion and Looza Band** every Friday night, Bhumi Resto Lounge, Lazimpat. 4412193
- ❖ **Rudra night** fusion and classical Nepali music by Shyam Nepali and friends, every Friday, 7PM at Le Meridien, Gokarna. 4451212
- ❖ **Sufi music** by Hemanta Rana, every Friday at 7.30 PM at Dhaba Restaurant and Bar, Thapathali.
- ❖ **Fusion and Classical Music** by Anil Shahi every Wednesday, rock with Rashmi Singh every Friday, Sufi & Raga with Hemant Rana every Saturday, 8PM onwards, Absolute Bar. 5521408

DINING

- ❖ **Nhuchhe goes Thai** at Nhuchhe's Thai kitchen, Baluwatar. 4429903.
- ❖ **Coffee & Chocolate** at the Lounge in Hyatt Regency, 4.30-6.30 PM. 4491234
- ❖ **Take away** at Te Restaurant from Bluebird Food Court and Welcome Food Plaza at Bakhundole, Sanepa. 5549331
- ❖ **Salmon Delicacies** at the Rox Restaurant from 7PM onwards, Hyatt Regency. 4489361
- ❖ **Organic Salad Bar and Steak** at Jalan Jalan restaurant every Friday from 6PM, Rs 650
- ❖ **Fusion** of Marcela Raganis new menu and Mannie's new bar at Dhokaima CafÉ. 5522113
- ❖ **Plat Du Jour** at Hotel Shangri-la, Kathmandu, Rs 600. 4412999
- ❖ **Pizza & Pasta** every Monday and Tuesday at Rox Restaurant. Hyatt Regency. 448936
- ❖ **Pasta pesto passion** at La Dolce Vita, Thamel. 4700612
- ❖ **Steak special** with free Irish coffee at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 4700043
- ❖ **Continental and cafÉ item** with live band every Friday at Vintage Cafe and Pub, Woodland Complex, Darbar Marg.
- ❖ **Unlimited wine offer** for Rs 990 at La Maison wine and cigar lounge. 9841333628
- ❖ **Home made pasta** at Alfresco, Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
- ❖ **Reality Bites**, The Kaiser CafÉ, Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarika's Group of Hotels, 9AM-10PM. 4425341
- ❖ **Steak escape** with Kathmandu's premier steaks at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson. 4411818
- ❖ **Cocktails, mocktails and liqueurs** at the Asahi Lounge, opening hours 1-10PM, above Himalayan Java, Thamel.
- ❖ **Retro Brunch Barbeque** with live acoustic music by Sound Chemistry, every Saturday, 12-3PM at LeMeridien-Kathmandu, Gokarna. 4451212
- ❖ **Starry night barbeque** at Hotel Shangri-la with live performance by Ciney Gurung, Rs 666, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- ❖ **Kebabs and curries** at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9841290619
- ❖ **Ily Expression Coffee** at Hotel Shangri-la, Lazimpat and Mandap Hotel, Thamel
- ❖ **Socially Responsible coffee** at Himalayan Java, Thamel

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors(at)nepalitimes.com



Dil Kabadi is a humorous take on urban relationships. Starring Konkona Sen Sharma, Soha Ali Khan, Payal Rohatgi, Rahul Bose, Irfaan Khan and Rahul Khanna, this film portrays the journey of two modern day couples. Samit and Mita, and Rishi and Simi are caught in the web of post-marital boredom. This movie shows how the couples deal with an irresistible temptation of lurking out of their relationship for some fun. As the four deal with monogamy and infidelity, they meet Kaya who spices up their relationships.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Current weather features are the result of dry air deposited by westerly jet stream of mid-troposphere over Tibet mixed up with relatively warm air of north India. On average, Kathmandu Valley gets 15mm rainfall in December. However, in the last decade the quota rainfall of the month was received only once. The chronic winter drought over the Himalaya has been taken by some to be a sign of climate change. This satellite picture taken on Thursday morning shows no change except a fresh westerly front in western Himalaya. But this lacks both vigour and moisture to do us any good. Expect dry, cold nights and smoggy mornings with breezy afternoons in Kathmandu.

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by PRERANA PAKHRIN





SPANISH DECORATION: Spanish ambassador Ion De La Riva Guzman De Frutos presents the Cross of the Order of Civil Merit on behalf of His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain to Ambica Shrestha on 21 November. Shrestha is the honorary consul of Spain in Nepal and president of the Dwarika's Group of Hotels & Resorts.



KIRAN PANDAY

SMILEY IN THE SKY: The conjunction of Venus, Jupiter and the moon as seen from a partially cloudy Pokhara on 1 December.

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MCUTREDA/07

Visit Ass' own country

Prime Minister Comrade Ferocity took time off from greeting foreign foreign ministers to tell an Austrian journalist this week that he was going to ban **strikes, hartals, chukka jams and bands**.

But even if he manages to get Girjau to agree to this radical proposal, the big question is whether he can convince his own trade union don, Comrade Jamar the Kattel. Just this week, the police nabbed 15 extortionists from the baddie "revolutionary" trade union who had threatened managers of a private security firm with death if they didn't hand over half a million bucks. Anyway, after some time in the cooler the culprits were released on direct orders from the PMO.



The Maobaddies have just brought out a Code of Conduct for their members in the Constituent Assembly. No more boozing it up in their hostels, at least not publicly. Not to attend anymore parties in five star hotels. To take only public transport or bicycles while commuting. Not to wear expensive clothes, and not to use mobile phones that cost more than Rs 10,000. Fine print: These rules are only for **proles**, and do not apply to party members who are in the cabinet or in the central committee.



Nothing shocks us anymore about Ass' own country, Nepal. Just when we were quietly rejoicing in the fact that the Thais have outdone us by closing down their airport, our very own Tribhuvan Interminable Airport was also out of action one evening last week. No, it wasn't because the duty free shopkeepers had gheraoed the departure lounge (although that is soon coming, we hear). It was because the airport's one and only generator ran out of diesel during a power cut.

The terminal building, runway lights, the KTM VOR beacon all went on the blink. BRB himself was in the VVVVVIP area waiting for a flight to Doha, so the financial minister got first-hand experience about the difficulties of generating 10,000 megawatts in the next ten years. Tourists waiting for flights and those that had just arrived got an unforgettable souvenir of Nepal, the **Land of Darkness**. Where else in the world does one get such a vivid demonstration of everyday life right at the airport?



The blackout came right on cue as the Nepal Electrocutated Authority announced that load-shedding would now increase to 49 hours a week, blaming it as always on the lack of water in the rivers and not on its own incompetence. Guess that means we can put plans for that electric crematorium in Teku on the **back burner**, as it were, for now.

But not to worry. Everything is going to be hunky-dory henceforth cuz the coalition government has just set up a multiparty highlevel coordination committee to advise the government how to run the government.



In the bad old days, there used to be long queues at the gas stations everytime NOC was about to **raise** the price of fuel. This week, cars started to line up when rumours started flying that the government was about to **lower** the price of fuel.

Gas station owners, it turns out, make killing either way. They used to hoard fuel before a price increase creating an artificial shortage, but this week they refused to lift fuel from NOC because they knew the prices were going down. This is on top of the tons of money they make mixing kerosene in diesel and turpentine in petrol. The only fuel which is reasonably pure is avgas, but even here the suppliers cash in on the five percent leeway that is given for en route evaporation.



They call him the **Old Fox**, but GPK should henceforth be called the **Old Mule**. From one mule to another, I must say the guy never gives up. Last week he told party faithful he wanted to continue leading the NC, and even hinted that if he can engineer the downfall of the Maoist-led government he'd like to be prime minister again for the 817th time or whatever.

Girjau is even preparing for the time he won't be around by ensuring that his heir apparent in the party is a Koirala. Being a democrat, he has given us three choices, and all three names begin with an 'S': **Sujata, Shekhar or Sushil**.

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