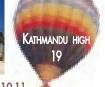


5 - 11 October 2001 Trekking in Mustang 9-10-11





middlemen, and are trying to get in by applying for political asylum. In the process, Nepalis who are genuinely fleeing persecution either from the Maoists or police do not get a chance. Their applications are almost always rejected, but most

"disappear" before that happens. "The story is a near-perfect cut-and-paste job which virtually every Nepali asylum seeker repeats with a change here or there," says an official involved in the asylum application screening process here.

Most of the stories are the same: "I face prosecution, even death. I escaped after friends and relatives arranged tickets and a passport for me. I don't remember the flight number or airline."

British Embassy officials in Kathmandu told us there has been a sudden rise in the number of Nepalis seeking asylum in Britain in the past few years when there have been 30-35 applications a month in Britain alone. Diplomats from other countries told us they are seeing more Nepalis claiming to be fleeing prosecution and arriving in Norway, the Netherlands, Germany and Australia. While two years ago many Nepalis pretended to be Bhutanese fleeing persecution, now they mostly say they are targeted by Maoists or police.

That is Karki's story. The only thing wrong is that none of it is true. The 28-The number of Nepalis seeking political year-old is actually from east Nepal, he asylum in Australia last year was 95, and the number this year is down a bit. Many say affected Gorkha district to buttress his they are Bhutanese, and most apply for appeal for political asylum in Britain. Karki political asylum after their student visas run out. This year there have been 11 instances not his real name) is among hundreds of of "unauthorised entry" of Nepalis in Australia, all by air. The applications are European countries and Australia who have processed by the independent Migration

Hundreds of Nepalis are seeking political asy in Europe or Australia. Nearly all are rejected, but many "disappear" to stay on as illegals.

Review Tribunal (MRT), and officials say no Nepali application has been accepted although some are still being processed by an appeals committee.

Nepali sources in Sydney say the rejects usually "disappear" by the time the committee decides. What is attractive to most asylumseekers is that they get allowances, in some countries under certain conditions they are allowed to go out of the holding centres and

can even work and earn money. One Nepali in Australia told us: "If nothing else the lengthy review and appeal process allows them to continue staying there for at least a year, enough time for

anyone to disappear." British Embassy officials in Kathmandu say they are monitoring the traffic closely, and have been trying to plug the loopholes For instance, a Nepali with a multiple entry visa would mail his passport home after getting to Britain, enabling a friend or relative to come in on the same passport, sometimes by changing the photograph. Now, British visas have photo identity

pasted on the visas with superglue. Embassy officials say they are unaware if any of the recent applicants have actually been granted asylum. The numbers from the Middle East and various eastern

European countries is growing so fast that it is difficult to keep track. The preferred country changes depending on prevalent laws, but at present Britain is the favourite for Nepalis, along with the Netherlands, Germany and Norway. In the United States, most people don't bother to seek asylum and just stay on as illegal immigrants.

In Europe, many arrive on legal student isas but a small percentage travel with fake passports and visas, which are either destroyed upon arrival or recycled by middlemen. Some Nepalis have now started reaching Britain overland from other European countries with Indians,

Afghans and Iraqis.
Alternatively, those with immigration in mind destroy their passports and claim political asylum at the immigration counters in just the amount of English needed to communicate their intent. Others hang out at the airport lounge waiting to be discovered by officials and taken to immigration. Agents helping these people get there have instructed them to say nothing but: "No passport, no money, I Maoist from Nepal, face big problem, I'm free now,'

### BINOD BHATTARAI

JITENDRA RAUT IN LONDON

am Bahadur Karki spent two years in

the jungles of northern Gorkha

donated all his property to the party (he has

receipts) and would have still been fighting had there not been a warrant for his arrest.

Friends and relatives arranged his flight from Nepal, and he fled because he would

charging him with murdering civilians.

otherwise have been killed in a fake

faked his residence in the insurgency-

Nepali economic migrants in various

sold most of their possessions to pay

encounter with the police.

district as a Maoist guerrilla. He

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has made up his mind: he is going to expand his cabinet. The only question is when. Going by the time he took to announce his government in July, Deuba may need some more time so his patronage is distributed evenly among supporters. "You are looking at next week, or even after Dasain," one senior minister told us. "He does not decide fast."

But why now? The main catalyst is the move by Deuba's arch rival within his party, Girija Prasad Koirala, to fill key positions in the Nepali Congress Central Committee with cronies and lovalists. There is no love lost between the two, and Deuba must have seen this as a personal challenge. Koirala himself needn't have done it so blatantly. What it shows is that Congress factions are still at each other's throats, which was the reason that despite being a majority party in parliament it has not been able to

A close Deuba aide said a decision on cabinet expansion was imminent, and there could be as many as 39 ministers. Deuba has a reputation for jumbo cabinetsduring his last tenure 1995-97 he had a record 48 ministers. To accommodate supporters, Deuba is even said to be thinking of unbundling larger ministries like Industry, Commerce and Supplies into smaller units. There are a lot of impatient Congressites Deuba needs to reward for helping him oust Koirala.



Koirala says he has given Deuba a free hand with ministerial appointments. "I don't care about what others say of my nominees in the central committee." he told reporters in Biratnagar on Tuesday. "And I won't comment on his pick of ministers in the cabinet. It's his prerogative as prime minister." What most indepen-

dent political analysts hope is that the Congress infighting over portfolios and power will not erupt at a time when negotiations with Manists have entered a crucial stage.

But there is also a more practical reason Deuba needs to expand his cabinet. Besides being prime minister, he manages nine ministries. Deuba may as well offload some key portfolios like Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Industry.

### FLT EVERY FRIDAY AND THREDAT TO LONGON'



sustained basis. It will not stop with the

use of military force, in fact, open warfare

will create the soils in which it is fed and grows. Military action to destroy terror,

already vulnerable civilian populations will be

like hitting a fully mature dandelion with a

golf club. We will participate in making sure

the myth of why we are evil is sustained and

We must recognise complexity, but

always understand the power of simplicity

September was in finding simple ways to

a sustainable peace process to the Israeli-

need the same energy to build an interna-

Palestinian conflict, and do it now. Now we

tional coalition for peace in this conflict tha

The biggest blow we can serve terror is to

make it irrelevant. The worst thing we could

and its leaders the center stage of what we

do. Let's choose democracy and reconcilia-

exactly what they do not expect, and show

we have dispalyed in building international

coalitions for war.

them it can work.

use the system to undo it. We must pursue

The effectiveness of the attacks on 11

we will assure yet another generation of

particularly as it affects significant and



### **7**FRO HOUR

Even Sher Bahadur Deuba's fiercest critics have been forced to accept that he has been surprisingly wily during his second term. When he became prime minister on 24 July. Deuba gave himself one goal and one goal only find a negotiated solution to the Maoist insurgency. He has tried to keep his word, moving single-mindedly in pursuit of this objective.

It is a tight-rope walk. The prime minister is under pressure from his own party and the palace-military combine not to be too lenient on the Maoists, but he cannot hurry the underground leadership for fear that its radical wing may splinter off. That is why he has been looking the other way while the Maoists used the time for extortion, threats and setting up parallel "peoples' governments". He even didn't complain much when the Maoists held on to 69 captured policemen, and gave fiery speeches against the monarchy and constitution. But it is clear now that patience is wearing thin even within Deuba's cabinet, Last week, the Defence Ministry stepped in to fire warning verbal salvos against the Maoists.

As we said in this space last week, the Maoists are also feeling the heat from across the southern border. The Indian foreign minister's strong words against Nepali Magists, the deployment of 10,000 Indian security forces on the other side of the border to check infiltration, and the sweep of Maoist safe houses in Siliguri must be giving the comrades the feeling that the rug is being pulled away from under them.

While this is going on, everything else is on hold. There is a sense of vapid directionlessness in the ministries. Everyone is waiting for something to happen, but they don't know what. The political limbo has translated into bureaucratic paralysis. One hand of government doesn't know what the other is doing. The Defence Ministry statement against the Maoists comes as a shock to the Home Minister. Other ministers learn of the prime minister's land reform plan over the Radio Nepal bulletin the next morning. Banking sector reforms are stalled. The BPC privatisation is a fiasco, Royal Nepal Airlines is bankrupt. More than 100 parked buses are damaged by mobs in Dang. The National Planning Commission is completely out of the

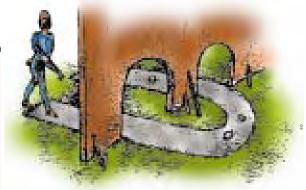
It is clear that Deuba just can't multitask, and he's not letting anyone else do it. The man is looking after nine ministries-having kept key portfolios like Foreign, Defence, Commerce and Land Reform to himself. The expected reshuffle may spread the load around, but it still will not resolve the potentially divisive issue of Deuba's lack of consultation with his party and cabinet. Party peers say the prime minister is playing with his cards unnecessarily close to his chest, and this has led to speculation about exactly who has his ear. Deuba's cabinet colleagues have publicly complained that there is little team spirit, and privately they have serious fears that the prime minister is isolating himself from advice and feedback.

All this could still be excused. You can't really blame Deuba for keeping things under wraps. After all, Nepali ministers are a garrulous lot and the cabinet is as porous as a sieve. Forget about trying to keep any secrets there, especially sensitive secrets about negotiating strategy. But what cannot be excused is that the drift may result in the government squander ing the goodwill it has earned after the truce went into effect and the peace

Negotiations are not the be all and end all. Talks have to go hand-inhand with measures to assure the public that the government machinery is still functioning relatively honestly and efficiently, basic services are still being provided, the administration still works. The government cannot think it has hoodwinked the revolutionary women by agreeing to alcohol regulation and doing nothing about it. You can hoodwink some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time, but you can't hoodwink all the people all the time. Sooner or later, they will find out there is nothing they can expect from parliamentary parties and will opt back for the extreme

Even if it is to put pressure on the Maoists to talk seriously and resolve the crisis, Deuba must get his act together. Otherwise the talks will just be an opportunity to let things go from bad to worse. And we all know where that will take us.





Rorty of Stanford University emphasised

the role happenstance plays in political

with example of the ripple effect of events

elsewhere in the world. The withdrawal

of the British Empire from South Asia in

the aftermath of World War II precipi-

tated the fall of Rana Oligarchy in 1950,

blockade imposed by India helped build

The recent surge in anti-terrorist

rhetoric too followed a similar historical

imperative—the cataclysmic horror of 11

transformed many Nepali intellectuals into

anti-Maoist warriors. To curry favour with

the Americans and score brownie points

over Pakistan, India is trying to whip up

region. India's foreign minister Jaswant

Singh found it strategically expedient to

lump the LTTE and Maoists with the

the CIA propped up the Taliban too.

our southern border is now being

watched by 10.000 of India's elite

frenzy against terrorism in the South Asian

jihadis of Kashmir. Neat trick, considering

that the first two owe a lot to Indian acquies-

cence, if not outright collaboration. But, hey,

Then reports started coming in that

to be for the Maoists to cross the border

terrain of a friendly neighbouring coun-

gency. Actually, after agreeing to the

release of abducted policemen, I have

sympathy for the cornered Maoist

Sentember, Black Tuesday suddenly

and the crumbling of the Berlin Wall

coupled with undeclared economic

democracy in 1990.

development. Nepali history is replete

# **Waiting for Dasain**

After the killing and suffering, the prospect of peace is itself worth celebrating.

ost Nepali intellectuals aren't seekers of truth. And quite unlike intelligentsia elsewhere, our buddhiiibis embrace fashionable fads of

Berating the government and eulogising the free market are parts of the LPG liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) agenda of the Global Right, Nepali buddhiiibis found little to worship in the undeveloped markets of Nepal in the 1990s. Nevertheless, they took to ridiculing the government. We saw a torrent of vitriol lashing Singha Darbar soon after the installation of the first popularly elected government after more than three decades.

To be sure, the democratic govern ments under Girija Prasad Kojrala. Manmohan Adhikari, and then the revolving-door coalitions of hung narliaments after the mid-term polls of 1994, offered little to cheer about. Much of the criticism-rampant corruption, naked nepotism, and blatant favouritism-were quite justified. But the scandals helped check a repetition of such undemocratic practices by later governments—duty-free privileges for MPs have now become history. But nothing can justify the hurry with which our exalted buddhiiibis became Maoist apologists when the "People's War"

began in February, 1996. It was an unjust war to begin with,

and it got increasingly destructive as it spread. Five years later, terrorism has played havoc with the economy, disrupted the strengthening of local government, and it has stretched fragile ethnic relations to breaking point. Had the intelligen sia contemplated these possibilities in advance parallels from Cambodia and Sri Lanka were not security forces. It is not as easy as it used difficult to draw) and and run training camps in the hospitable cautioned society to the dangers of ultras using armed struggle, perhaps try. We therefore started talking about things would have been a the degeneration in the Maoist insur-

. buddhiiibis took sadistic

pleasure in lynching the government on the Manist terror tactics have been one hand and glamorising guerrillas on the refined over the last five years and less other. They didn't even pause to consider their stand until the Maniets started to knock on their doors with extortion threats often did. Instead of mass murders in August and September this year. But chance seems to have played its role in This is not degeneration. Despite the exposing the hypocrisy of the Nepali chatterati. The fad now is fighting terrorism governments in Singha Darbar, the "in whatever form, in whichever place for Maoist war is burning itself out. whatsoever reason" along with the leaders of global capitalism. Maoist insurgents have Hemmed in by Indian security forces suddenly become pariahs even for their ardent apologists in Nepali media and Speaking to a select audience at Baggikhana last Friday, Prof Richard

But more than accommodating Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Dr. Bahu Ram Bhattarai of an interim government, the challenge before Sher Bahadur Deuba is to rehabilitate Maoist guerrilla cadre. Absorbing them into the armed police force may be a likely detoxification of youths raised on hate.

Addressing Maoist grievances about oppressions of ethnic, gender and untouchability, and working to eradicate social ills like drunkenness and gambling won't need a violent revolution. Adminis trative sincerity, commitment to reform and social justice can produce the same result. And it will be more sustainable than transitory transformations the Maoists have been able to enforce out of fear. Political power may sometimes come from the barrel of a gun, but social transformation does not happen that way.

Perhaps there will be peace by Dasain, but the government must display its will to keep it. As K P Bhattarai pointed out in a manner so uncharacteristic of him, loose talk about an interim government or a new constitution can weaken democracy. Bhattarai admonished his favourité acolyti Sher Bahadur Deuba in no uncertain terms: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Before the task of constitutional amendment can be taken up, the priority for government will lie in first making it prevail. Establish the legal process of constitutional amendment before tinkering with it. After the killing and suffering, the prospect of peace

vicious in last three months. They don't hack their opponents to pieces as they Maoists are carrying out mass meetings. glamourisation of the war by fashionable efties and the fecklessness of successive from three sides, not tolerated anymore by the Royal Nepal Army, Maoists now have nowhere to go but to the negotiating table. It's up to the government to

bring them gently into the mainstream. into ministerial berths through the back-door solution—after all, former hunters make good conservationists. But it will require ideological

by JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

# Let's do the unexpected

So hope for a great sea-change On the far side of revenge. Believe that a farther shore Is reachable from here. Believe in miracles And cures and healing wells.

if located can be destroyed. Quite

frankly our biggest and most visible

weapon systems are mostly useless.

The genius of people like Osama bin

Laden is that they understand the power

of a free and open system, and has used it

to his benefit. The enemy is not located

in a territory. It has entered our system.

And you do not fight this kind of enemy by

shooting at it. You respond by strengthen-

ing the capacity of the system to prevent the

virus and strengthen its immunity. It is an

ironic fact that our greatest threat is not in

Afghanistan, but in our own backvard. We

surely are not going to bomb Travelocity,

Realities are constructed. Conflict is,

perceptions and interpretations of reality

Hertz Rental Car, or an airline training

among other things, the process of

building and sustaining very different

This means we have multiple realities

defined as such by those in conflict. In

the aftermath of such horrific and

unmerited violence that we have just

experienced this may sound esoteric. Thi

school in Florida.

The Cure of Troy by Seamus Heaney

hough natural, the cry for revenge seems more connected to social and psychological processes of finding a way to release deep emotional anguish, a sense of nowerlessness, and our collective loss, than it does as a plan of action seeking to redress the injustice, promote change and prevent it from ever happening again.

Always seek to understand the root of the anger. How do people reach this level of anger, hatred and frustration? Explanations that they are brainwashed by a perverted leader who holds some kind of magical power over them is an escapist simplification. Identity-based anger of this sort is constructed over time through a combination of historical events, a deep sense of threat to identity, and direct experiences of sustained exclusion. Our response now may reinforce and provide the soil, seeds, and nutrients for future cycles of revenge and violence.

Movements that use violence sustain themselves by a thorough decentralisation of the power structure, autonomy of action through units, and refusal to pursue the conflict on the terms of the strength and capacities of the enemy. One of the most intriguing metaphors is that this enemy of the United States will be found in their holes, smoked out, and when they run and are visible, destroyed This may well work for groundhogs, trench and maybe even guerrilla warfare, but it is not a useful metaphor for this situation. This is not a struggle to be conceived of in geographic terms, in terms of physical spaces and places, that

we lose the critical capacity to understand that from within the ways they construct their views, it is not mad lunacy or fanaticism. All things fall together and make sense-years o struggle that used or excluded them encroaching Western values considered immoral by religious interpretation, or the construction of an enemy-image who is overwhelmingly powerful and uses that power in bombing campaigns and always appears to win

Both an army preparing to fight an insurgency or the Americans

tackling terrorists need to understand the nature of the enemy.

The way to break such a process is not through a frame of reference of who will win or who is stronger. In fact the inverse is true. Whoever loses, whether tactical battles or the "war" itself, finds intrinsic in the loss the seeds that give birth to the justification for renewed battle. The way to break such a cycle of justified violence is to step outside of it. This starts with understanding that TV sound bites about madmen and evil are not good sources of policy. The most

significant impact that we could make on their ability to sustain their view of us as evil is to change their perception of who we are by choosing to strategically respond in unexpected ways. We must understand the capacity for recruitment-the greatest power that terror has is the ability to regenerate itself. What we most need to understand

about the nature of this conflict and the change process toward a more peaceful world is how recruitment into these activities happens. In all my experiences in deep-rooted conflict what stands out most are the ways in which political leaders wishing to end the violence believed they could achieve it by overpowering and getting rid of the perpetra tor of the violence. That may have been the lesson of multiple centuries that preceded us. But it is not the lesson from do is to feed it unintentionally by making it that past 30 years. The lesson is simple: When people feel a deep sense of threat. exclusion and generational experiences of tion over revenge and destruction. Let's do direct violence, their greatest effort is placed on survival. Time and again in

Let's do the unexpected. Let's create a these movements, there has been an new set of strategic alliances never before tion of chosen myths and thought possible. The current situation poses an unprecedented opportunity for this to renewed struggle happen, more so than we have seen at any time before in our global community. If indeed this is a new war it will not be won with a traditional military plan. That will just provide them new martyrs and new

> John Paul Lederach has served as mediator in conflicts in the Third World. He is professor of sociology and conflict studies at Fastern Mennonite University in Harrisonhura VA and a research fellow at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame

fundamental process is how we end up referring to people as fanatics, extraordinary capacity for the regenera madmen, and irrational. In the process of name-calling

by email

HOW MUCH DO WE OWE?

I was shocked to read in Sudhirendra Sharma's "How

indebted are we?" (#62) that the Office of the Auditor General doesn't know how much Nepal owes to multilateral credit agencies. There is no doubt that there is widespread misuse and irregularities of foreign aid and grants, but not letting the Auditor General know means not telling the sovereign Nepali people and their representatives in Parliamen about the burden of loans upon them. It is a crime against the

Parsa are repeated, we can kiss

the Nepali nation good bye.

Shiva K Bisangkhe

Thanks to CK Lal for remembering the sacrifice of the brave Nepal Police in "A year after Dunai" (#62). There may be black sheep in the police, but they laid down their lives in Dunai while the military did nothing to save them.

I agree with CK Lal (#62) that the

and alienation of the people. The manhadis were horn hecause of the long oppression of poor rural people. And it is the same throughout the world: the iihadi's. LTTE. Peace can only come when the laws are equal for everyone. Americans should learn to respect the rights of people all over the world. The only antidote to terrorism is equa

Biaava

I've never read anything so deeply stupid in the Nepali Times as CK Lal's "The eagle is wounded" (#61) a muddle of smug pontifications on the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington which is as twisted as an argument as the terrorists own perversion of Islamic scripture. America is indeed a flawed enterprise, arrogant, self absorbed, decadent. But it is other things as well, things not noted in Lal's cartoon of it.

wounded but she will heal. And the Internet. I am writing to thank then you just watch her soar. Rishwa V Rasne Ashland, Mass., USA

you for enhancing your site. It is much more reader-friendly now and easier to switch to other



HIGHER UP I am extremely surprised by your reference to Nepalis being down on the economic ladder in "Kamikaze" (#60). It is true that the higher your apartment, the higher the rent you pay. But it is definitely not true that higher the office the more "important" it is.

How do you judge the importance of a company? Is Cantor Fitzgerald on the 100-105th floors of the WTC more important than Morgan Stanley that occupied the lower floors? The most influential companies in Manhattan are housed in buildings less than 30-40 stories high. And yes, there are quite a few Nepalis who work in these premier firms.

Preeti Upadhya.

OUIT The Maoist threats against schools has to stop once and for all, otherwise I quit. Is



Nepalis to part with their property f they stole theirs?

The Maoists have torn apart the interdependence between Nepali pahadis and madhesis. This could ignite a conflagration of commu nalism. There should be no houndary called hills and tarai we

Can our economy sustain capital flight? Reforms should begin at home. Let all the politipeople and the country cians first declare their disproportionate unaccounted and accumu lated wealth. How can they ask

Maoists want to send this country

back to the stone-age? Do they

achieved 100% illiteracy? They

have been successful in damag

ing the economy and are not fai

collapse of the education system

My message to the Magists: lay

off schools, leave the economy

we feel you deserve it.

CAPITAL FRIGHT

alone. We will support you only if

Your story "Capital fright" (#57) is

right on. Has this government

constitutionally safeguarded?

ealised that right to property is

Birendra "Khambu" Rai

bv email

rom bringing about the total

want a country which has

Australia

Buddhi Bahadur RC

are all Nepalis. If the misdeeds of root cause of terrorism is injustice

Thomas Dudd

This is not the time for introspection and poetry. We need to heed America's call, show solidarity with her, and bring justice to the thousands who perished. The

RAMYATA LIMBU

Lichhavi era.

s late afternoon in the courtyard

reinstate a statue on its pedestal in

# In the land of gods, thieves

There's not much left to steal from Nepal's temples,



but international art-theft cartels continue to try. statue to its moorings, after which they attach iron bars all around it.

replacing the iron lattice window amund the almost 300-year-old statue of Bhupatendra Malla and

We're trying to make it as secur as we can. But there's no guarantee that people will not try again," says Chakra Dhara Nanda Rajopadhyaya,

I brother found the statue in the nearby forest the day after it was stolen, "Probably it was too heavy to carry far," he conjectures.

Türgen Schik, a connoisseur of Nepal's traditional art, says almost 00 percent of rare idols, as well a those of exceptionally high quality have left the country since the 1960s, and those that remain are less important or simply

Hindu and Buddhist images taken by Schik during his travels in the Valley in the early 80s feature in the 1989 book by Lain Singh Bangdel, art historian and former vicechancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy, Stolen Images of Nepal (Royal Nepal Academy).

Photographs of numerous

Schick's own book, The Gods



The first theft in twenty years-in

of the Changu Narayan temple. Dogs lie listlessly in the sun, and and two other images disappeared pigeons feed on grain as visitors from the temple courtyard wander around the premises taking ir The statue of Bhupatendra Malla the stone sculptures and miniature was found the next day by a cowherd carvings that date back to the partially buried in a forest about a

kilometre away, and was reinstated A couple of curious Dutch this week. The two other images have tourists join a crowd of onlookers not been recovered watching local workmen struggle to

Directed by the temple priests, the workmen weld and cement the

front of the main Narayan temple. One night last month, the goldolated statue of Bhupatendra Malla

the late 70s and early 80s four statues disappeared from the temple omplex—has reinforced the need for aution. Nanda and other temple insiders are becoming used to the suspicious glances of visitors who wonder why they hover around the statues at all times.

"Ten to fifteen people live inside the temple complex and they have two policemen patrollin the vicinity," says a bystander. His cannot be uprooted.

Schick first arrived in Kathmandu 1973 as a tourist, and was struck by he wealth of culture concentrated in Kathmandu Valley.

His aim of putting together a omprehensive book detailing the Valley's heritage changed when on his travels he began to notice empty niches, holes in temple walls and murilated statues—the work of professional, international

from Nepal, was published in

German the same year and carried pictures and accounts of some of the stone and bronze sculptures that disappeared from Nepal in the 70s and 80s. An English version was published in 1997.

The work of both, one an cademic whose research spans 30 vears and the other an avid art watcher who spent seven years painstakingly documenting the Valley's icons, is detailed proof of of reliable records at the Department of Archaeology, the two books are the only existing evidence that enables Nepal to claim that cultural artefacts works have disappeared from the country.

Like Bangdel's book, the aim of Schik's book—apart from provid-ing evidence of the theft—is to change the purchasing policies of western collections and lay the ground for the return of stolen artefacts. "The 90s have experienced less art theft. I guess there's not much left to steal, and attitudes are changing too. The market is shrinking," says Schick.

In August 1999, based on details in Stolen Images of Nepal, a private American collector returned four idols. The images—a ninth century Buddha image from Bhinchhe Bahal Patan, a 10th century Garudasana Vishnu image from Hyumat tole in Kathmandu, the mutilated head of a 12th century Saraswati image from Pharping and a 14th century Surva image from Panauti's Triveni Ghat—are now in the National

An image of Uma Maheswo which disappeared from Wotol in Dhulikhel in 1982 was returned last year by the Museum of Indian Art Berlin and now lies in the Paran Museum, where Dhulikhel residents feel it is more secure that it would be in a temple. (See

'Return of the gods," #5) "Given the insecurity of our openly-kept statuary, I don't think it is a good idea to reinstate it in its original location, yet," says Bel Prasad Shrestha, mayor of Dhulikhel. He doesn't discount the possibility of the statue being stolen again.

Over the years, numerous idols have disappeared from in and around the area Other than improve the lighting in temple complexes and alert the police and Chief District Officer of the need

have a field day

statues of value, Shrestha doesn't see what else he can do. "Given the large gap in the economic condition and intellectual status of the Nepali people, it's difficult to do much.

Shrestha and his colleagues do, however, hope the statue will return to its rightful, if not original place one day-under a town restoration project Dhulikhel is planning to carry out, the mayor hopes to build a separate temple for the statue, "The gods would truly have returned. then," smiles the mayor.

In Changu Narayan, the priests lay part of the blame for the disappearance of statues on the guthis. Initially local watchmen took turns to guard the temple area and were paid for their service in kind, with grain. But the guthis stopped the practice and decided to pay them a sum in cash that can only be described as nominal. As a result, says Rajopadhyaya, the watchmen are simply not motivated to look out for their charges.

The dozen or so policemen who patrolled the area after the earlier thefts has now dwindled to two, after they were dispatched to other parts of the country to tackle the Maoist insurgency.

"It isn't only the temple complex. but the surrounding neighbourhood too that we have to patrol," says one of the policemen on duty.

Where the stolen items will land up is anybody's guess. According to INTERPOL, only five to ten percent of all stolen cultural property is ever recovered. Some of these idols, worshipped by genera-

Europe or the U.S. A 1990 Sotheby's catalogue on Himalayan And Southeast Asian Art showed a 5th century sculpture of Laxmi Narayan. The sculpture was lifted from Patko tole of Patan in 1984. Another stone sculpture from Patan is in the Denver Museum in the US. And the Guimet Museum in Paris. one of the world's leading museums lisplaying South Asian Art has an 1th century idol of Uma Maheswor, stolen in 1984. Nepal's

laws governing ancient art prohibits

the departure of any item more than a hundred years old. "It used to be just there," says a esident of Bhaktapur's Nasamana Tole, pointing to an empty, moss overed niche. Just a couple of yards away from the spot is a fake tatue of Laxmi Narayan, made to replace the original 800-year-old black granite Laxmi Narayan statue that was stolen in 1984. According to Bangdel's book, eight other sculptures are missing from the immediate vicinity. More than esthetic works of art, the idols ave a deeply religious significance.

> f thousands of Nepalis. Art watchers estimate that over ,000 art works have been smuggled out of the country, many in the 70s and 80s. The remaining idols in Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu have been placed behind ugly iron hars or cemented to the ground to deter thieves. But this hasn't prevented a spate of art thefts in

They were never just museum

pieces, but part of the everyday lives

recent months, including the loss of Buddha images from Swayambhu Maha Vihar, and statues from Patan Durbar Square and Chobar. And those are only the ones that have een reported as stolen.

Because the trade in stolen arr avariably takes place across borders, with statues and objets d'art changing hands in many countries before reaching a final

buyer, international regulations can provide some degree of protection o artefacts, even if they are not well-protected at home. One major international legislation is the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export, and transfer of ownership of cultural property. Nepal ratified the onvention in 1976, and there are currently 91 signatories to it. It will help if countries with important art markets like Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom join as fullledged state parties.

The 1995 UNDROIT Conven tion on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects and other international legal instruments or illicit trade deals with the issues insufficiently covered by the UNESCO Convention. In late August, UNESCO organised a symposium on the illicit trade in cultural property, which recommended creating a website to be managed by the Department of Archaeology to raise international awareness about the missing cultural property of Nepal, and establishing of a tri-partite investigating commission, including representatives of the Departmen of Archaeology, the division of customs and the Nepal Police.

The symposium also adopted vhat it called the Kathmandu Declaration, urging the government to update laws against trafficking in heritage property. As part of its awareness raising campaign to protect cultural heritage, UNESCO has issued postcards of stolen cultural objects, some more than 1,500 years old. (See illustrations.)

Left to right: Gold-plated statue of Bhupatend. ra Malla being reinstated at Changu Narayan; this seated sixth century Buddh stolen from Patan in 1985 has no en recovered; this 12th century mage of Shiva and Parvati stole from Dhulikhel in 1982 was eturned by the Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin and is now in Patan Museum; a stone

As the third round of talks get underway, both the government and the Maoists appear to be giving a little. On 2 October, 17 policemen detained by the Maoists were released in Surkhel under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The policemen were later transferred by the ICRC to the regional headquarters of the Nepal Police in Nepalgunj. Last week, the Maoists released the most prominent hostage Dev Raj Joshi, former Nepali Congress MP from Bajura who was abducted in early July and feared dead. Now the pressure is on the government. The Maoists want their comrades, including leader Matrika Yadav released, and information on where their 69 missing comrades are as a precondition for dialogue. The Home Ministry spokesman told us that, "the process of releasing detainees from the government side is on." However, it appears the government has no clue about Maoist central party member Danda Pani Neupane, who disappeared in May 1999. Neupane is not on the government's list of Maoists detained or killed. Before the 17 policemen were freed, the government said the Maoists were holding 189 hostages, including

### ISDP extended

Not missing

The government has extended the Integrated Security Development Programme to six more Maoist-affected districts. That takes the number of districts where the army will be partially deployed to deliver the government's heartsand-minds program to 13. Early this year late King Birendra approved deploying troops to build roads and carry out development work in Gorkha, Rukum, Rolpa, Jajarkot, Salvan, Kalikot and Pyuthan-the seven districts hit hardest by the Maoist insurgency. Fashioned after the US Army's Vietnam-era counter insurgency strategy, the ISDP has been extended to Dolakha, Ramechaap, Dailekh, Surkhet, Dang, and Lamjung. Says Dr Jagadish Chandra Pokharel National Planning Commission member, "The army, police and development workers in these district are assessing the area's needs according to which programs will be carried out." The Maoist say the on-going peace talks cannot produce results if the government does not scrap the ISDP and withdraw other policies aimed to muzzle the insurgency.

### Nepal Oil Corruption

Vehicle owners better watch it. Those substituting cheaper kerosene for diesel to operate their vehicles may not get away with it for much longer. Subsidised kerosene costs a mere Rs 17 per litre, compared with diesel, which sells for Rs 26.50. Nepal Oil Corporation officials suspect the substi tution may be accounting for about nine percent increase in



demand for kerosene, and a corresponding 30 percent drop in diesel sales since last month, NOC says it has intensified its anti-adulteration checks. A night bus was recently caught in the act-tanking up with kerosene instead of diesel at a local gas station. Some refuelling stations in Kathmandu have been found doing the same. Transporters are aware that using kerosene could damage their engines-and pollute more than diesel does-but claim the money they save makes it worth the extra maintenance costs. The government pays Rs. 3 for every litre of kerosene NOC sells to the general public.

### E-shradhas

E-commerce may be out but E-shradha is in. Shradha Online, started by Web Park Nepal, allows Nepalis in any corner of the world to make arrangements for the annual rites performed to appease the spirits of departed kin without having to be in the country for the purpose, electronically of course. Interested individuals don't have to fly to the banks of the Bagmati, they can simply forward family details via Web Park Nepal's site and a Bahun priest at Pashupatinath will

Web Park captures the religious ceremony on digital camera, posts the footage on the web, and gives the bereaved a password to view it. All this for \$150.

The Pakistani authorities have decreed that no foreign journalist can complexities in the streets of Quetta, the challenges before Pakistan. They do the good journalism, they write the truth, they truly enlighten their fortunate readers and viewers. They work for American, French and other media outlets and their work speaks for itself; no need to list their names here, but they are the ones who don't use phrases like "war against terror" and "global coalition" and "fundamentalist parials."

This is a time when decent journalism should not be at a premium. Governments making war on terrorists are not allies of the press at moments like this; they are interested parties with messages to get across. No matter how much one despises the events of 11 September, emotion must not get in the way of impartial journalism, driven by universal principles of getting as much true information as possible to the public. The media must

conduit for any side's propaganda. The organisation where I cut my teeth as a reporter, BBC World Service Radio, is still a paragon of this attitude. Until recently, the use of the word "terrorist" was banned there on the wholly defensible principle that it was judgmental, subjective and not helpful in explaining events.

What's coming the next few days, weeks and months is not going to be pretty, nor will it be easy for anyone at the centre or the periphery of this conflict. The trouble won't end when the dust settles from the bombs, missiles or helicopters evacuating ground forces at the end of a mission. It will just be starting. An attack on the Taliban regime of Afghanistan looks fairly simple on paper; American military might and technology against zealous students and fanatical fighters with only a few small arms and rocket launchers. The temptation for the international media, which by and large is not living up to the challenges of the moment, will be vilify the Taliban, by implication glorifying the other

Yes, the bearded zealots of Kandahar have grotesquely violated the human rights of Afghan women, and apparently they've given unquestioning shelter and support to a hateful man who enables the death of innocent people. But there are a multitude of perceived sins committed or permitted by America that enrage Muslims. If we're to avoid the poisonous minefield implicit in accepting Huntington's civilisational

clash, we need our media to guide us. Too many of my colleagues, I fear, are not up to the task



seeing on the ground zero of world iournal ism. Here in Pakistan, a 1,000-strong contingent of newspaper, radio and television reporters are laying siege to a country, and sometimes, to a religious faith. Their weapons are money, technology and self-assured ignorance. Here in the wild west of Pakistan, a usually quiet backwater is foaming with impatient reporters and rapacious television crews. The only five-star hotels in town, a wonderfully designed place called the Serena, seethes with the press pack in full cry. It begins on the way in from the not don uniforms, identify with one side or the other, or allow itself to be a

and my fâmily.

No. what is

troubling is what I'm

# One way ticket to nowhere

detention until a lawyer is found to represent those who make formal asylum appeals. During this time, they ring contacts in London who the provide the back-up support needed to follow the application through, or simply help them disappear. The escapes are meticulously planned, rehearsed and carried out under stric directions of handlers both in Kathmanduand London Even those without acquaintances to help don't have to worry much: the British government gives you £36 per week a survival allowance, £10 pounds in cash and £26 as food you chers Nepalis who have come through this channel say they nay between Rs. 800,000-Rs 1,2 million to middle men who arrange the visas. Some agents even accompany their dients" to London and return with the fake travel documents, which are

Asylum seekers are typicall armed with documents to "prove their claims. Some have Maoist photo IDs (in English), others have supposed threats spelled out on what appears to be Maoist party stationery. Still others have warrants on police letterheads that say the person in question is being sought for killing civilians. Many also have with them front-page stories from obscure district newspapers speaking of threats to their lives. (We received a copy of one such paper with a page 1 story detailing the threats to the life of an asylum seeker,

later recycled.

but couldn't find a copy of the The profile of the average asylum seeker in England is: single, male, 20-something, first entered the UK on a student visa. Those travelling on fake documents are largely uneducated and not interested in studying. These typically have friends or relatives or relatives of friends in England, or other contacts who help them settle down and find jobs. Most end up working for businesses run by Asian mainly Indians, and are paid minimum, or less than minimum. wage. But no one complains because th sides benefit: the employer is

exploitable workers and the employee because they have found a means of noney to send home.

The Nepali passport is easy to tamper with. It still uses "cold" lamination, even after the scam that surfaced some years ago where even MPs were found to have sold their passports with visa stamps, which we eused after a photo change. Gently heating the underside of the photo page of the passport reportedly allows the laminated cover to be peeled off, and a new photo stuck on.

A trained eve can detect such fakes-many Royal Nepal Airlines staff have actually been trained to look out for photo switches and fake visas. But the fact that holders of fake travel documents have managed to get past airline check-ins and immigration desks at the Tribhuvan International Airport suggests that money changes

The British authorities have danged £60 000 worth of fines on Royal Nepal Airlines for flying in Nepalis without valid documents into Gatwick airport, of which the airline has paid up £30,000. Other Gulfbased airlines flying from Kathmandu have enforced strict criteria to screen Nepalis routed through to Europe.

These days you don't even need a

British visa—genuine or fake—to get to England. Recent Nepali arrivals have come hidden in container trucks from Belgium or Germany, which have begun to tighten immigration aws. An even newer way is to get a visa to a nation that would raise few eyebrows—Cuba, Nigeria or the former Soviet Republics—and get a transit ticket through Heathrow or Charles de Gaulle. Once in the transi lounge, the passengers "disappear" and are next seen applying for political asylum as happened to a group of ove 30 Nepalis attending an international

outh conference in Algeria in August Britain has one of the most lenient sylum laws and has of late come under increasing pressure from other European countries to tighten up. This process has accelerated

New York, amid suspicions that terrorists may be using the same loopholes in immigration laws and procedures to sneak into the country One reason Nepali illegal immigrant or those who overstay have not been targeted is that they are usually economic migrants who stay on the right side of the law once in the UK

Nepali migrants claiming llegiance to almost every political shade have sought asylum. In the early 1990s it was the ex-Panchas wh claimed they were unsafe after the restoration of democracy in Nepal. Communists claimed prosecution b the Nepali Congress governments and Congress members said they

nists were in power. Pretending to oe Bhutanese was a rage till last year and is still happening. But most asylum applications these days are rom those claiming to be Maoists fleeing persecution. Some asylum seekers even claim they were nvolved in the Maoist attacks on Dunai and Holeri to make

Plumstead, Blackheath and refugee status. It is also difficult to Woolwich in southeast London are estimate the number of Nepalis living areas where most recent Nepali in these localities: according to one migrants congregate. Many are Plumstead resident there could be as students, but the numbers also many as 500 there. Aldershot also has include those there to seek asylum. a sizeable Nepali population, while Because immigration applications others could be scattered in different are confidential, it is difficult to say parts of Britain and are very mobile.



and economic desperation in Nepal there will be Nepali migrants trying to sneak into Europe or overstay in Australia. And, it seems, they will us whatever political cause is most likely to grant them asylum. (With additional reports by Binod Bhatarai in Kathmandu)

# barheque

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Effective from 15th of Sep. 2001

5-11 OCTOBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES

**Statutory skirmishes** The Supreme Court, the CIAA, the prime minister's office, and MPs are all battling for primacy. And it is getting a little spooky.



ne of the last things one would have expected to see under a constitution drafted by a panel headed by become chief justice is the Supreme Court struggling to

establish its supremacy. In a society suffocating in the vapours of yows broken over the 12 years since the restoration of multiparty politics, a healthy dose of judicial activism has kept the citizenry alive.

Whenever the national conversation on anything crosses a decibel threshold determined by civil society, Nepalis know they can expect the gavel to fall in court. To be sure, the Supreme Court has infuriated almost everybody in the course of interpreting the letter and spirit of the constitution. By progressively restricting the rime minister's prerogative to dissolve the House of Representatives in cases spread over governments led by all three major parties, the top court has shown its commitment to staying above the political fray. By striking down the provision of pensions for former MPs, a deal struck in one of those rare moments of genuine Nepali political camaraderie, the judiciary has made a lasting impact on the livelihoods of a tribe that has increasingly come to view a full legislative term as a rarity. By pulling up the government, albeit circuitously, for

trying to foist the citizenship amendment bill on the palace in the form of a finance bill, the justices have underscored the great remium they put on due process. Our justices would not be

unjustified in equating criticisms

manating from all political

quarters with commendation for their conduct. Moreover, the value the judiciary has put on its independence has inspired other organs of the state to become more assertive. This passionate pursuit of primacy, however, has sometimes turned into a pernicious form of power struggle. We have reached a stage where heads of constitutional bodies have become mbroiled in bitter turf wars. The Supreme Court had to walk a tightrope a few months ago in the Attorney-General vs Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority on a case oncerning a denomination of Indian hanknotes that is not legal tender in Nepal. The people could be forgiven for not being able to figure out which side won. In the recent dispute over the government's decision to freeze land transactions, the court had the disadvantage of having to deliver a ruling after the order was rescinded. The enduring value of the verdict nevertheless lies in its admoni. tion to the head of government that he cannot rule by decree from the podium of parliament. During the Lauda Air

investigations, the CIAA and the their constituencies, and prime minister's office were indirectly elected/nominated locked eveball to eveball over MPs of the Upper House who issues of sphere of duty and are under no such compulsion executive privilege. After but enjoy a longer and more launching a mucky smear secure tenure. But that's not the campaign in the media and part that lowered the morale of hurling wild allegations of dirt our Lower House luminaries. tricks, each side eventually had The ruling came at a time whe to find a face-saving formula in a awmakers of all persuasions in sealed letter strongly reminding both chambers wanted the fund the other about its rights and raised from Rs 1 million to Rs

10 million a year per member

The struggle for institutional Convinced that revenue is a superiority flared up on another orm of justice when a ruling i front last week. By declaring devoid of leniency, irate legisla tors launched an instant illegal the way in which the counter-offensive. Some have MPs' constituency development fund is being administered, the called for the impeachment of apex court has dealt a further the justices who delivered the verdict. Moreover, with parlia ow to our representatives. The verdict made no distinction ment debating whether to grant the CIAA the additional author between popularly elected members of the Lower House ity of investigating members of who are constrained to nurse the bench, the tables have been

responsibilities.

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Jari Mari: Of Cloth and Other Stories (74

ndia, 2001, dir - Surabhi Sharma Vill workers in Bombay are laid off

turned on the judiciary. You now have all three branches of the state locked in combat with one another, maintaining a areful mix of offensive and efensive postures. Members of he fourth estate, meanwhile, are gleefully giving front-page reatment to this deafening lisplay of democracy in action. or many Nepalis, courtrooms, egislative chambers and cabine neetings have become the only

places to learn about the world

Behind the dust kicked up by this sequence of statutory kirmishes, however, lies a onstitutional knot that not ven the wisest of our counsels eem to be able to untangle. When the palace sought its advice, the Supreme Court did ot take very long to examine and declare the citizenship amendment bill dead on arrival. However, the people weren't told what kind of funeral the bill should get because, as it turned out, the justices weren't asked Nepal's democratic experience has established that you can't hope to be Jung Bahadur and Jefferson at the same time. However, grey areas are bound to continue complicating national life in the days ahead, especially when everybody of any consequence has developed an abiding passion for command and control. Prudent inrisprudence, therefore, would dictate against being bogged down in deliberations over jurisdiction. As for the citizenship amendment bill, cremate it, bury it or leave it to the vultures—just make sure it gets to rest in peace. It's getting a

little spooky out here.

### FESTIVAL OF SOUTH ASIAN DOCUMENTARIES

# FILM SOUTH ASIA '01

4-7 October, 2001 (Thursday to Sunday), Russian Cultural Centre, Kathmandu

lay, 5 October	HALL A	Saturday, 6 October	HALL A	Paper Flowers (25) India, 1999, dir - Raiiv Krishnan	
Art of the Impossible: 11:00 am intrait of V. R. Singh (45) , 2000, dir - Juliet Reynolds nan and his Mandal		Michael Jackson Comes 11:00 am to Manikganj (57') South Asia, 2001, dir - Nupur Basu Satellite television invades South Asia		Eunichs at work  Guhya (55) India, 2000, dir - Kirtana Kumar The woman and the goddess	
re RU on ICQ (6') , 2001, dir - Avinash Roy ling on the Internet	12:05 pm	We Have the Same Kind of Blood (41) Nepal, 2001, dir - Berit Madse	12:15 pm	Sunday, 7 October HALL	
Wars   (41)		The Dalit is bewildered  Abhimanyu's Face (27') India, 2001, dir - Ranjan Palit A passion for Mahabharat's Al	2:00 pm bhimanyu	The Quest for Peace 10:00 at in Nagaland (33) India, 2001, dir - Bharat Bhusan Why the Naga problem and where to ?  Pakistan and India under the Nucleo	
		In Search of Meera's Buddha (29) India, 2000, dir - Murad Ali Sculpted Buddha heads for the hills		Shadow (32') Pakistan/India, dir - Pervez Hoodbhoy Deadly footage of confrontation-in-making	
		he Deep Biver (65) ledic, 1999, dr Avindi Sahab Mustang mother's precoppoint Mustang mother's precop		Aamala (22') Nepal, 2000, dir - Elizabeth Snider Mustang mother's preoccupations	
				Famous literary names speak	
				Kashmir, 2001, dir - Pankaj Rishi Kumar Performing in a troubled land	
				Nepal, 2001, dir - Dhruba Basnet Face-to-face with the Maoist insurgency	
Bee, The Bear and Kuruba (63') , 2000, dir - Vinod Raja	5:30 pm	India/Nepal, 2001, dir-Kesang Tseten Old boys talk and talk about school		The Dream (35') 3:45 pt India, 2001, dir - C. Saratchandran School with a difference	
ribal, the forest and the modern man		HALL B		Now That's More Like a Man (35') Pakistan, 1999, dir - Farjad Nabi and Maznar Zaidi Pakistani women talk about their men	
HALL B		Amir: An Afghan Refugee 11:10 am Musician's Life in Peshawar (60)			
Me Also Come chool (56') , 2001, dir - Simantini D	11:10 am	Pakistan, 1985, dir - John Baily Revisiting a past  Sunrise Radio (17) India/UK, 2001 dir - Shai Herdia London listens to South Asia		A Rough Cut on the Life 5:15 pn and Times of Lachuman Magar (39') Nepal, 2001, dir - Dinesh Deokota	
tate of school education cet Lives in Lahore (1:	31 12-20 nm			A naughty old man	
tan, 2000, dir - Farjad Nabi ed over				HALL Our Boys (42) Bangladesh, 1999, dir - Manzare Hassain	
Migrant Soul (35') ladesh, 2000, dir - Yasmine Kabir		Born At Home (60)	2:00 pm	Boys talk about boys	

Tickets (Rs 25 per screening) available at: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath (227711/216100); Suwal Music 'n Movies Lazimpat (421522); Saraswati Book Centre, Pulchowk (521599); and Patan Dhoka Kitab Pasal, Patan Dhoka (548142).

Kathmandu's Silent Night - A festival within the festival Over 20 silent short films from all over South Asia Friday, 5th October at 6:45 p.m. at the Russian Cultural Centre, Kamal Pokhari, Entry is FREE

ind spirits with special offerings.

from Siberia to India. This is the

uperhighway across the Himalaya

the times the mountains were younger

ou can hear the honking of the geese

ar above the valley before you see

north in V-formations etched against

them. They come down from the

the azure sky

### 10th plan preview

The National Planning Commission has begun shuffling paper in the run-up to the 10th five-year Plan, which comes into effect from mid-July 2002. Until 1990, the National Planning Commission was a powerful coordina tor of development activity and government policy, based on five-yearly planning cycles since the 1950s. Its role in development planning has been fuzzy since, but the five-year plans are still around.

According to the approach paper to the 10<sup>th</sup> plan, (available in a read-only, unprintable form at www.npc.gov.np) the goal is to achieve an average annual growth rate of 6.5 percent, against the three yearly averages of 5.3 percent since 1997/98. This would require achieving 4.2 percent growth in agriculture—against the 3.17 percent average of the past four years—and 8 percent growth in the non-agriculture sector, up from the present average of about 6.3 percent. The overall goal of the plan is to expand employment opportunities to reduce the number of people in absolute poverty from the present 38 percent of the population to 32 percent at the end of the 10th plan. The numbers look good, but going by the NPC's past record they may also be difficult to achieve without a major overhaul of the planning, implementation and governance processes.

Reduce infant mortality from 75 per 1,000 to 50.7 and maternal mortality from 435 per 100,000 to 350 Expand primary education coverage from 70.5 to 85 percent

Raise adult literacy (15 years and above) from 53 to 70 percent Raise female literacy from 26 to 50 percent, and

Keep population growth rate at 2.1 percent, against the present 2.4

The plan also envisages building motorable road links to 70 districts, up from the 58 that are currently connected—even though some of these roads are not black-topped—and take telephone connections to every 50 lines per 1,000 people from the present 11. The coverage of electricity is to be increased by seven percent to reach 22 percent of the population. The fixed capital investment needed to achieve the five-year goal is Rs 689.5 billion-almost seven times the money budgeted for spending in fiscal 2001/01

### Letters of intent

The Nepal Rastra Bank has issued letters of intent to three new banks: Siddhartha Bank, Laxmi Bank and the Export-Import Bank of Nepal. The three had applied to set up banking operations in 1995. Of the three the Export Import Bank will have an authorised capital of Rs 2 billion (paid up one billion) and the Kathmandubased Siddhartha Bank, Rs 1 billion (paid up Rs 500 million). The Laxmi Bank will be based in Birgunj and is to have an authorised capital of Rs240 million. NRB rules stipulate that these ventures must begin banking operations within one year of receiving a letter of intent—that is by September 13, 2002. One year after they start operations, the banks are required to issue shares to the public.

### Philips' new range



Philips has unveiled a new range of consumer electronics that incorporate the firm's patented wOOx technology to produce high acoustic bass, a company release says. The products include VCD players, an MP3-compatible mini hi-fi, home entertainment stations, flatscreen TVs, projection TVs and even a five-in-one (VCD/MP3/CD/audiotape/radio). The ducts have "super error correction", which allows them to play scratched VCDs and CDs

### **Bad governance**

Add another Rs 8.11 billion to the loss from public institutions—that is the amount that remained unsettled in mid-July. The Auditor General's office says this takes cumulative overdue/ unsettled accounts in government agencies to Rs 26.4 billion-almost seven times the money the government plans to spend on development programmes under the Ministry for Education this year. This amount does not include the unsettled accounts of quasi-government bodies and district development committees, which bring the total money government agencies owe each other to Rs 38.4 billion—an amount that is almost two-thirds the government's anticipated regular spending in fiscal 2001/02. The Auditor General's report says the rate of settlement of overdue accounts is about a paltry 28 percent.

# Auditors' nightmare

The government needs to take its own audits seriously.

 he Beed is appalled. Last week, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) presented a report pertaining to fiscal 1999/2000. which showed that Rs 71 billion of expenditure that year by different arms of government was not in accordance with procedure, or has not been accounted for properly. And advances worth Rs 26 billion were made—but have still not been

The 1,542 page audit report is essentially a post-mortem of government activities involving cash. Generally, this Beed and other likeminded individuals have come to accept that audit processes on the government front are a mere formality—they look into financia transactions relating to the year before, and some time in the next year submit a report. The report—if indeed, it does come out in the second year after the fiscal year in question-may or may not catch the attention of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), If it does, then it might be questioned the following year. Answers can be returned to the committee whenever. In short, a bit

And the OAG is so constrained its own constitution that it has little influence in the world of government. Our good auditors tend slink around in a self-pitying state and the Beed does not blame them. But it is a shame—a powerful tool of the legislature that could, in theory provide the executive with the check and balances it surely needs, is a mere formality to ensure that the existing legislature-executive nexus is not exposed.

The gov- emment spends nearly Rs 100 billion each year-roughly 20 percent of the GDP—but there is only nethodso auditing this expenditure. The

government expects audits of private and non-governmental organisations to be conducted in a timely manner, and corrective actions to arise from the conclusions of such audits almost immediately, but exudes a breezy uncaring attitude to putting its own house in order.

The sort of rampant, oper corruption we see can only be eradicated by good governance, Good governance demands an efficient system of accountability—audits. Bu not the toothless kind we see now. OAG reports submitted to parliament need to be honoured in the right spirit-how else can we institutionalise the sense of discipline government in this country needs so desperately?

Accepting and honouring the findings of the OAC is the first step, but if we can climb that mountain, we

then need to turn our attention to strengthening the OAG's office. There is perhaps no real need to say this, but we live in a world of information technology and advanced communication systems. In times like these we need to build the capacity of our watchdogs, not take away from it. The OAG requires more resources to understand the changing environment in which financial transactions are conducted, it needs technologies and it needs to understand how they work.

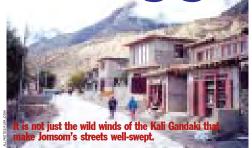
Government is not a monolithic

entity. It answers to many constituen

cies and there is no unified chain of command. To control the functioning of an entity like this, there need to be checkpoints every so often-and the OAG is an important one. Its recommendations have to be observed as a mandatory procedure. Bilateral and multilateral agencies in Nepal should make it a point that their grants and loans are tied to follow-up of the audit report. If the government really does not care about proper procedures and systems, then why does it bother funding them? The OAG must be integrated into the system of governance—if only to ensure they don't keeping adding 200 pages to their report ever year in a desperate plea for attention. All the best, Bishnu Bahadur KC, Auditor

Readers can post their views at arthabeed@vahoo.com

Mustang getaway



hue. But as the day wears on the

Vilgiri reflects its msy light

vegetables to the locals and to

passengers flying out to Pokhara

Porters mill about hoping to find

mountain plays hide-and-seek with

Life bustles around Jomsom

RUPA JOSHI IN JOMSOM

ollowing the contour of the river bed, and perilously close to the cliffs on either side, the aircraft flies over the towns of Lete Tukuche and Marpha. The plane's shadow skims swiftly over apple orchards terraces of pink buckwheat, across the sandy banks of the Kali Gandaki. A tight bank on finals brings the swirling grey waters out the left window and deep blue sky out the right, then we are bouncing on msom's recently-asphalted runway and roaring to a stop. Outside, the clean and crisp

mountain air seems vacuum-cleaned Nilgiri's fluted ridges of ice tower over the deep green conifers at its base. In the morning, the sun shines from behind the mountain, giving it a hazy ople huddle inside homes and

the clouds, and finally when the sun A signboard at the airport alerts dins behind the tall himals to the west veryone that Mustang is a nopolythene hav district. In fact, alert police men and women in Pokhara irport in the mornings. Farmers from airport will frisk and remove anv neighbouring villages sell apples and plastic bags still in your possession The streets in and around Iomsom are clean and litter free. The Mustangis bid to free their district of the plastic prospective clients. And then there are menace that is plaguing the rest of the the locals, who just come to watch who country has been assisted by the comes and who goes. Jomsom-based various organisations working in the civil servants throng to the airport area. A water refilling system is in terminal catching up on Kathmandu place to reduce litter caused by newspapers that come on the morning discarded plastic water bottles. flight. By mid-morning, the legendar Established by ACAP in association Kali Gandaki wind tunnel starts to with the New Zealand firm, Safe show what it can do. The planes stop Drinking Water Stations, the project run by community groups in Kagben

vater for locals and trekkers. Tshering Gurung, helps manage the station a Kaøbeni that refills water-bottles at the rate of Rs 35 per litre for tourists and Rs 5 per litre for Nepalis.

Jomsom is the gateway to the Mustang Festival this weekend 5-7 October.

Seventy-year Chhini Lhamu who lives in Samley across the river from the airport sells an average of Rs 350 worth of vegetables whenever she goe to the market. These days she's been elling apples too. "But syau (apples) can be jhyau (a bother) when they don't get you a good price," she says. There comes a time when even our livestock get sick of these fruits!" Last vear Chhini sold Rs. 60.000 worth o pples from the 70 or so apple trees in the family orchard.

Every tree in and around Iomson fter Kagbeni, filling the valley floor with sand, pebbles and boulders. In is heavy with red and vellow apples ripening gently under the balmy the monsoon, the water channels shift utumn sun. Exorbitant air freigh ll the time, making it difficult to osts, and the punishing mule ride to bridge the river. "Every year it washes the road-head means that most of the off houses and farms," says Prem fruits in the Kali Gandaki valley get Surring, a Tomsom resident "It's either desiccated and candied or futile trying to tame this wild river. metamorphose into cider, brandy and In a few weeks time, when the wine. Thus while the rest of the uckwheat ripens and turns black, the ountry bites into expensive, stale and Kali Gandaki vallev will see a different tasteless apples from India, fresh and sort of southward flow—of migrator iuicy Mustangi apples continue to sel pirds. Siberian geese and ducks all at Rs 20 a kg in Jomsom or are sniffed inging south in their long journey

ws called *Iulus* The Kali Gandaki cuts the world's eepest gorge between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. Geologists say the river is older than the mountains and sliced through the Himalaya as it lifted. The gorge is a funnel linking the Tibetan plateau with the Gangetic plains to the

and nibbled by goats and miniature

south, and this is the reason for the When the clouds obscure the fierce winds. The prevailing wind nountains, the birds circle to gai means the trees all lean northwards, vith their branches pointing towards Tibet. From time to time, the "wrong vinds blow in from the plateau and

height and finally disappear above the uds to find their way out of the valley. When flying conditions are really bad, they are grounded like the hat is when the elders in Thini take i anes and they come down to rive is a bad omen and gather at a special oanks and wait out the weather. "The hhorten above the village to pacify th villagers used to kill the birds and eat them, but not any more. Now they are The river itself spreads itself our otected," says Prem. The clackety-clack of horseshoes is:

familiar sound in these stoned-paved villages. Trees have protective coverings around their trunks to prevent hungry horses and mules from nibbling away the bark. The fields are all walled off to protect the crops. In the wide fan of a stream near Dhumba, fattened horses graze on the green grass. "This is the bes eason for them," says Prem. "Once inter sets in, there is no green at all."

Flights out of Jomsom all depend on the wind gods. The first question in everyone's mind in Jomsom every moming is: "Will the planes come ir today?" Sometimes you have to wait a they follow from genetic memory from week, as turbulence over the Kali Gandaki, clouds or snow cancel flight Pokhara is a 3-4 day trek away along some of the most spectacular scenery or earth. Go to Jomsom next week during the Mustang Festival, and enjoy the exotic locale of Nepal's cleanest town.

### Fun & Ride 20th October 2001

flying, the sand starts flying and

The teams of Kathmandu Mountain Bikes and Adventure Tented Camp would like to invite you at 20th October 2001 for a Fun & Ride Rally.

Come and join our adventure trip in the south – east of Kathmandu. The rally will start from the unique Dubar Square of Patan over the quiet and peaceful villages to Lubhu.

In this little ancient villages your legs will get some power supply with refreshing drinks and snacks. Loaded with new energy you continue your ride on the eight kilometers uplit Pokhar Thumko. After two kilometers strong riding, we provide a bus for the bikes, for those people who would like to hike up to the Adventure Camp.

The rustic Country Kitchen of the Adventure Camp built on the edge of the hill facing the valley and the mountain range will serve you with an excellent lunch and at the Lakhuri Bhaniyang Bar you can try the local wines, cocktails and the in – house bonhomie.

After refreshing your power, you can explore the area around the Adventure Camp. The location makes to dan ideal place to discover the local fauna and fora. Many different evotic species of plants are at home at this exceptional hilltop such as wild orchids and medicinal herbs.

After a very exciting day, the kitchen of the Adventure Camp will spoil you with excellent

We will say goodbye to this wonderful day with a glass of Sangria and a last look on the top of the snow peaks of the Himalayan Range.

The members of **Kathmandu Mountain Bikes** and **Adventure Tented Camp** would be very pleased to see you on this exceptional tour.

### Final registration day: 12th October 2001

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- Cycling clothes
- Hiking shoes Binoculars & Cameras
- Insect repellent, sun hat and sun glass. - Sweaters & wind jacket

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- Lunch/ one soft drink

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# THE DUALS HE STREET, Mark Street Short Said States and Thomas Street

# If the talks with the Maoists fail, should the Royal Nepal Army be mobilised?

From other insurgencies we know they can't be stopped by the barrel of the gun. The only solution is the dialogue. If the ernment thinks that power , be it police or the army, can overcome the problem this is a mistake. Any such move can push the nation into civil war. Which will be an opportunity for India even to invade or Arjun Bhandari

If the talks fail, army should be mobilised help our government to kick Maoists who have killed so many innocent people, even children. They threaten people and force to become Manists. A democratic monarchial constitution is good for our country, a republic is unimaginable.

The Maobadis are doing a lot of good for the country. We are always ready to help vou turn Nepal into a republic. The origin of the Maoist problem is in the

should be fulfilled before we go fo any kind

government should be clear that this is a

All governments so far failed to solve the

of insurgency against them. For that

political problem. This is why the army

should not be deployed.

Shrayan Pokhrel

S K Hyoju

negligence of governments to the 40 points demand put forward by the United People's Front, led by Dr Baburam Bhattarai. The basic rights of the people

Using the army will mean more violence and flow of blood, but Nepalis won't get peace until they are deployed against the Yes. If the talks fail military force should be

Lekhat Gurung

the army, the government should allow the see how they do it. Nischal

The people should unite and counter Manists. The bullet will not bring peace, it will lead to more uncertainty and insecu-

It is too late to resolve the Maoist problem through talks. The recent activities of the Maoist demonstrated that there is a major shift in their policies. If Mao was alive, he would have warned them not to misuse his name. Anybody who undermines the Royal Nepal Army is an anti-national element. Vidhu Prakash Kayastha

Its very funny that the question if government should mobilise the army is coming out now. It should have been done long ago before the Maoists started their bloody campaign. The government has been sleeping. Innocent people are dving but who cares.

No, the army is not the solution, Punish corrupt politicians, and the problem will resolve itself Kosh Prasad Neunani

Kashimir. I don't think it is necessary to mobilise the

army, they are there to fight an extrenal enemy. The Nepali Police should do it, and the police should be made stronger.

Certainly not! Fighting Maoist with the army is not the solution. All so-called terrorists exist for a reason. And the reason is inequality and abuse of powe by the ruling class and corrupt politicians. The only solution is through negotiation. As a matter of fact Royal Nepal Army should be dissolved, and its hudget used to improve the education

Parmeshwor Pokhrel

Yes, the only solution to this problem is army. If Royal Nepal Army is not willing to take action in this situation, what they are for? Why we should we feed them with our tax money? After all, they will be pretty useless against a foreign enemy. Our army knows the Maoist are buving time to reorganise.

Mobilising the army will hasten the demise of the present so-called democ racy. The army wil have to chose between corrupt leaders and the people Let us see who they chose.

This will be gravest the mistake the Negalese will ever make when the Army is mobilised fully to counter the insurgency. When the army is mobilised this once peaceful country will become another Chechniva. Sri Lanka or

Yes. mobilise RNA as soon as possible to stamp out terriorists, but we must also stamp out corrupt leaders. So, which one Linaden Limbu

# The Maoists are collecting a lot of trust

and selling dreams to poor people. So mobilising the army is ot going to solve this. But Maoist are doing terrible things and the government has to take immediate action.

I think Maoists are just taking advantage of government and the generosity of the Nepali people. I don;t think they will give up their arms in a peaceful way. The way they have spread terror shows, they are not really aiming anything but just destroying already weak economy of Nepal. Good the government gave them chance to talk. After this it's time to use

### Bharat Pokhrel

Manhadi are spreading all over the country simply because government could not extend its muscle. Had the army been mobilised on time their numbers would not have grown like it has. No matter whether peace talks succeed or fail, the primary responsibility of the army is to guard the people of Nepal Bigyan Sijapati

What is our government doing all these years? They should have used army long time back when they were small in number. But it is beter late than never No one has the right to kill people.

lised against the Maoists. The work of the army is to save the nation, not sitting in the barracks and taking government salary. They have to be mobilised and save our nation.

I think it is not fair to mobilise army, as it will create civil war in Nepal which neither he good for Manists nor to the government. The best way is to teach people and give them the essentia needs. But they don't know that it is almost impossible by getting Nepalis to

It is already getting late to mobilise Royal Nepal Army. They should be mobilised immediately. All this talk is no use. Maoists are only taking time to re-organise, buy new weapons. Suresh

Maoists are a gang of notorious people who are there to fulfil their own need not the country. So army should do something for the peace of Nepal Sital Koirala

It seems ridiculous for the Deuba government to go and talk to criminals like Maoists. It is better to mobilise the Nepal Army and crush them and bring hack neare Kamal Sinha

Manists or the army? Just compare North Korea and Pakistan Kaweeta

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a treekes, scree-filled dope. Nights are still dark, and the inky carvas of sky is perforated by my hole spings up only gilmpes of what seems to be the blinding white light of a universe of a dream. a treeless, scree-filled slope. Nights are still dark, and the inky canvas of sky is perforated by tiny holes giving us only glimpses of what seems to be the blinding white light of a universe beyond. The milky way traverses the sky like a nocturnal river, and in the

the eastern mountains turning the ss sky into a blue so blue that it northern Nepal, road accessis he eyes to look air. As the valleys wamup, tufisof camulasgather the roads here do not come from the

village of Charang, have started diggin their section. At this rate, Jomsom wil have a road to Tibet before it has a road to Baglung. Tractors and jeeps have already arrived in Iomsom brought over in the belly of Russian helicopters and used for hotel transport and for construction.

The road is obviously going to follow the old trading route, transforming the landscape and the way of life of this ancient trail. Luckily, there are alternative routes up and down from Jomsom to Lo Manthang that can still be used for trekking when the highway is finished. The side roads are even more remote and forgotten than this remote and forgotten part of Nepal—places with names which would be great names for male deodorants, like Dakmar on a side-

valley near Charang. Jomsom is now a much-cleaner version of Thamel, even Muktinath has become cosmopolitan, boasting a Bob Marley Café Shop and Restaurant which has Buffalo Soldier blaring out on to the streets where Indian holy babas straggle along towards the temple with the eternal flame.

For now, before the road is completed, the Mustang trail follows a you get stopped.

Jomsom to the north, every village along the way that has lost out to the trade wants to build a road north along the Kali Gandaki. Some, like the

> circuit with some spectacular smaller valleys that are worth exploring. An ideal itinerary after flying into Jomsom from Pokhara would be as given on the box (right).

North of Kagbeni, tourists (except Indians) need a special permit that can be obtained from the Home Ministry by paying a fee of \$700 for 7 days, and \$170 for every extra day. A bit steep, but believe me, for a trip of a lifetime, worth every cent. Most of this can be arranged by some of the more reputable trekking agencies in Kathmandu. Indians and Nepalis do not need any special permit, but it is better to carry a citizenship certificate or a passport just in case

**To Lo Manthang and back** Day 1: Jomsom-Kagbeni At Kagbeni you leave the other trekkers who are not

allowed beyond unless they have special permits for Day 2: Kagbeni-Chele

Watch the Kali Gandaki fan out into its wide plain and cross the oscillating bridge.

This is definitely the beginning of The Other World.

Day 4: Geling-Charang Excellent unspoilt ambience

Day 5: Charang-Lo Manthang

A side trip is the narrow red canyons of Drakmar. The soft conglomerate walls of the narrow valley are iddled with caves, some of them still inhabited.

Day 6: Lo Manthang-Chinese border

Explore the grand Chosar Valley with its intriguing caves on the valley walls.

Day 7: Lo Manthang-Dhi

Dhi is an idyllic village by a stream along the high road back to Muktinath.

Day 8: Dhi-Luri

Nice walk, that also includes a hair-raising traverse of a swollen river strewn with slippery boulders.

Day 9: Luri-Tange Since you are not on the main trail, there is not much

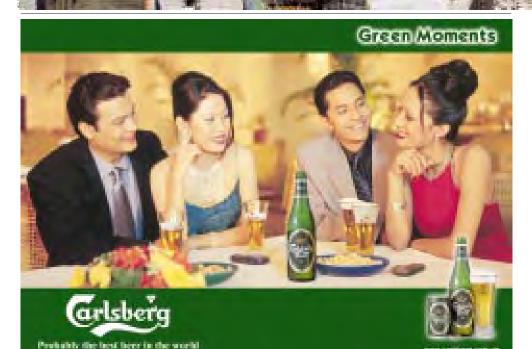
traffic. just the occasional yak and goat herders. Day10: Tange-Chuksang

A long hard climb up to 4,100 m to an area that looks like something that got left behind from the Tibetan Plateau. Someone definitely needs to build a rest house up here for those who can't make this in

one day.

Day11: Chuksang-Jomsom

Whew. Finally made it back.







function as blackboards, notebooks and

oiect. Each student's smart card will

enable her, her teachers and the course

designer to monitor the progress of

lessons studied. This will even enable

programmes to study at their own pace

"Once the Simputers are in place, the

students at non-formal education

d according to their ability.

report cards in the Bastar education

India scientists may have found a way to bridge the digital divide.

MM PANIYIL

BANGALORE - The first assignment of a poor man's hand-held computer, developed in this global IT hub, is to bring basic education to tribal children in central India.

Ar \$200 apiece, the Simputer, when first developed and launched late last year by four professors at the igious Indian Institute of Science (IISc) here, was hailed for its major price breakthrough and touted as the answer to the digital divide that outs technology beyond the access of poorer members of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

SAF is the brainchild of veteran Indian diplomat and adviser to the UNESCO, Madanjeet Singh. "Our pilot project in Bastar is expected to benefit about 2,000 students," says Professor Swami Manohar, the acting chief executive officer PicoPeta Simputers, "It will be operational in six months." Already, the new company has tied

up with public sector giant Bharat Electronics Ltd to produce about 100 Simputers that will be used to receive digital content broadcast by WorldSpace which has been broadcasting digital data along with its popular voice broadcast of news and entertainment. At present, only ommercial organisations download World Space broadcasts using personal computers, "Personal computers tend to use up a lot of disk space to store voice files. But the text-to-voice capability of the Simputer makes the process easy notes Professor Ramesh Haribaran the youngest of the IISc Fab Four, as the local media calls them. "It is interactive and easy to operate, thus enhancing the effectiveness of education programmes,

Fending off criticism that highechnology was being foisted on schools that still lack blackboards and buildings, Hariharan argues that the Simputer can bridge the digital divide in a creative way Together, they can make available professionally designed lessons to the most far-flung village that have no

telephone or electricity, he explains funded by the Rainbow Partnership Hundreds of villages in southern Organisation, an SAF initiative that Karnataka state, of which Bangalore is the capital. lack electricity or telephone promotes cooperation among the seven

connections and can greatly benefit if the such as microcredit facilities, storing and tools adaptable for a wide range of nteractive education in Bastar takes off. accessing agricultural data and so on," says Smart cards are used to personalise Professor Vijay Chandru, director of PicoPeta Simputers. Simputers are applications in a Simputer. These detachable credit-card-like devices will

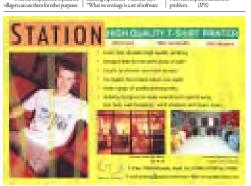
adaptable to a large range of rural applications. With the smart card, they can function as an effective aid to facilitate village census, agricultural data collection, and even routine services such as railway ticket reservations.

The professors will also help to develop the content for the education project. "First and foremost we are teachers. Together we have 35 years of teaching experience," Manohar says. "What we envisage is a set of software

teaching applications," explains

Chandru A major hurdle for the Simputer has been getting enough venture capital or corporate tie-ups to start commercial production. Help from two 'angel' funders took the project through the prototype phase. One of the factors that could

discourage commercial tie-ups is the unique open-licensing procedure of Simputer. It works on the publiclicence Linux operating system. PicoPeta Simputers has another problem. (IPS)





The Paris-based charity South

Asia Foundation (SAF) has roped in

the creators of the Simputer and digital

broadcaster, World Space radio, for the

device's first field application—an

interactive education programme for

rural children in the remote Bastar

district of central Chattisgarh state.

launched by the coalition, will be

PicoPeta Simputers, a company

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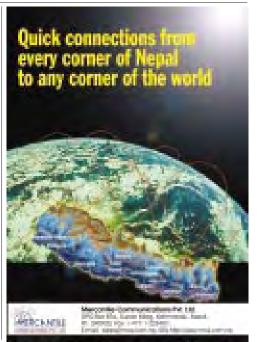
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# One voice

that "George Bush is the President,

me to line up, just tell me where"-

have violated every canon of good

journalism. They have also snuffed

This is more than simple

patriotism. The thinness of the

American TV networks' steady

disengagement from the world in

recent years. Since the end of the

Cold War, overseas bureaux have

recalled and the time allocated to

international news sharply pared.

blinkered than CNN. While the

No outlet has seemed more

network can still count on Christiane

Amanpour to parachute into the

world's hot zones, and on the game

efforts of such on-the-ground assets as

Nic Robertson in Kabul, the network

seems flummoxed by the complex

been closed, foreign correspondents

out any whiff of debate and dissent.

coverage and the shallowness of the

analysis seem a direct outgrowth of

As much of American media displays a

the popular news anchor Dan Rather | that famous brief clip showing a

attack on the World Trade Center.

Within days, word began circulating

on the Internet that the footage had

actually been shot during the Gulf

a Reuters cameraman in East

some claimed).

Jerusalem who insisted that he had

not encouraged the celebration, as

The real scandal is that CNN

repeatedly showed the clip without

commentary, without attempting to

place it in the broader context of

reactions from the Islamic world.

interviews with clerics in Cairo.

editorial writers in Amman, shop-

Ian Fisher's sparkling dispatch from

Gaza Strip, Anger at the U.S. Still

Gaza in the New York Times ("In the

What were people in Gaza and the

MICHAEL MASSING

few minutes into ABC's World Soviet-style reliance on official sources, it is News Tonight on 21 Septemhard to find inquiring or dissenting voices. ber—the night after George W Bush's speech to Congress-Peter Jennings said it was "time for all Americans to begin learning more about Afghanistan." As the days passed he makes the decisions and, you after 11 September and the governknow, as just one American, he wants ment prepared to strike at Osama bin Laden and his Afghan hosts, sharp political analysis had become urgent. On my TV screen appeared Tony

Cordesman, a ubiquitous Gulf War talking head, dutifully reciting basic facts about the small size of the Taliban army, the limited number of tanks and aircraft at its disposal, the scarcity of bombing targets on the ground. "The job is extraordinarily difficult if not impossible if you set deadlines and demand instant success," Cordesman burbled. Then the program was back to its coversor of victims, heroes and terrorists. We learned nothing about the level of support for the Taliban, the strength of the opposition, or America's long history of involvement in the region.

The segment was typical. As the nation prepares to go to war, the coverage on TV, the primary source of news for most Americans, has been appallingly superficial. I have been stunned at the narrowness of the views offered, at the Soviet-style reliance on official and semiofficial sources. To a degree, such deference reflects American TV's customary rallying around the flag in times of national crisis. The iineoistic displays on TVthe repeated references to "we" and "us," the ostentatious sprouting of lapel flags, a startling declaration by

### The cost of war is too high

JEFFREY SACHS

he direct economic costs of the terrorist attacks in the US may amount to \$20 billion, insurance estimates say, but indirect costs may be running around 150 times that amoun as measured by world stock markets

shedding around \$3 trillion in wealth. The gap reflects the fear of global disruption—even war—following the attacks. The economic solution is not a stimulus package for the US economy, as some are urging, but confidence-building measures to assure the world that today's global networked economy will continue functioning efficiently and without disruption.

The most important step is to avoid war. Despite the understandably heightened rhetoric, America was hit by a massive terrorist attack, not the irst war of the 21" century. The biggest mistake would be to launch a war in response to a terrorist attack—the kind of response that sent the world into World War I following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo. In 1914, like today, globalisation seemed inevitable. Yet WWI ended globalisation for two generations—the carnage of that war was followed by two decades of economic disruption and World War II. Let's

not gamble with peace and the world economy. We live in a globally networked economy. Major disruptions to global trade, finance, travel, and production have dire effects on the world economy. This reality was proved even before 11 September, when the global economic fallout of the US financial bubble bursting was much sharper than originally predicted, and the linkages across markets stronger than commonly understood.

The key economic responses to 11 September must therefore bolster  $\,$ the framework of globalisation, recommitting governments worldwide to its success by making it work for all nations, including the poorest. Without that, business investment and consumer spending will plummet, and the world economy will fall precipitously. The following steps are most needed:

- 1. America should look for diplomatic solutions to apprehend terrorists. If the Taliban offers to surrender terrorists on evidence, it should be provided. Readiness to talk can be effective. Finding and destroying terrorists' capacity to commit these inhuman outrages is essential, still, military actionsespecially those bringing death and destruction to innocent civilians—must remain a last, not first resort.
- 2. There needs to be confidence in the basic infrastructure of international trade and transport. Security at nodes of commerce and travel should be enhanced. But security, even if involving tough counter-terrorism actions, is different from warfare.

Hugh Pope's excellent front-page roundup in the Wall Street Iournal: Some Muslims Fear War on Terrorism Is Really a War on Them; West Undercuts Islam, They Say, by Backing Israel, Autocratic Mideast Not all was bland on CNN. Jeff

Greenfield made genuine efforts to probe the Islamic world's complex ove-hate relationship with the US. clutch of Palestinians celebrating the On 20 September he had a spirited discussion with Afghanistan hands Barnett Rubin of New York Universi and Shibley Telhami of the University of Maryland, along with Farid Esack, a War. The furore became so great that Muslim scholar at Auburn Theological CNN eventually issued a statement Seminary. Far more representative. describing where it got the tape (from though, was "What Do We Know About Islam?" an exceedingly brief segment in which a Christian ministe and a Muslim cleric offered vague observations about relations between Christianity and Islam. After that a Muslim-American assured us "Islam means peace." Shot in Boston and New York, the segment drove home how CNN has lost that precious ournalistic ability to work the street West Bank saying? Where were the of the world and discover what's real taking place. Given CNN's critical part in keeping the world informed. keepers in Jakarta and schoolteachers one can only hope that it will soon in Kuala Lumpur? It was certainly not regain its bearings. (Mediawatch) hard to obtain such views-witness

Michael Massing is a contributing editor at the Columbia Journalism

Smolders") and Peter Waldman and Trouble is good for John Howard CANBERRA - The government of Australian Prime Minister John Howard is likely to win the national elections next month, largely due to its tough handling of

444 asylum seekers who reached Australian territory last month. Howard's policy over the last month has come in for criticism, from the UN and local activists, but attracted strong approbation from anti-immigration supporters of the right-wing One Nation Party and conservative working class followers of the Opposition Labor Party, One-third of Australians were born overseas or of parents born on foreign soil, but taking a tough line on asylum seekers-called "queue jumpers" by the government-resonates with some recent immigrants who went through the formal application process. Recent opinion polls suggest Howard, who months ago looked set for defeat, will now probably win comfortably. The Opposition Labor Party initially opposed the government's moves, but after experiencing a backlash has fallen in behind Howard. The Howard government last week passed six amendments to Australia's migration legislation to dramatically restrict the rights of asylum seekers. One approved amendment allows ships with asylum seekers aboard to be towed back into international waters, and asylum seekers to be transferred to quasi-prison centre on islands like Nauru. Another excluded the most common landing sites of Ashmore Reef, Christmas Island and Cocos Island from Australian migration legislation—asylum seekers who land there would not be ineligible to apply for permanent residency, for other countries who perhaps do not have the traditionally high standards that Australia has." (IPS)

### Peace in Macedonia?

SKOPJE - The ethnic Albanian armed uprising in western Macedonia is over, for now. The rebels have been disarmed, and the NATO force that collected their weapons is going home. But another force is arriving with the task of preventing renewed fighting between the country's rival ethnic communities. Brigadier Heinz-Georg Keerl. commander of Operation Amber Fox, a German-led force of 700 troops, arrived in Skopje last week and told journalists: "We are determined to move with great speed to ensure a smooth transition between these two different missions, with no security gap," His force will nominally provide protection for 200 civilian monitors under the command of the 55-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. Most observers expect the NATO soldiers will themselves act as a guarantor of the peace. The day before the brigadier's arrival, Ali Ahmeti, political leader of the Albanian rebel National Liberation Army (NLA), announced that his group had disbanded and no longer existed. He added that he was considering the transformation of the NLA into a political party and said he would recognise the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. "For us it is important to have a broad amnesty and for all NLA fighters to be reintegrated into society," said Ahmeti, Macedonia has entered an uneasy handover period. NATO's 30-day Operation Essential Harves collected 3,875 weapons and nearly 400,000 pieces of ammunition and explosives from the NLA. The government has yet to pass essential legislation, without which further reconciliation will be impossible. As well as the amnesty, the parliament must approve changes to the constitution giving more rights to ethnic

# International economics after 3. In coordination with other countries aggressive actions should break down

terrorist networks-disrupting their finances, freedom of travel and shipments of 4. The US and Europe should insist OPEC avoid any disruptions in oil supplies or pricing. OPEC governments, among the most vulnerable to this

crisis, should readily accede to this kind of international commitment. Military escort should be offered, where necessary, to ensure the security of global energy 5. Leading central banks must ensure ample liquidity, as they have been doing. With Japan already in recession, the Bank of Japan should take even more

aggressive action, selling enough yen to prevent any further appreciation of the currency. (The yen should be weaker than 120 yen per dollar)

6. A new trade round should be launched at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in November, signalling the intention of all members to persevere on the path of free trade. It is time for the rich countries to respect the wishes of the poor in getting such a trade round off the ground. This requires immediate and proactive steps to ensure developing-country exporters improved access to rich-country markets (especially for apparel and agriculture exports) and fairer rules regarding

7. America should wake up from two decades of insufficient attention to the urgent needs of the world's poorest nations. It has not provided enough leadership and financing in fighting AIDS in poor countries; dragged its feet on cancelling unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries (not because of the financial costs, which are negligible as they could not be repaid anyway, but because US politicians have not taken the plight of the poor seriously); and slashed foreign assistance as a share of national income to where it is lower than

As the centre of a global network of production, trade, and finance, the US surely has the greatest stakes of all in the success of globalisation. A broad and violent war in response to 11 September would not protect US or global interests. (Project Syndicate

Jeffrey D Sachs is Professor of Economics, and Director of the Center for International Development, Harvard University.

40 JUDGEJUBAH....



Where he takes are as full as the mountains.

Management of the later than the party. locatified, with a repetactan markety. ing properties are assumed the many constraint.

SECRETARY SECURIOR STATE AND ADDRESS OF has been been been been been and the beginning



# China and the new world

as a cover for domestic campaigns

against political opponents. Beijing

has already laid down conditions for

support of any US retaliation, saying

Washington should back China in its

War also carries the danger of

are coming mainly from the Middle

own struggle against "terrorism and

BEIJING - In a post-11 September world defined by US President George W Bush's maxim-"either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists"—it had become increasingly difficult for China to be reticent on international conflicts. In marked contrast to its earlier opposition on joining such US-led alliances, Beijing responded quickly that it stood "side oy side" with America. It has backed a ÚN Security Council resolution on the "fight against terrorism" and shared intelligence with the CIA on Asian-based terrorists, Beijing and Washington are working so closely together for the first time since Mao Zedong and President Richard Nixon forged a strategic alliance to fight the Soviet Union in the 1970s

separatism" in Xinjiang, Tibet and How Beijing stands by its pledge to support the US-led military and diplomatic action might be a defining instability along China's borders and moment for China-US relations, and the prospect of US military expansion for China's future as a world and in Central Asia. With the US military regional power. Stoked by a lifetime already in Japan and Korea, an of media depictions of the US as the American attack would bring American troops to China's front and country's top enemy, many here believe Washington's foremost goal is back doors. Yet even this is seen as a to contain China's rise to greatness. bonus in the short-term, as analysts The May 1999 US bombing of the say Washington will be too preoccu-Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the nied with its own security issues to spy plane conflict near Hainan Island worry about protecting Taiwan. which China considers a renegade last April which left one Chinese pilot province, "If the United States dead only strengthened those helieves major post-Cold War threats

Now Beijing wants to assume the

The eagle, the peacock, the Taliban

After half-a-century of cool relations, the United States and India are

quietly establishing a strategic partnership. India's foreign and defence

minister, Jaswant Singh has already offered India as a base for US military

operations against terrorist targets. Three short years ago, few would have

forecast this convergence of interests. India's nuclear tests had put it in

War such spats seemed distinctly archaic, until recently, the only real

cies. Shared stakes were few and an almost endless laundry list of griev-

head-on into India's aspirations and its leadership of the global non-

Number One enemy, the Soviet Union, souring US-India relations.

America's diplomatic 'dog-house.' Even though with the end of the Cold

similarities between the two were that they were the world's largest democra

ances existed on both sides. Suddenly, these irritations have melted away.

During the Cold War, American efforts to contain the Soviet Union ran

aligned movement. India was seen as the Number One friend of America's

Liberalising India's economy in 1991 improved India's image in the US as

it strengthened India's economy at home. But Pakistan has remained the

complicating factor. From the 1950s, America's ties to Pakistan as a bulwark

against Soviet expansion intruded, as America felt compelled to shade its

policies toward India in the light of its relations with Pakistan. Locked in a

decade, Pakistan's standing with America decayed as its role as a Cold War

buffer receded. In recent years, Pakistan's ongoing support for the Taliban

boomeranged against it. The countries misadventures in Kashmir, and the

nuclear non-proliferation. American policy targeted India with the mantra.

of "cap, reduce, and eliminate" nuclear capabilities in South Asia. But with

Paradoxically, India's nuclear tests in May 1998 broke the logiam, A

military coup that removed its elected government alienated American

opinion even more. The other factor impeding closer US-India ties was

the issue of Kashmir alive, neither Pakistan nor India was willing to

strategic dialogue was initiated between the US and India to discuss

security interests. Consultation on such matters with a country that was

neither enemy nor ally was unique for America. For India the talks broke

Cold War, Consultations during the Kargil War in Kashmir in 1999, when

India combined military action with politico-diplomatic moves, inspired

confidence in and between both governments. President Bush's readiness

to consult with India's leadership on missile defence at senior levels, and

But Indo-US relations have more than a strategic/military component.

America is India's largest trading partner. India's IT industry has ballooned

from \$150 million ten years ago to \$5.7 billion in 1999-2000. Two of five

US Fortune 500 companies outsource their software requirements to India

The nearly 1.8 million expatriate Indians in America—mostly highly skilled

professionals—are vital to the US economy, and are gaining a strong voice

Rethinking the sanctions imposed on India in the wake of its nuclear

money laundering and economic crimes are areas where the two countries

are already working together. Military co-operation is quietly under way. The

tests has begun, and the sanctions may be lifted soon. Drug trafficking.

India's positive (some say enthusiastic) response, was a sign that the new

new ground, as security issues on this scale were rarely discussed during the

unilaterally abandon its search for nuclear weapons.

relationship was progressing.

n US domestic politics.

downward spiral of instability and economic mismanagement for over a

role of a major global player. Some experts say China doesn't want to see place such a large number of troops in a replay of Kosovo when it was East Asia?" asks Yan Xuetone isolated in its support of Slobodan director of the International Affairs Milosevic, Also, in theory, China and Research Institute at Oinghua the US share concerns about University, Yan also speculates that Washington might be forced to terrorism. Beijing is worried about the spread of Islamic separatism in divert its attention from building a Xinjiang, which borders Afghanistan. missile defence system, which Both countries want to contain China firmly opposes, to strength-Muslim fund-amentalism in Central ening domestic security. and South Asia. But human rights activists warn that some countries might use the global coalition's effort

Along with strategic reasons, China's willingness to participate in these efforts is driven by its economi concerns. Beijing's 15-year quest to join the WTO has been finally approved. In November, China is to become a member of the trade body gaining access to markets across the world. As a net oil importer, China also wants to ensure its supplies of oil and gas are not interrupted by wars or terrorist acts. (IPS)

Islamabad and Washington is the "the day after," the postpolitical dispensation would or could replace the Taliban eeime were it to unravel. Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar voiced Pakistan's reservations when he warned recently: "We must not make the blunder of foisting a government on Afghanistan. Any such decision from foreign powers to give assistance to one side or the other in Afghanistan is a recipe for great disaster for the Afghan nad told TV networks Afghans would be "better off" without the Taliban. President Bush publicly sought "the cooperation of Afghan citizens who may be tired of having the Taliban in place." He added a caveat, though: "We're not into nation building, we're focused on justice."

Pakistan has three concerns. First, the anti-terrorism campaign be limited to nabbing Osama bin Laden and his cohorts, not removing a regime perceived as "friendly" to Pakistan. Second, the Northern Alliance, the Taliban's principal opponents who occupy 10 percent of northern Afghanistan near Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan,

> a "Get Taliban" operation as well. Third, enlarging the American anti-termrism agenda could instability and uncertainty in Afohanistan.

influx into Pakistan, and earn the Taliban's ire, that could be destabilising for Pakistan, given the Afghan regime's nexus with seminaries and politically-active religious groups But others in the region do not share this perspective.

5-11 OCTOBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES

Turkey and Russia have announced support for the Northern Alliance that is unlikely to be confined to word Iran, saving, "we are neither with the Americans nor with the terrorists," would not shed any tears for the Taliban. Norwould China, whose intelligence and anti-terrorism experts briefed their counterparts in Washington on 25 September about Afghanistan, the first such intelligence cooperation since the first Afghanistan war in the 1980s. And Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf, in his speech to the nation on 19 September, accused India of organising the recent moot in the Tajik capital Dushanbe where plans were apparently discussed in the presence of Iran, Russia and Uzehikstan to displace the Talihan and promote the Northern Alliance. The Taliban regime has been further isolated after the UAE and Saudi Arabia broke all ties with it. Finally, discreet, intelligence-cum-political manoeuvres seem already underway to weaken the Taliban regime from within-inducing defections from their key commanders. The Taliban themselves deployed this tactic to capture power during 1994-1996-a third of their commanders are defectors, which facilitated the relatively peaceful conquest of Afghanistan five years ago when they captured Kabul in September 1996. US contacts with former Afghan King Zahir Shah, in exile in Rome since 1973 when he was deposed in a coup in Kabul, are part of the process likely to unfold in coming weeks despite Pakistan's reservations. (IPS)

## What Central Asia wants

WASHINGTON - Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have emerged as possible frontline US allies against Afghanistan. The Bush administration has not clarified the kind of presence it intends to establish in the Centra Asian countries, what level of support it expects from their governments. and what price it is willing to pay in return for their allegiance. Many details may not come to light until after the initial military campaign, but observers are still worried. Taiikistan is embroiled in clan disputes with religious overtones that have persisted even after a peace process incorporating self-described Islamists in the government. The cashstrapped government has had to commit resources to containing incursions by Afghanistan-based rebels fighting Uzbekistan's government. The focus n security has stalled political reforms and suppressed economic activity Some 10 000 Russian troops under Moscow's command are based in Tajikistan and patrol its Afghan border with the mandate to keep rebels and refugees out. Taiikistan also borders China.

Moscow and Beijing, themselves fighting Muslim separatists in Chechnya and Xiniiang respectively, have said they will contribute in some way to the fight against the Taliban but neither welcomes the prospect of Washington gaining a foothold in Central Asia. Turkmenistan has offered vague assurances of support to the US. It commands uninterrupted territory and air space from the Caspian Sea to the Afghan border. At a minimum say analysts, Washington will want overflight rights. If a ground war is launched, Turkmenistan could be a valuable staging area Soviet forces entered Afghanistan from there in 1979. Uzbekistan says it is willing to discuss any form of cooperation with Washington. It has a usable air base near the Afghan horder and could provide a valuable base for ground infiltration because the territory immediately across its frontier is controlled

by the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. Policy, military, and intelligence officials say despite their ties to Moscow and Beijing, the countries could be won over to Washington's side with military and intelligence assistance, bilateral and multilateral loans and aid, and the promise of state visits and other symbolic gestures. But Human Rights Watch in an open letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell warns that "some governments may cynically take advantage of this cause to justify their own internal crackdowns on perceived political opponents. 'separatists' or religious activists, in the expectation that the United States will now be silent." The risk of such opportunism, the group says, could be greatest in Uzbekistan, where President Islam Karimov's government has in recent years imprisoned and tortured thousands of non-violent Muslims for worshipping outside state controls. Washington has sent military personnel there to prepare a staging area for operations in Afghanistan. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, accused of exploding car bombs and attacking civilians, was added to the official US list of terrorist organisations on 15 September. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan repress even apolitical religious observance and organisation as threats to ruling elites, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG), a think-tank

Taiikistan and Uzbekistan are also in deep economic trouble, and unrest is being fuelled by the growing gap between elites who benefit from privatisation and other market-friendly reforms and disenfranchised majorities. A recent ICG report says a "breaking point" is near. "If it is reached, spontaneous uprisings or organised underground political activity, increasing militancy, and a readiness to seek the overthrow of current regimes can all be anticipated." They fear economic aid, conditional or no-strings, could merely stoke the fires of revolt by fuelling disparity and corruption. (IPS

# The day after

MUSHAHID HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD - At the core of a possible cleavage between bin Laden phase. The key areas of divergence are the role of the Northern Alliance in the coming weeks, and what sort of people." Earlier, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice

should not be enlisted, because then the campaign would be

# Japan's burden of history

When Japan chipped in \$13 billion to help the US-led forces in the Gulf War it was criticised for putting its dollars where it was too afraid to put its soldiers. It was the biggest financial contributor to the operation, but on the

In the aftermath of the attacks in the US, Tokyo has been stressing that it will supply "visible support"-military officials and manned equipment closer to the action. The problem is Japan's pacifist constitution renounces war as a means to settle international disputes and successive governments have interpreted that to mean Japan is banned from going to the aid of allies when they are attacked. Prime Minister Koizumi has promised swift enactment of a new law allowing Japan to provide logistical support for US military action, including the supply and transport of unspecified items and medical services. Aside from Tokyo's long-standing desire to bring its diplomatic clout in line with its economic power, the country has been a target of terrorism-including a chemical gas attack on one of its busiest railway stations-and is dependent on imported oil.

But all that doesn't make Japan's neighbours, particularly China and the Koreas, easier about moves to unchain Japan's military, which despite its unthreatening name. Self Defence Force, is one of the largest, most technically advanced in the world. The plan has also caused unease at home, where memories of militarism and defeat run deep. Koizumi will likely soon visit China, the site of some of the Japanese Imperial Army's worst atrocities in WW II. In addition to discussing plans to support the antiterror coalition, Koizumi will try to make up for his visit to a controversial Tokyo war shrine last month.

China, like most of the region, has given its wary assent to Japan's gesture to the region of Tokyo's contrition for the deeds of the past and intention to set things straight.

Defense Policy Group established in 1995 will push cooperation forward. Jasjit Singh, a retired Air Commodore, is director of the India Institute for Strategic Studies

EDITORIAL IN THE NATION (BANGKOK)

geo-political front Tokyo wasn't going to get any respect.

plans. Beijing and other Asian capitals have reasons for wanting to keep a lid on extreme challenges to the political status quo. There is also reason to believe that Japan, which is much more pro-Arab than America, may be a moderating influence. Koizumi reportedly hopes to seek understanding from the Chinese side, and to reiterate that he has no intention of justifying his nation's past conduct. Perhaps he should go further and use his first possible meeting with President Jiang Zemin to make a bigger

**Government flip-flops** 

We agree that the government is barely functioning. Sometimes it makes you wonder whether the problem

1) Take the issue of land reform. The proposal has passed through four phases since the day the prime

minister made his first announcement and come back to where the process began-square one. As soon

as the prime minister made his announcement (that land reform would be undertaken) the government

parliament, but before it was passed, the government began saving all actions would be taken according

confused once again on whether they should go by what the government said or by what the Supreme

Court ordered. This is one example about how confusing a half-baked government decision can be. And if

this is how things happen, then the largest problem the citizens face is the government. This shows how

2) Another prime example of the functioning of the government can be seen from the way top officials

function. It is difficult to believe how soon they can begin to violate thier own decisions. The secretaries of

government meet every two weeks, led by the Chief Secretary. This is a routine meeting. At almost every

meeting they decide on one thing (including everything else they decide on)—that they will reduce the

misuse of official vehicles. The minutes of the meeting are there for all to see at the cabinet secretariat.

Upon stepping out of the meeting the secretaries, including the chief secretary, begin going against their

to use office transport. But the secretaries and the chief secretary keep their duty-free vehicles at home

and use official cars to come to the meeting and decide on reducing their misuse. This is one misuse of

official previlage which the prime minister can see for himself if he looks out of his chamber windows...

3) It is not a very easy job to create, close and divide ministries. But in the last five years the government

has done this twice. There used to be 21 ministries. In 1995, six more were added, including the ministry of

Population and Environment, Women and Social Welfare, and Youth, Sports and Culture, among others. In

Transport. This ministry was divided in two—the infrastructure section was attached to the Ministry

of Planning and the transport part went to the labour ministry. Naturally, The taxpayers paid for all of

2000, the government decided to bring the number of ministries back to 21 by merging them. Some

ministries were split and then merged with different ministries. Take the Ministry of Works and

decision by misusing official vehicles. The secretaries who imported duty-free vehicles are not supposed

banned all sale and transfer of ownership, which created confusion. Then a bill was presented in

to its provisions. Then the Supreme Court ruled against the government decision. The people were

ill-conceived the decision was, one which prevented people from using their own property

is the government or the country. The administration is oversized and almost incapable of running the

country. If we analyse the following points, we will understand why that happens

FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

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FM radio station in Rukum for the past year. The station is in the Mahat Village Development Committee and t broadcasts for an hour everyday, from 7am-8am. According to Comrade Bishal, a member of the Maoists district committee cell, this nas been very useful—as it is not possible for all people to attend all the Maoist meetings, the radio broadcasts all speeches, directives and orders passed by the Maoists, Nowadays most meetings organised by the Maoists are also broadcast live on loc FM. Besides this, the FM also broadcasts 'revolutionary' educationa and other programs for its armed forces. The station's signals can be received as far as a full day's walk away. The station does not have a permanent transmission tower

indigenous and Maoist cadres are esponsible for its proper functioning

### Distrust at the top

Ghatana Ra Bichar, 26 September

THE RESERVE TO SERVE Deuba wants to present himself as a great leader by resolving the Maoist nsurgency. But his style of function no has created mistrust and problem within the ruling party, its members, and the government. His detractors say Deuba believes the Maoists more than he believes his own ministers,

be no reason for the ruling party and

the government to exist. People close

to Deuba say that although he appear

ery open and frank in public, he is

actually just the opposite. He is very narrow-minded, short-sighted and

conspiratorial. So much so, that even

his own home minister. Khum

Bahadur Khadka, does not have his

full trust. People close to Deuba say

that he does not present all facts, or

confide in the home minister about

the developments in the talks between

the Maoists and himself. When he wa

publicly said that the Maoist problem

home minister earlier. Khadka had

ould only be resolved through a

dialogue and that he was against the

negotiations are the only way this

use of force. He still believes that such

problem can be solved. Despite this

the prime minister does not trust him

This has created problems within the

ruling party and the government.

decision to impose a ban on

People have realised that the

demonstrations in the three districts o

Kathmandu Valley was a mistake and

there are some in government, too,

who feel it was not the correct decisio

This has created a lot of problems for

Deuba to negotiate with the Maoists

before withdrawing the decision. He

withdrawn only if the Maoists could

assure the prime minister that there

had said that the ban should be

the home minister. He had asked

when this was done. Then Krishna Prasad Bhattarai became prime minister. Under him the special police department was made to function under orders of the prime minister's office. After a few months the department was again transferred to the home ministry. Within a spar

The Special Police Department is another

example. During Girjia Prasad Koirala's

third stint as prime minister, a decision

under the cabinet. The process was

functioning under direct orders of the cabinet. But the arrangement did not last and the cabinet decided to make the cabinet and the cabinet decided to make the cabinet d completed, and the force started

was made to keep the department directly

department under the Home Ministry

again. Koirala was prime minister

Don't ask what this does for the morale of the department

5) In 1997, a cabinet meeting held under the chairmanship of the prime minister decided to form an investment promotion council. It was to function under the prime minister's office. It had its members and member secretary named, but the council got lost in Singha Darbar within five months. The council has not been formally shut down, nor has it ever met. If an entire council can vanish like this, what can be said of

6) In 1998, the prime minister gave birth to a new institution: it was called the commerce advisory group. The prime minister was the head of this group and it was supposed to be situated within the National Planning Commission premises. Its members and member-secretary were also appointed. It worked for about two months, but did not meet thereafter-it was perhaps not thought necessary. The prime ministe remained in office for nine months after the formation of the group but no one cared about it. It soon got

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The palace massacre, the height in murder, terror, aberration and contradiction, marks the end of an age of feudal nationalism.



KB Mahara: We'll turn Narayanhiti and Singha Darbar into the Pentagon. AB Vajpayee (in Hindi): Hello Bush. ....we've spotted the Pentagon terrorist in Nepal. Could it be

Deshantar Saptahik, 30 September.

Radio Mao

Jana Aastha, 26 Septmber

The Maoists have been operating an all compo-

of two years, the special police department was required to function under separate bosses four times.

lost in the maze that is Singha Darbar.

### Guns and talks

excerpts from an interview with Durga Subedi, a mediator employed by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai's governme

How did you come in contact with the Maoist leaders? I met them when they were in exile. After I moved away from Giriia Prasad Koirala, I started attending their publi meetings as a guest. Besides their arguments about Nepali politics and ociety, we used to agree on almost verything. I came close to them because of this association, I have gained their trust and it is very easy t me to contact them by any means when necessary It was during the second half of 1999 that Prachanda

5-11 OCTOBER 2000 NEPALI TIMES 15 discussed the possibility of their coming to dialogue and they told me that they were willing. General elections were to be held soon after, and there was a possibility that Krishna Prasad Bhattarai would become the prime minister. I then met the leaders of various political parties and conveyed the wishes of the Maoist leaders. All agreed dialogue should be held and this strengthened my position as a mediator. Around this time Khum Bahadur Khadka announced in a peech in Dang that it was possible to hold a dialogue with terrorists too.

How and when were you given

the responsibility of an official

Although, I was in touch with the

elections, I met the various political

leaders after the polls and informed

Maoist leaders. I even spoke to then

Prime Minister KP Bhattarai and

informed him that I was in contact

ocedures and formalities were

completed. I then asked the

vith them. Bhattarai told me that a

onducive environment needed to b

ated for dialogue to be possible. All

overnment to be officially appointed a

Purna Bahadur Khadka gave me a lette

ving so. I met the Maoists secretly for

nediator, and then Home Minister

four to five months. The issue of an

exchange of prisoners came up. To

ouild trust, the Maoists released

Deputy Superintendent of Police

return released Dev Gurung and

Suresh Ale Magar After this.

(DSP) Thule Rai; the government in

Prachanda wrote a letter asking that the

dialogue be started. The government

formed a high level committee under

the leadership of Sher Bahadur Deuba to take up the issue. Deuba and the

Maoist representatives met a couple o

times. As soon as this process started,

the Congress party president [Girija

Prasad Koirala] started a campaign to

topple Bhattarai. Koirala became prime

inded that the Maoists give up thei

minister and started his campaign of

eapons. Koirala forgot that earlier

dialogue with the king, they had not

given up their weapons. The weapons

the Congress collected at that time are

still stored in India under the directive

Do you have proof that these

Umesh Giri has publicly said he was

working under the direct orders of

Koirala and that he himself hid the

veapons. According to the information

rottham Das Kapoor, alias Bhaiyaji.

I have received, these weapons are in

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, and the

erson keeping an eye on them is

We have proof that Koirala had

massed and has stored 351, 303

guns, 45 SLR rifles, 25 carbines, 36

nguns, and many other weapon:

You have said the environment

for dialogue was created over

two years ago, and accuse

weapons are being held in

India by Koirala's orders?

of Koirala himself.

when the Congress was holding a

uppressing the Maoists. He de-

them about the aspirations of the

Maoists much before the general

mediator?

Bomb scare

Jana Aastha, 26 September 강마산취비 Maoists leaders fly quite often these days. Since they come and go all the time, the atmosphere at Tribhuvan nternational Airport is very tense. On the morning of the 25th (September), a "bomb"—a big, unclaimed bag—was found near a security checkpoint at the airport. There was chaos because of the unidentified baggage, and the airport only returned to normalcy in the rening. All flights were stopped, the RNAC flight to Delhi was delayed by wo hours. All aircraft were towed to safety, people were evacuated and the army's bomb-disposal squad was called in. Troops surrounded the airport: they moved in and checked it thoroughly. The soldiers then carried the bag out and opened it carefully. Inside it were some ancient books use by Tibetan monks. The bag was later

would be no terrorist activity in the

Valley. Since the army was already

getting ready to move in and the

active, Khadka wanted Deuba to

National Security Council was also

inform these two organisations of what

was happening and seek their opinion

ome minister of wanting to disrupt

too. Deuba was not prepared to listen

to Khadka, but instead accused the

the dialogue. We have to remember

Khakda was the first person who said

n public that a dialogue should be

eld. As a result of all this, people are

finding it very hard to believe Deuba.

His actions seem to have only had an

effect on the Maoists.

handed over to the police. "Misinforming"

aptahik Janadesh, 25 September A top Maoist leader has accused Kantipur of spreading misinformation In its 23 Sentember issue, Kantinui stated that the Maoists were working together with Libya. The Maoist lead nied this and said the statement was paseless. He said this was done to nalign the Maoist organisation, whic as fighting for the rights of the veople. He added that this raised uspicion about the intentions of the aper. The leader further stated that ne paper's claim that Ram Bahadur hapa had been expelled from the oviet Union while he was studying and if he continues this way, there will there is also completely false. He said action would be taken against Kantipe if it spread misinformation and rumours. The Maoists are a major political force here and saying they ar n league with international terrorist organisations is pure misinformation antipur has been defaming the Manists for some time now. It is functioning the same way as the CIA its intentions are not clear or good.

Kantipur, 26 September यज्ञाने संघर

Koirala of destroying the possibility of talks... The Maoist revolution was just a to bring the Maoists to talks. stepping-stone to power for Koirala. He ver made an effort to solve the problem. I do not trust Koirala's style of working. Padma Ratna (Tuladhar) was the mediator then... Today the ton

and Baburam wrote to me saying they wanted to meet me. We met and

are in direct contact again. I am still a You could have been made the facilitator, then? People representing the Maoists and rnment sides have become acilitators. A mediator is a person who has the trust of both sides. Once you ecome a facilitator, there could be problems with trust. I am happy to

remain a mediator.

Maoist leaders and the prime minister

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

ari Rokaya, marathon runner,

old daal-bhat-tarkari. His

training is similarly low tech, but

you wouldn't know that from this

39-year-old's impressive record of

first places. There is more to the

story than a starchy Nepali diet.

Rokava's is a tale of hard work.

patriotism-and, sadly, corruption

Hari Bahadur Rokaya is from

Jumla. The very name conjures up a

harsh mountainous terrain, with

long, difficult winters and a harvest

of barley and potatoes that is never

enough for the year. Perhaps

Rokaya, who for the last two

decades has displayed the endur-

ance needed to win marathons.

determination, perseverance,

in the sporting authorities.

eats nothing other than plain

do if we had the proper facility

as their foreign colleagues"

There is no doubt that with that

nav be down but he's far from

out\_his dream is to establish a

mountain running school in his

It's never been easier to subscribe to

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district. But first he needs to have a

Nepali athletes could perform as well

Nepal's very own marathon man

**Marathon man** 

applauded as Rokaya jogged on.

Everybody was talking about

did pretty well, coming in eighth

partner Laxmi came 23rd. "I am a

nomentum uphill but my perform-

grounds," explains Rokaya with a grin

dedication and their staying power

this is the man to look at. Rokaya says he has had numerous chances

to stay abroad when away for

rournaments and that even the

authorities in Nepal say they are

baffled at why he keeps coming

back. "They ask me why I don't

good," he says. With authorities

like these it is no wonder our

sportspersons disappear almost

for an international event.

very time they leave the country

of his national sporting career he has had so much trouble with the

decided to stay out of the regional

is simply too much politics and

and national level meets see. "There

nepotism there. They (Nepal Sports

Council) are not concerned about

promoting Nepali athletes, they are

Rokaya has been given the post

only in for the money," he says.

of Junior Assistant Coach in the

Jumla District Sports Committee

and gets a monthly salary of Rs

7,000 but now his only source of

authorities and seen so much

politicking, that he has now

Rokava says that from the start

take the chance and stay away for

For all those who are sceptical

among 3,700 runners while his

ghland runner—so I gained

ance slowed down in the flat

about Nepali athletes, their

Nepal, it made us really proud," she

says. Expectations were high and for

a man who lives on dal-bhaat. Rokava

The 'Everest Runner' is going places.

Forrest Gump fiction, Rokava

lad at Chandannath Secondary

ters of Jumla district. But that

modestly describes himself as a shy

School in Khalanga, the headquar

changed after he won his first race

Inter School Games when in grade

in the Birendra Running Shield

eight. He took off and he's still

running. He won the event twice

more and then decided he says to

run for the rest of his life. He was

meticulous in planning his sporting

career-Karnali, the remotest part

of the country, was barely on the

national sports radar, so Rokaya

remedy that. "No one from Karnal

decided that he wanted to first

had won a medal until then. I

vowed to wipe away this shame,

In 1981 he finally got his

beginning, coming fourth in the 5

National Games in Pokhara. He

staved in the top five in a number of

middle- and long-distance runs at

different national-level meets, but

his first real break came at the 26th

Kathmandu in 1985 where he came

n first in the 5 km race and second

n the 10 km race. Since then Hari

Rokava has won every other major

tional events. Representing Nepal

at the third SAF Games in Calcutta

in 1987 he finished in third positio

in the 5 km, and at the 25th

national long distance run and

participated in over 28 interna-

National Athletics Meet in

hance and made a modest

km marathon at the second

And of late Rokaya is getting

Everest Marathon is a full marathon

held every eighteen months and is

widely considered as the world's

highest marathon. This 42.2 km

as 16,500 ft. The breathtaking

race that began in 1987 goes as high

oute in the shadow of the world's

nighest mountain and the challenge

f even just completing the race

different countries. Hari has won

von the Eighth Everest Marathor

in June 1999 in 3 hours 50 minutes

Hari's practice schedule is as

nost of his counterparts prefers an

early morning run. But unlike them

he starts out with a simple cup of

doesnt plan the runs neither does

he time it but he is known to reach

even hours, more than a days walk

Rara Lake from Jumla proper in

Impressed by Rokaya's performance, Paul Gut, a Swiss

architect and runner who partici-

pated in the last Everest Marathon

decided to take him to the famous

lungfrau Marathon held every year

n Switzerland. Finding sponsors

was a difficult task, but eventually

Austrian Air sponsored the tickets

for Rokaya and his trainee Laxmi

Jpadhyaya. When they got there

his August, everyone was already

alking about the "Everest Runner

Mana Gut KC, a Nepali and the

wife of Paul Gut, remembers how

tearful and overjoyed she was when

Nepal was announced and hundreds

average travellers.

tea and heads for the hills. He

ough as his home terrain. Like

and 23 seconds, beating his own

former record of 3 hours 56

minutes and 10 seconds.

the last three of these races. He

draws experienced runners from 15

famous as the Everest Runner The

z

# Valley villages



Valley villages have a hundred legends of kings and gods, histories of trade routes and invaders.

he countryside is still a few minutes outside Kathmandu but imperilled as the city races to expand. The Ring Road, only a few years old, has encouraged a rash of new buildings so that what is now a roller coaster drive through fields and hamlets about the city shows signs of becoming a highway through busy suburbs

A drive along the Chinese road past Bhaktapur to Dhaulaghat on the river Sunkosi. or to the Chinese frontier beyond, carries one through some of the most enchanting scenery I have ever seen. Before it leaves the Valley, it climbs and dips and snakes through fields so luminously emerald in summer, so vividly mustard vellow in spring that the colours almost hurt. Willows weep beside meandering streams across which old bridges arch, and bottle-brush bleed.

Huts and hamlets glow white and ochre and terracotta red. draped in season with scarlet chillies and green garlands of drying vegetables. Golden corncobs are piled against trees or sprout like fungus below overhanging eaves. There are geraniums and marigolds in tins on window ledges. In the hedgerows are pink and white roses, bouquets of Lantana and wild flowers Leannot name Above this profusion of loveliness the mountains rise ridge upon ridge to meet the snows and there are no two hours of the day when they look the same. Often they wear blossoms of clouds or are truncated by brewing storms. And though one may have seen them a thousand times, the great snow

peaks when bright with day or flushed with dawn or sunset are breathtaking, humbling, unforget-

s without a history of a hundred legends. They sat across trade routes, faced invaders, were commissioned by kings or inspired by gods. So Sangma owes its legendary origins to the God Rhim Sen who when the Valley was a lake, used to moor his boar where the village is now. Bhim Sen is the patron saint of trader. and so Sangma, straddling the trade route to Tibet, built him a shrine. A Malla king of Bhaktapur, while out hunting, met and loved a girl of Pyangaon who bore him several children. To them in time he gave exclusive rights to manufacture the bamboo measuring pots called ha pa. To this day Pyangaon goes on making

hapa which are used throughout the Valley. For centuries Thankot has guarded the trade route to India where it enters the Valley. Its ancient name is Shonitapur which commemorates a battle fought etween the son of Krishna and the demon brother of a legendarily beautiful woman who lived here. Much was the blood spilled and Shonitapur means the place of blood. The Gurkha King Prithyi Narayan Shah realising the strategic importance of the village posted a military garrison there and changed its name to Thankot — a place of garrison. The quiet beauty of Lubha attracted a Malla queen so powerfully that she

abandoned her palace in Patan and settled in the village. There

she sold a golden dish to raise the

village. Her endowment is remembered in the name Lubhu which means dish of gold. Royal passion of another kind gave the village of Sanagaon its popular name Thasi. The settlement was infamous for its destructive malaria: so much so that political prisoners of the Malla era were sent there to perish. When a king once visited Sanagaon the inmates of this penal colony begged him to settle them elsewhere to which the king said Sisa thasi which translates more or less, "I do no care if you die or not. The word Thasi stuck but happily, the malaria disappeared. I remember Sankhu on a ricl

northern trade route as a hand some village of five houses and four gates. It is greatly changed but the story of its origins remains. Above the village on a wooded hillside and approached by a long flight of stone stairs is a temple to Goddess Bajra Yogini. She once lived there and legend has her inspiring the Saint Manjusri to visit the holy Kathmandu lake and drain the water from the Valley. An early king of the Valley humbly offered himself to the goddess to sate her great hunger. She obligingly ate him and later one of his sons buil Sankhu in her honour which makes one wonder whether he particularly liked his forbear

Self-sacrifice gave Namo Buddha, a beautiful spot actually outside the Valley, its name; it Hardly a village in the Valley seems that in the dawn of time three princes were out hunting near the spot when they happened upon a tigress and her cubs that were so starved they were near death. The youngest prince fed them his own flesh until he himself died an act of such grace that the Buddha himself recognised the prince as Bodhisattava.

One of my favourite hamlets, distinguished by a small Rana palace, is Nagarkot from where one can see Everest and almost forever. Apart from being the retreat of an ndearing Rana Prime Minister, Nagarkot has a connotation of happy indolence one cannot help appreciating. It seems a ruler of Kathmandu once imported a large force of mercenaries from the Punjab for defence against the encroaching Gurkhas. He settled them at Nagarkot where these staunch and valiant fighters soon succumbed to the local air, local wine and local beauty. So much so that when the Gurkhas invaded and were at the city gates, the imported stalwarts were merrily useless. The years have reduced their shame and identity. They now pass as Nepalis but to this day are known as Nagarkoris. In this story lies the moral; those who taste of the delights of the Kathmandu Valley are forever blissfully enslaved

(Excerpted with permission from My Kinds of Kathmandu, Harper Collins, 1994.)



Rainbow Thamet Opposite



date: 13th october | time: 6:30 pm | venue: Patan Museum, Patan | tickets: 599

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### Olympic Games in Spain in 1992, took his cue from his environment he placed at a respectable 70 out of His life reads like a highland the 172 who ran the marathon Radisson

# **Cellulite and Spot Reduction**

Cellulite is the name given to the pimpled looking skin most often but not uniquely found around the inner and outer thigh area. Cellulite is the result of fat deposits caught under the skin in connective tissue. Men tend to store fat around their midsection and in the general women store fat in the thigh, hip, and abdominal regions for fertility protection. Fat cells in women store estrogen and so once they have been stored they are harder to lose. There are many creams, pills and gadgets on the market which claim to aid in the removal or reduction of cellulite

and many women have spent hundreds of dollars in an attempt to rid themselves of these fat deposits. There are two popular methods of fat reduction active and passive neither work. In fact, there is no known

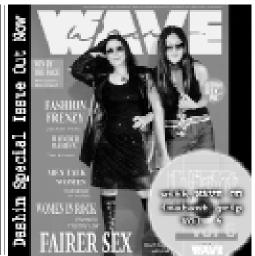
technique short of surgery for removing fat from any particular part of the body. Some passive fat reduction techniques include pulley belts, rollers, sweat suits wraps and the use of saunas and steam baths. Most of these simply increase water loss, (not fat loss) which is replaced in half an hour and done in

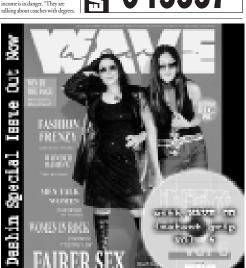
excess can lead to heat exhaustion. In general active fat reduction involves super-exercising the muscle that is directly under the fat deposit, for example sit-ups for the stomach and leg raises for the thighs. Doing hundreds of sit-ups without reducing your over all body fat percentage will result in you having a strong set of abdominal muscles, that you won't be able to see because

of the layer of fat deposit lying on top. So the question is how does one reduce body fat. The answer is simple. Cardiovascular exercise combined with strength and a low fat diet. The only way fat in the hody is used up is if the caloric demand placed on the hody is so great that the fat is needed for fuel. This usually occurs after 25 to 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise e.g.

No amount of wriggling, rubbing, pounding, push-up or sit-ups will remove fat from a specific area. Hard work is the key cycling, jogging or even brisk walking will reduce the fat a lot faster. People who get involved in aerobic type exercise coupled with a strength-conditioning program will trim down all over. If you do this and watch what you eat, great results can be achieved







omeone like myself, I didn't even

running for the country-how could

I afford getting a degree?" laments

Rokaya. If he were to receive proper

Rokaya might do. Says the winner,

"For us Nepalis what foreigners eat as

breakfast serves as the main meal for

the whole day-think what we could

training, there is no telling what

have enough to eat and was still



IN TRUTH, THEY HAVE APPEARED BY TAX & YETH.

SOME THOUSAND MILIES Away From Home...

Personal division (Little disciplinary, 2004), reside Personal

Management Reals (School Falls of Feb Properties).

Our Supposition Could in Endowation Bradition of East 700 ht. Planta Constalled Landon & Discours Of Pairs .

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### MOVIES

Film South Asia Fifty-one documentaries from Nepal, Pakistan India and Bangladesh. Back-to-back screenings all day, 4-7 October, Russian Cultural Centre. Tickets Rs 25 per screening, available at Suwal Music n' Movies, Lazimpat; Mandala Book Point, Kantipath; Saraswati Book Shop, Pulchowk; Patan Dhoka Kitab Pasal; Himal Association, Patan Dhoka. Schedule and more info at Himal Association. 542544, www.himalassociation.org/fsa

In Search of Shangri La Photos by Nepali and European photographers. Until 12 October, 10am-6pm, National Art Council,

Babermahal. Organised the Nepal Photographic Society and Eco Himal. Paintings and sculptures by Batsa Gopal Vaidya and Shashi Shah. 14 September-17 October, 11am-6pm. 411122 Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 411122

Women artists Nineteen women artists from the two-day spot-painting event at Bungamati, Lalitpur display their works. Proceeds go to a training course for women in craft skill development. 13-14 October, Hotel Yak &Yeti. 248999

Classical music Every full moon at the Kirateswor temple, Gaurightat, Pashupati. Next on 7 October, 4.00pm. Organised by the Shree Kirateshwar Sangeetashram. Fourth Momo Festival Unlimited helpings from 20 kinds of momos with live music. Momo-making, eating contests, door prizes. Rs 350 over 4'6" includes complementary beer. Rs 200 under 4'6", with complementary coke or ice cream. 6 October, Bakery Café,

Bowling for all Strikes for Rs 75, 6-12 October, Hotel Shahenshah International.

Live music Tuesday, Friday nights at Rum Doodle Restaurant, 414336 Live acoustic music Dinesh Rai and Deependra every Friday at the Himalatte Café.

Cadenza Saturday evening live jazz at Upstairs, Lazimpat. 7.30pm-10pm. Rs 200

Barbeque lunch with complementary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children Saturdays and Sundays at the Godavari Village Resort. 560675

Le Cafe de trekkers New French restaurant with a selection of fine wines and cocktails. French and Tibetan cuisine in a pleasant atmosphere. Jyatha, Thamel.

Patan Museum Café Mixed menu, garden seating. Lunch only, 11am-2pm. 25 percent off with Summit Card, 526271

All-new at Dwarika's! Krishnarpan Nepali ceremonial four-course lunch, \$13, daily Three-course course set lunch daily at the Toran Garden Restaurant, \$11, Friday Night Sekuwa with fusion music by Himalayan Feelings. Special October price: Rs 555 per person, Rs 1,010 per couple, All prices nett, 479488

Dine with the birds and butterflies Chef Sher Singh BBQ, kababs, tandoori, other traditional cuisine Farm House Café overlooking Shiyapuri Reserve, Park Village Resort,

Sandwiches Over the Rainbow American Diner has reopened. Fifth Avenue sandwiches, full meals at backpacker prices. Opposite Pilgrims Book House, Thamel. 42651 Barbeque Dinner with music by Las Sonidos Latinos. Friday nights through October. Rs 500 per adult, Rs 250 per child, plus tax. Summit Hotel. 521810

Two for one International buffet lunch-main courses, on-site cooking, seven kinds of dessert, eight kinds of salad and dressings. Rs 700 plus tax, this month two lunches

for the price of one Garden Terrace Spaltee Crowne Plaza 273999 Splash Bar and Grill New fifth-floor outlet with panoramic view of city and surrounding hills. Starting 28 September at the Radisson, 411818

Kolkata to Kathmandu With recipes from the famous Sonargaon restaurant in Kolkata, taste kalkori kebab, dal sonal gaon, murg malal kebabs and more. Hotel De L'Annapurna. 221711

Dwarika's Breathtaking Escape Until end-December! Two nights, afternoon tea, cocktail, dinner, breakfasts,

massage. \$155 per couple nett. 479488 A day for yourself Swim in heated indoor swimming pool, steam room, sauna, Jacuzzi, bowling and other sports. 20 percent discount for non-members. Hotel Shahenshah International

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

### NEPALI WEATHER







This late monsoon surge took us all by surprise and the

reinforced each other and brought this vast band of

those planning treks is that the band is now being

without significant post-monsoon precipitation. But it

clouds that stretches from the Arabian Sea right up to













Corruption, Governance, and International Cooperation: Essays and Impressions on Nepal and South Asia Devendra Raj Pandey Transparency International Nepal, Kathmandu, 2001

Pandey suggests that civil society can help increase transparency in Nepal in particular. He also asks what role development cooperation, donors and conditionality can play in controlling graft and helping governance reform in Nepal.

Asian Commitment: Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and South-East Asia David Snellgrove Orchid Press, Bangkok, 2000 Rs 3,560 An autobiographical account of the travels and studies of a lifetime. Snellgorve

deals with, among others, the maritime empire of Srivijava, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of east Java, the history and culture of the Khmer civilisation, and the role of

Islam through the Malay-Indonesian archipelago.



Buddhist Daily Ritual: The Nitya Puja in Kathamndu Valley Shrines Gregory Sharkey Orchid Press, Bangkok, 2001 Re 1 112

A comprehensive look at devotional rituals in Newar Buddhist viharas, this study assesses the influence of Vajrayana ideology and the congruity of Newar daily rituals with early Buddhist and Theravada practice. This volume also provides the most complete scholarly study to date if Buddhist Sanskrit hymns and is illustrated with drawings by Manju Thapa, one of Nepal's

foremost living painters

Courtesy Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 227711, mandala@ccsl.com.np

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5-11 OCTOBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES

# **High fliers**

### From October to April, hot-air balloons are the way to go.

ix AM in Sallghari, Bhaktapur after a night of un-seasonal post-monsoon showers. As the fix it to the ground. The group first rays of the sun break over the hurries in to fill up six-and-a-half by four-and-a-half feet wicker basket that Valley, a crowd of curious onlookers gathers to watch the first flight of the carries six passengers, an altimeter, a barometer, VHF and UHF radios, and season for Nepal's only commercial hot air balloon flight by Balloon Sunrise Nepal. The flight team takes notes on the wind direction as the smaller pilot balloon gently glides into the morning air. The larger 90 ft by 60 ft rip-stop nylon hot air balloon season has begun. balloon is slowly getting ready for take-off as the burner beneath it pumps 210,000 cubic feet of Liquid Petroleum Gas and a pinch of

ALOKTUMBAHANGPHEY

nitrogen into it. A small group of

tourists eagerly waits for the captain.

board the wicker basket that will take

them floating to about 6,000 ft above

the Valley. The weather is exception-

ally clear this autumn morning and

view of the Himalaya, including

Everest in all her morning glory

the flight promises a grand hird's eve

The balloon has now been filled

Now Open

AND THE REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS.

had december between one of

PRODUCT THE CAPPEL PROPERTY OF

Suneil N Singh Thapa's order to

a global positioning system (GPS). After going through a brief landing exercise and last-minute instructions the ground crew frees the ropes that anchor the balloon to the ground. The In a country whose scenery is worth paying a king's ransom to see,

this is a great enterprise. And though in Nepal every successful business is

copied endlessly, the six-year-old

company that offers hot air balloon

started by Phintso Lama, owns two

reached its 1,000 hour flight limit.

The other is going strong at just over

If you're thinking of getting into

380 hours flying time to its credit.

the act, be warned. It's an expensive

balloons, one of which recently

flights over the Valley. The company,

Balloon Sunrise Nepal is the only

accoutrements costs \$100,000. It is carries enough fuel to be airborne

much cheaper to simply take a trip-\$195 for foreigners, and IRs 4,500 for SAARC citizens for a one-hour flight. Not cheap either, but this gets you transportation to the take off site, breakfast, and a certificate to show off to friends. Some times, the winds carry the balloon further than expected-but no fear, your craft for two-and-a-half hours. "This is the oldest and safest means of air travel but in case anything should happen, every flyer has an insurance

coverage of \$20,000, like for

commercial domestic flights,"

Captain Thapa tells his passengers.

was a captain in the Royal Nepal

Suneil Narayan Singh Thapa

Army until he took a hot-air balloon

flight in 1996. He was hooked. The

next year he quit the army and went

to train for his private pilot license

in Melbourne. Two years down the

line, he was abroad again, to get his

California. This is Captain Thap first season in full command-after almost five years and some 300 hours of ballooning—and he looks thrilled

As the balloon slowly gains height, floating with the wind, the Valley below looks like a patchwork of Lego art interspersed with lush green carpets. To the east is the sun rising over Nagarkot and to the north, the mountains changing shades from misty blue to majes golden. The Langtang range comes into view and there, just on the horizon, Everest hovers into view with her pre-winter patches of snow and rocks. Climbing at an average speed of 600 ft per minute, the balloon will soon reach a height of 6,000 ft above the Valley. "Part of the adventure of balloon flying is not knowing what your final destination is," says Captair Thana, narrating a trip when they wer blown out of the Valley to Dhading. But this is not really a problem, as the retrieval crew is always in contact by radio and can be told where to come for the pickup. The hour passes by so swiftly, one barely notices the balloon being gently lowered down. "I though I was afraid of heights, but it was so peaceful," says one flyer after her feet are back on terra firma. The whole affair is incredibly smooth—from being airborne to landing, there is nothing jerky about the experience.

Thus comes the flight to an end, with a prayer praising the wind for its softness, the sun for its blessing, yourself for flying so high and so well in your laughter and setting you back gently on to Mother Earth

response her with their fiftings

We of Climate requestors with a test, but year moving require

recipes ofto come from

becamilities showed of China.



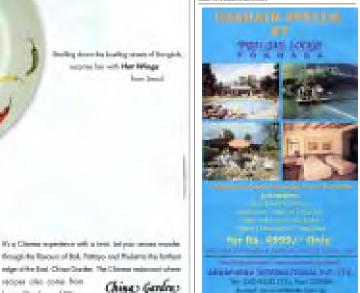
the Catalonian Autonomous Region of Spain is welcomed on 28 September by Honorary Consul of Spain, Ambica Shrestha at Dwarika's Hotel.



DHULIKHEL MEETING: Bel Prasad Shrestha, Mayor of Dhulikhel with Gert Meinecke of the Royal Danish Embassy and vice-chancellor of Kathmandu University, Suresh Raj Sharma at the Quality Education Proiect Evaluation Report Presentation in Dhulikhel on 2 October



BHUTANESE REFUGEES: Bhutan Peoples' Party organised a press onference 30 September to address issues surrounding the murder of their leader RK Budathoki last month.



man to the first blood think had

5-11 OCOTBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES



**Under My Hat** by Kunda Dixit

# Let's not do it

banned sex, and according to a Reuters News Agency dispatch datelined Sheselweni, those violating the edict will be slapped a fine of one cow to be paid by each of the perpetrators. Now, why didn't we think of that one before? However, let me quickly add that we should not despair because

it is never too late to start. It is true that under certain circumstances and the under the right weather conditions, the early bird has been known to get the worm, but it is also true what they say: if you are a bird get up early, if you are worm, sleep late.

In our own case, His Majesty's Government needs to get the Ministry of Copulation and Livestock to gird its lions like Swaziland has done, and in one deft stroke throw two stones at one bird to solve our country's population explosion while at the same time reinvigorating the dairy industry.

Like Nepal, Swaziland is also a landlocked kingdom sandwiched like a stone between two yams. And as with Nepal, the Swazi human population is racing to keep up with the kingdom's livestock numbers. For the moment, according to Reuters, Swaziland's sex ban only applies to interaction programmes between humans, but we gather it may soon be extended to cattle and goats.

There is of course the slight problem of enforce-

ment, and Swaziland, which we are told is the only absolute monarchy in Africa, has solved this ingeniously by (what else?) passing an executive order. That should do the trick. But although such a decree may work

among the law-abiding Swazis, it will be more difficult to implement a ban among freedom-loving Nepalis who cherish and value the basic human right to have not infrequent interaction programmes in full office attire. Considering that our national parliament could not

scenes that will greet a Sex-Ban Bill in parlia-

We can only speculate at present which parties will be against the proposed ban, but it is my educated guess that it will be the

same people who opposed the draconian Armed Police Force Ordinance and

brought the house down in the process.

legislation alone is not going to be enough to enforce

celibacy in this country. Not even the deterrence of the

penalty of two cows per couple is going to stop people

from hanky panky, they can just round up the cattle

from the herd that is always sunning itself on Narayan

Gopal Chowk every weekday at rush hour. Something more cunning needs to be done. We must outwit the

people if we are serious about national abstinence.

What? Can't hear you...you're not serious. Send all Nepali interlocutors to Swaziland and feed them to

But it must be stressed that an anti-sex

conduct its regular business for two months because Niki Lauda kept interrupting, and MPs against land reform resorted to gheroing the indulging brickbats

while the

inister spoke,

the kind of wild

was in. Almost everything had been looted already, but they were quarding the most important possession: a Landrover, their only way out. The car had been immobilised by disabling the fuel pump. The gunmen figured it out, fixed the car and drove off. Ram decided to make a run for it and headed He finally reached Uganda, then Kenya and finally India, Ram lost all his savings, but is back in

an experience that still gives me nightmares," he told us. "I have seen what such violence does to people, and I hope I will never have to witness anything like that



