



## MOTORCYCLING THE HIMALAYAS

# ***MOTORCYCLING THE HIMALAYAS: THE RAGGED EDGE: PART 4***

The second flight from Guangzhou China to Kathmandu Nepal was the short one, only four and a half hours. Filled with anxious trekkers, wanderers, Everest climbers and adventure seekers, I met Glen. Movie star good looks, obviously in top shape, he was here to attempt to summit Everest, again.



## **EVEREST BOUND**

Last year he and his team were 300 feet from the top, and the ceiling dropped like a sledgehammer. 100-mile-an-hour winds annihilate any chance to summit and can last for days. Glen is back, spending other 45 grand on permits and prays to the mountain gods for safe passage. Eddie, a fifty-something CPA from Iowa, in not-so-good shape, was clutching a copy of Sir Edmund Hillary's account of his ascent on Everest. Eddie beams as he swills Chinese beers and yammers on about the lure of the mountain; his mission is to get to Basecamp...and have a cold beer.

## **BLESSED ARE THE DREAMERS**

Jackie, an attractive college student from San Diego armed with only a backpack and some travelers' guides, was wandering the world solo for the next three months. An experienced hiker, she had worked out a \$25-a-day budget for

food and lodging in Nepal as she hiked there for a month. Then there's us, the mad motorcyclists who are here to ride 1,200 miles from Kathmandu to Lhasa on Royal Enfields. Blessed are the dreamers.



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# República



## Malaysian jet skids off TIA runway

### Airport operations shut for 13 hours

**ARPANA ALE MAGAR**  
KATHMANDU, April 20

A Boeing 737 of Malaysia's Malindo Air with 139 passengers and crew on board skidded beyond the runway at Tribhuvan International Airport at 10:15 pm Thursday.

The pilot aborted the take-off at the final moment when he saw an error in the monitor display in the cockpit, according to Raj Kumar Chhetri, general manager of the airport, who was quoting the pilot.

The pilot could not control the Kuala Lumpur-bound aircraft as it was already on take-off mode. So the take-off was aborted and it came to a halt on grassland around 40 meters from the southern end of the runway.

Following the incident, all flights to and from TIA were halted for 13 hours. Flight operations resumed at 11:45 am on Friday after the Malaysian jet was towed to the hangar.

**Lack of proper equipment and manpower delayed the towing.**

—Raj Kumar Chhetri, general manager, TIA

diverted to Calcutta, New Delhi and Dhaka while six departures were canceled. Scheduled departures for Friday morning were delayed.

"A salvage team of around 60 members tried to tow the stricken aircraft from the grassland," Chhetri said. Ground handling personnel of Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC), the Nepal Army and TIA firefighters were in the salvage team.

Lack of proper equipment and manpower delayed the towing, Chhetri added. TIA used equipment from the army for the purpose.

time an incident occurs all the stakeholders make a commitment to improve matters but later on the commitment is forgotten," he said.

He further said that the bodies concerned should take the initiation to establish a well-equipped task force for such contingencies. "The authorities should not hesitate to invest money in proper equipment," he added.

Limbu further said that this kind of problem arises because the country's sole international airport has only one runway. "Other countries tackle such contingencies within five to six hours but Nepal lacks the equipment and manpower," he added.

Chhetri, the TIA chief, said rain and mud hampered the salvage work.

Three years back, it took TIA three days to tow a Turkish Airlines plane that had also skidded off the runway.

Dr KC, Bihel... No option but Company... Rail link with...

DEPESH SHRESTHA/REPUBLICA

Malaysian Malindo Air's Boeing 737 sits grounded beyond the TIA runway near Koteswar as pictured on Friday morning. The plane with 132 passengers and seven crew members had skidded 40 meters from the southern end of the runway during takeoff at around 10:15 on Thursday night. No one was injured in the incident. The airport was closed for around 13 hours following the incident. The plane was towed to the hangar safely on Friday morning.

## THE RAGGED EDGE

Touchdown at KTM airport was thrilling. The 707 smacked hard on the tarmac, bounced, then shuddered to a ragged stop. That very evening another jet with 148 passengers skidded off the same runway and closed the airport for an entire day. The adventure begins on the ragged edge.

**Next Episode: K-K-K-Kathmandu**

**MOTORCYCLE BOOTS**