



change the rules of origin: either capping percent cap on imported material content imported material content, or fixing local value addition.

India also wants a safeguard clause giving it the power to suspend and eventually cancel preferential treatment for the product in question.

ince the 1996 Indo-Nenal trade

25 billion. But renewal of the treaty.

ber, appears to be in jeopardy.

which expires at midnight on 5 Decem-

Officials from the two countries

have met four times to iron out the main

sticking point: India's worry that there

exports of certain items, suggesting that

these are third-country goods pretend-

ing to be Nepali products. "There has

main issues: rules of origin and safeguards against surge," one negotiator

been absolutely no progress on the two

Here's where the negotiations are stuck:

India has proposed two formulae to

has been an unnatural increase in

treaty. Nepal's exports to India

have grown five-fold to about Rs

Nepali negotiators seem undecided on how to respond, and also about the nature of the technicality we want in place, Commerce Minister Purna Bahadur Khadka even took the same flight back to New Delhi from Doha with his Indian counterpart Murasoli Maran to see if he could untie the knot. Officials say that unless there was a political breakthrough at the Khadka-Maran talks, it is unlikely

that the treaty can be salvaged. Meanwhile, the Indians have been turning on the heat. They nearly walked out of the last round of joint secretary level talks "because nothing was moving Nepal apparently had no response at the talks to the Indian proposal for a 50

on our exports to India, or a 50 percent local value addition threshold. At present there is a roughly 20 percent value addition requirement for goods seeking

duty-refunds on exports to Indian markets. Nepali officials who had initially opposed a formula on value addition proposed by Nepal's Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and India's Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), are now said to have decided that could be the way to go. But India now wants value-addition calculation done differently.

Indian officials are under pressure from their manufacturers of vegetable ghiu, acrylic yarn, copper wires and steel pipes, who say a surge in Nepali exports of these items since 1996 has destroyed their business. They've already lobbied for anti-dumping duties on acrylic and zinc oxide and local taxes in some states. They say the Nepali products have high third-

country content, and there has been an explosion in the entry of these items

Koch G36, the Colt M16, and rifles made

by FN Herstal and Galil. "This is not like

If that is true, then the weapor

nspicuous by its absence from the

shortlist is the Russian Kalashnikov, the

famous AK-47 which cost under \$500. The

army wants to standardise its arsenal, and is

trying to switch from 7.76mm to 5.56mm

calibre weapons. The 5.56mm give a soldie

With the ceasefire in danger of being

broken, the \$70 million question is: can this

country to afford to splurge on weapons, or

is it going to buy only what is appropriate

more fire-power, while the 7.76mm has

o our conditions and cheap."

buying a new CD," one army source told us.

"The new weapon needs to be rugged, suited

The Indians had been complaining about this for about a year, but it appears that Nepal failed to gauge the extent of Indian anger about the 1996 treaty. "Now we are trapped," says industrialist Binod Chaudhary. "If the government accepts the Indian proposal, trade will regress to pre-1996 and our exports will be doomed."

Others argue that a few exporters who benefit from questionable "exports" are holding Nepal's trade with India nostage, and sabotaging the country's industriali-

INTERVIEW

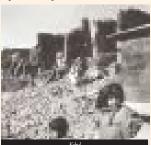
# A PROXY-FREE ZONE

epal should not be turned into another Afghanistan." It has become irresistible for politicians of every hue to proclaim those words from pulpits across the land.

They mouth the words, but it is doubtful if they have studied the history of how multi-ethnic Afghanistan entered such a hopeless vortex of violence and destruction. A lot had to do with failed governance within Afghanistan, its fickle alliances and frequent back-stabbing. Sound familiar?

Lest we forget, these intractable internal rivalries were largely stoked and fomented by Afghanistan's neighbours for their own short-term advantage. The Afghans were proxies of regional powers who in turn were the proxies of the super powers. Bin Laden used to be an American proxy. Mullah Omar was a Pakistani proxy. Ahmed Shah Masond was a

As Michael Ignatieff warns in this issue (p 13) proxy wars are easy to fight, but the danger is that proxies run away with their own agenda, and then mess up the agenda of those who think they are controlling the proxies. History shows us that in geo-politics, short-term advantage is almost always a long-term disadvantage.



slink away with tails between their legs. This month, the Taleban political structure finally collapsed under the weight of American firepower. Something happened in Afghanistan in the first week of November 2001 that probably marked a turning point in the history of military campaigns. As a response to suicidal terror, we saw the application of a new doctrine of high-tech distance warfare a la Tom Clancy. Twelve years after the Gulf War, we have seen the awesome advances in military hardware and technology which now obviate the need for full frontal invasions, supposedly minimise "collateral

and "friendly" casualties, and allows the conduct of virtual

It was, and is, Afghanistan's great misfortune that it is so

strategic, straddling the crossroads between civilisations. Ever

since the Moghuls rode over the Khyber Pass, all through the

Russo-British Great Game, the disastrous Soviet occupation

for extremists from all over the Islamic world, no one has ever

left Afghanistan alone. This hostile land peopled by fierce

tribes became the graveyard for many invaders who had to

and finally to the present day when the country became a haver

So far so good. But however euphoric the talking heads on CNN may sound. America's war on terror is not over. In fact, it may just be beginning. The Taleban could just dig in and keep fighting a guerrilla war, Afghanistan may be partitioned between north and south. But how is this new high-tech war going to fare in the next phase when it can't be fought by remote

And the most frightening part: al-Qaeda is still loose and it s more enraged than ever before. Is America more secure than it was before the Afghan bombing began. They'd be fooling themselves if they thought so.

Despite all this, if there was a worthy outcome from the deaths of innocents in New York and the misery of millions in Afghanistan, then it must be that one of the most repressive, intolerant and obscurantist regimes on earth has been unseated. Also, the world's only superpower seems to have realised that multilateralism is the way to go and there may be some use for the United Nations after all. (Now maybe Wash ington will finally pay up its UN dues.)

Yet, in our own region, India and Pakistan continue to see the unfolding drama in the Hindu Kush from their own narrow prisms. For them, it's still about Kashmir, Numerous pundits on satellite talk shows continue to rant about how India or Pakistan can earn brownie points from the misfortune of the

other. There are few with the clarity of thought of Indian analyst K Subrahmanyam, who argue that after the Taliban is defeated, everyone's (the US's, India's, Russia's, Pakistan's) common goal should be a moderate Pakistan.

So what lessons for us? Nepali history and geography have parallels with Afghanistan. We are also multi-ethnic, we are strategically located, we also have a history of domestic intrigue and outside meddling, and we are as fiercely independent as the Afghans. Our strength can come from visionary leadership that can show integrity and commitment to economic progress that makes us more self-reliant and in control of our own destiny.

Our squabbling politicians may want to learn the lessons of Afghanistan and resolve not be proxies for anyone for short-term gain. Proxies are expendable, and they are

The forthcoming and much-delayed SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in January will be largely symbolic photo-op. Anything can happen during December. Still, it could be an opportunity to forge a "Kathmandu alliance" to declare Nepal and the smaller South Asians a proxy-free zone.



# A nation in hard labour

Ganga and Jamuna return to their homeland, where more mothers die at childbirth than anywhere else in the world.

he day Siamese twins Ganga and Jamuna arrived as two independent babies in Kathmandu, one in every ten children born in their homeland died before completing their first hirthday. It may look inopportune to talk about this silent catastrophe amidst the celebration of a glorious medical achievement but it is in times of joy that we must not forget

the sorrows of the less fortunate. The maternal mortality rate in Nepal is also one of the highest in the world. More than one quarter (27 percent) of all deaths of women een the ages of 15 and 45 are the result of childbirth complications. In most families, pregnancy i managed according to practices passed down from generation to generation. Almost all deliveries in rural areas are attended by sudenis in the hills and chamains in the tarai-women who have learnt the craft of midwifery by apprenticeship, and have no knowledge of modern medicine or tools. The use of rusted razorblades to cut umbilical cords, and the applica tion of cow-dung to treat birth-

wounds are not uncommon. But between the bleak picture and national attention given to the extraordinary in the metropolis. there is an expanding middle ground where the definition of minimum level of service' is slowly changing. Sutkeri Samagri (a packet of bare necessities to help sudenis do their job) and training of womer paramedics at the village level are wly improving the services available to the newborn and mothers alike While it is true that most health posts in the country lack enough trained personnel and essential supplies, their role in

of utter neglect in the hinterland

cannot be denied. Then there are medical practitioners in urban areas who render valuable service, even though only to those who can afford their fees. It limits the reach of some outstanding physicians, but that still doesn't reduce the importance of their services. After all, every one life saved, or every moment of agony reduced, is an important service. Fach human being is unique and deserves the best treatment. This justifies the tortuous hours of surgery by an international team of

doctors in Singapore on Ganga-

delivering basic health care

Jamuna, and the generous donations made by the citizens of that affluent city-state.

As long as specialised medical ervices aren't being provided at the cost of general health care for every one, public investment in advanced medical facilities need not be questioned. It is a grim reality of this country that a poor sudeni in Achham or an illiterate chamain in Mushaharniya cannot even buy a subsidised packet of Sutkeri Samagri either because she is unaware of it or because it isn't available there at all. Even so, this does not mean that famous gynaecologists like Dr Jun Thana and Dr Supatra Koirala should stop examining expecting mothers in Kathmandu and fly away to some faraway land where they can practice their profession with a

clear conscience But what is it that makes people like Dr Thapa and Dr Koirala get up in the morning and face another gruelling day, often full of frustrations? Money can't be their sole motivation, because they can make more of it almost anywhere else. Serving society is a high-sounding motive, but such

epeated calls for her presence in the ward. She doesn't even have the time to look at the faces of those who come to her more for reassu ance than anything else. Supatra hasn't changed, it's just that now she has become a victim of her own altruism falls flat in front of the professionalism. But that is a compelling argument that when you different story On one of those earlier leisurely cannot provide clean water to drink, a caesarean surgery is no

social service. If their urge was

omfessional excellence, they could

have chosen the company of equally

competent professionals at state-of

the-art facilities in more developed

countries. There must be something

motivates them to do what they do

insurmountable odds. Supatra once

revealed her fount of inspiration

quite unintentionally about nine

In those days, Om Nursing

Home was a modest establishment,

hospital that it has grown into today. Supatra's consultations were

often more like counselling sessions

for nervous couples. Sometimes she

would call expecting mothers and their husbands together and talk

history now. These days, she rushes

from one patient on the examina-

tion table, another standing on the

weighing machine, one more in a

chair, and manages to ward off

calmly about the challenges of

parenthood Sadly all that is

quite unlike the huge private

more, something personal, that

day after day, against seemingly

days, she once cared to ask a ould-be father: what would he like his son or daughter to be. The man pretended to be witty and intoned in mock-seriousness, if it's son, he would want him to be a BP, and if it were a daughter he would want her to be another Supatra. Between the moment the entence was uttered and when Supatra gathered her composure world of emotions passed through her face. "Don't ever wish BP's fate on any one much less on an unborn," she said slowly, her eyes welling up. "Nobody deserves to endure the pain BP

went through."

Whenever I think of Dr upatra Koirala, these are the first two sentences that come to my mind. In the economy of those few words lie hidden the sum of the physical pain, emotional turmoil, intellectual hunger, political frustrations and social rejection that BP Koirala vent through in the last years of his life. Like others born never to die, BP lived through all that, but

Dr Shashank Koirala is an erudite eye specialist, he talks lofrilu about Koirala legacy, and likes to quote Kant to clarify a complex theory of vision. Supatra may be his wife, but she has no such pretensions. Instead, she is much more compelling with her natural simplicity, sincere smile, and earthy wisdom. In the labour-room of Om, attendants aver that Supatra knows hest how to make babies cry as the enter the world. Her touch makes the little ones rend the room with the music of a new human life. What her colleagues probably don't know is that she is equally capable f making grown men cry too.

Koiralas are something akin to

oval commoners in Nepal, much like the political dynasty of the Nehru-Gandhis in India. Supatra could have easily chosen to bask in the glory of her surname alone, particularly after 1990. Or she could have gone into social service mode. Instead, she chose to remain what she trained to be—a consulting gynaecologist for the urban middle class. There is only one lament however; her dedication has bred a popularity that has turned a ounsellor of human souls into just mother famous physician with a high market value. Wonder if BP would have approved. Or, whether Supatra still remembers what she told a would-be father about her

"Nepal and India have so much in common we tend to take each other for granted..." Nepal, as also certain other developments in the internal scene which have wide ramifica. tions. I've seen the resilience and the

Nepali polity, in dealing with these tragic Are there lessons we can draw from the Hrithik Roshan riots?

determination of the Nepali people, the

and momentous events

I think it would be appropriate both in Nepal as well as in India if we draw the appropriate onclusions or lessons from the unfortunat series of events. While one need not dwell on this for ever and ever, I think for thinking people and for decision-makers there are ns that would need to be drawn for future relationships. Only time will tell if we have learnt those lessons

One of the things that the riots and the aftermath showed is that India and Nepal just cannot seem to get anything started because of our mutual hang-ups. Little problems get in the way of bioper things that need to be

A very crucial aspect of this relationship is that the problem is not only on one side. I think that because we have so much in common, we tend to take each other for granted. We assume we know all there is to know, when in fact in our own ways we are both growing up. I think like any relationship, ties between ations need to be worked at and I think both of us have fallen short of the desirable levels of understanding.

So what kind of confidence-building measures should be taken? How about cultural exchanges?

I think at the highest level there is no absence of understanding. Cultural exchanges would help. I am really looking at greater interaction and understanding, particularly between journalists and academics, so both can see the other chan's point of view. We mustn't expect that all points of view will always converge We each have our national priorities and interests. It should not be expected that we agree on everything.

Equally, I think that while our views may not converge on everything, there is no issuenone-on which we have a conflict of interest We should not impute negative motives to the other person in every instance. We should accept people at face value. Neighbours hav to understand each other's problems and perceptions to ensure that they don't transgress each other's interests in any way.

Has something changed after 11 September? Your Foreign Minister came out and called the Tamil Tigers and our Maoists "terrorists". You have tightened security along the Indo-Nepal border, there have been raids on Maoist safe-houses in Siliguri. I think globally there is a heightened awareness of the different forms terrorism can take, and how this affects us. John Donne wrote 400 years ago: "Ask not for whom the bell tolls, for it tolls for thee..." You cannot ompartmentalise terrorism. It is a hydraheaded monster that has its linkages, ramifications all over. I don't want to go into the links the Maoists have with external organisations vho, in turn, might have other links. These

things cannot be seen in isolation. India has been a direct victim of international terrorism for a long time. With regard to your specific query, I don't think there i anything very new that has happened. We have similar problems in India, though in our larger geographical context it may not have the same impact as in Nepal. Our support has always been with the government of Nepal, in combating any movement that seeks to overthrow existing legal institutions by

sever the links between our Maoists

means of the gun.

and yours? I have to honestly answer that given the kinds of movements that take place across the border, say between your Maoists and Indian Maoists, in Iharkhand, in Andhra Pradesh. that would be an empty statement. We don't know if they have interactions, and if so, wha kind of interactions they have. Within the limitations of managing this open border that we are both trying to do, it would be difficult to give any credible assurance on something over which one does not have total control

Is there a way out of the impasse or joint water and river projects?

I think we need to firstly, primarily, dissociate politics from such economic decisions. Nepal has to decide whether collaboration with India in the development of water resources for energy is beneficial to Nepal. And I think once such a decision is taken, the rest must be allowed to move ahead without hindrance. I think it is necessary to have a political consensus in Nepal on this subject. Having said that, we seem finally to be making some progress towards the detailed project report on Pancheswor. The government of India offered as assistance to Nepal the setting up of a small-to-medium hydroelectric plant fo which some sites have been visited. I trust that if those are allowed to move ahead. they will create the level of confidence needed for much more extensive collaboration in water resources.

After the prime minister's visit to Delhi last year things looked rosy. There were no problems at the leadership level, but later things seemed to get stuck in the bureauc racy. Is it a problem of babudom on hoth sides?

I will speak primarily of India. I will say categorically that when a political decision is made, bureaucracy does not obstruct. But, in all fairness to my breed, I should go a little further. Sometimes promises can be made and assurances given without a full analysis of the implications. Now, while I do not claim the Have there been any special moves to Indian bureaucracy to be the sole guardian of national interest, it is our duty to look at all aspects of a question so that any final decision that is taken is taken on the basis of full knowledge of facts. I think political wisdom and statesmanship are essential in resolving issues which can only be resolved with nolitical involvement. But I must emphasis that the majority of issues require in-depth analysis by experts. By-passing this process eventually causes more problems than are

seen to be solved at a given moment of

What are the real reasons preventing the automatic renewal of the 1996 trade treaty. Does it signify that the

Guiral Doctrine is finally dead? As you know the 1996 protocol to the Indo Nepal trade treaty was quite unique in some ects. Now the fact is that in the operation of the treaty in the past five years. India feels that some shortcomings have been evidenced which need to be rectified. There are, I think essentially two areas where some modifications may be necessary. One is with regard to value addition made to products manufactured in Nepal with goods imported from third narries-the foreign material content in good exported from Nepal

The other issue is with regard to a very sudden explosion in exports which could damage selected Indian industries. Let me also say that if you look at the totality of the Indian market, it is possibly quite true that Nepali exports are not of a magnitude which would cause damage to industry as a whole in India. But it could cause damage in significant areas in a manner which causes distress.

Now, with regard to the first issue which I cited, I would also suggest that you may wish to consider as to how much the interest of Nepal, Nepali labour, or your foreign exchange reserves are served by large dollar imports and selling the goods with margina

As to what I believe to be the essence of the Gujral Doctrine, that Indian has a special duty towards her neighbours, I think this certainly holds. This does not mean a one sided relationship, for no relationship can be sustainable on that basis

What memories will you take back from Nenal?

I have enjoyed myself greatly. Hopefully, I have made some friends. I have had some occasion to see some of your very, very heautiful country

(A selection of black-and-white photographs taken by Deb Mukharji in Nepal are reproduced on page 10-11.)

attitude towards the RP Knirala

insecure to work there. There i his alarming trend of "daktar

kutne" in the whole of Nepal.

but especially in the tarai region

As a result, doctors in Hetauda

examinations, there are no able

doctors in most district hospi-

remain in Kathmandu or in the

least security is a bit better.

Whose responsibility is it to

provide security to doctors in

just a small local issue it will

sorry state of our health syste

ultimately make the already

he district hospitals? This is not

oig regional hospitals where at

tals, most doctors wants to

have stopped doing forensic

Institute of Health Sciences

(BPKIHS) we always felt

### LETTERS

### DUBYA AND DEUBA

Indian ambssador to Nepal, Deb Mukharji, is completing his tenure in Nepal and

Nepali Times: By all accounts you have

ambassador posted in Nepal. And yet,

the last two years have been among

the most challenging for our bilateral

Deb Mukharji: Thanks. That is for my friends

These have been very eventful times

for Nepal. How has it been for you?

Indo-Nepal relations have had some ups and

downs in the past year-and-a-half But most

obviously the basic strength and resilience of

themselves. It has also been a period when I

our relations have continued to assert

relations. How did you do it?

in Nepal to judge.

been the least controversial Indian

CK Lal's pathological hatred for Americans is difficult to understand ("Oh, say, can you see Osama and Omar?", #68). Why does he not realise that Nepal gets nothing by supporting countries like Afghanistan, Iraq or Sudan? But if we support the US. Nepal can henefit-look how Pakistan has benefited. It is possible that Sher Rahadur Deuha has som understanding with the Amerilami (matchmaker). Maybe we will get American help to fight the Maoists in Nepal. CK Lal should be hanny that Deuba supported the USA immediatel in its war with Afghanistan. The fundamentalists are helping set up madrasas in Nepal, spread-

ing Islam in a Hindu country Naresh Adhikary Anamnaga

C K Lal has done it again. He criticises the Taleban and al-Qaeda, but unleashes his full wrath, with no stones left unturned upon his favorite target-the Big Bad Wolf of the planet, in his view, the United States of America, Buoved by hot air from such Blame



summarized in two words:

Al Jazeera for a moment or two, maybe he would not be making such a ridiculous statement as America is responsible for the Taleban and the al-Oaeda If CK Lal's point is that America only acts in her own self-interestthen the natural question, is which country doesn't? The solutions to the struggle in Afghanistan is "so elementary" to him that he gets frustrated that the folks at Langley 'don't get it". But what does our boy wonder have to offer... well, nothing, of course! He would rather wallow in guilt, self-pity,

Chomsky, he is more than happy once again to ride the jet-stream of anti-American hatred. The whole point of his article can be 'America... Bad'. If CK I all were to tune out of

introspection and soul-searching than provide concrete ways of

Their leader was Hitler. There were people then, like Neville Chamberlain, who thought that a ivilised dialogue mixed with a gentle dose of appeasement would be enough to melt Hitler's neart and save civilisation from ruin. But in the end, it took force defeat this evil. Already in Kabul, with the initial success of the allied forces, the Taleban are on the run, there is music on the streets, the women have started o unveil their burkhas in defiance, men are lining up outside barber shops to get rid of their Taleban-mandated beards, and children are flying kites again, and people are shouting "America rica" in utter expression of

liberation the Afghan neonle, and

Roughly fifty years ago, an

evil not unlike the al-Qaeda and

the Taleban was visited upon this

world in the name of Nazism

idding the world of terror

by email

Finally Daniel I ak has shown his true colours ("Two months after" #68). He pretends to sympathise with the objects that he covers

gratitude. And CK Lal has either

for the western media, but his loyalty remains with his subject furthering western interests in developing countries. Lak should read his fellow columnist CK Lal ("Oh sav can you see Osama and Omar", #68) to understand why US policies in these parts of the world are despised so much. If the United States practiced what it preaches, there would

Bhanimandal

have been no Taliban, no al-Oaeda and no hin Laden and 9-11 would not have taken place at all. America needs to correct itself rather than keep bombing Iraq, Sudan or Afghanistan at its whims and fancies. Instead of writing western propaganda in his widely read column, it would be better for Mr Lak to expose the hypocrisy of Britain and America. Satyendra Shakya

Re: "Deuba's gamble", #67. Looks like Nepal is seeing some rays of hope amidst chaos with the government and Maoists talking again and the Maoists giving up at least some of their demands. seriously hope that something positive will come out of this. But I am really aggravated and vexed by Mr Girija Koirala's attitude. Here is a guy who is incompetent and completely clueless, who is nungry for power and whose greed exceeds his ego, going around asking people to rise against the Magists when there is a peace process being underaken by his own party member When will be finally accept his ailure and let Nepal move

#### D Karmacharva New Jersey, USA

PRACHANDA Thanks to Puskar Bhusal ("Prachanda comes alive", #68) or exposing Comrade Prachanda for what he is: a failed, phoney evolutionary who has brought untold suffering to the Nepali people, and set in motion an rreversible brutalisation of our society and nation. The fellow hasn't learnt his lesson. He wants to take on the Indian Army. Then he has the cheek to wax eloquer about Karisma Manandhar, She

DAKTAR KIITNE

agree fully with Dr Milan Piva

"How much is too much?", #68).

had worked in Inaruwa Hospital

and even though most people in

should immediately disown him P Shrestha

even sorrier.

incorrectly identified Queen Juliana as being absent as she was giving birth to future crown nrince Willem-Alexander It was the present Queen. Her Maiesty Queen Beatrix, -Ed

Dr Amrit Rai.

Copenhagei

CORRECTION

An editing error in a sentence about the 1967 banquet for King Mahendra in the Netherlands

Unnoticed, Nepal has emerged as a model for low cost, reliable world-class blindness prevention care in the world.

to first establish the necessary

infrastructure. It was only after

1990 that attention was given to

nhancing the quality of services.

2020 programme-part of a global

drive against avoidable blindness

Under the programme, Nepal is

and provide surgical supplies to

cataract, trachoma, childhood

olindness and other eye diseases.

But to meet that goal, we

ophthalmologists and four times

echnicians in the next 15 years.

Today, Nepal produces only an

average of five eye specialists a

year. The national drive against

blindness in Nepal and the world,

paid attention to the number of

urgical procedures and over-

ooked the quality. The same

national survey found that the

onventional type of cataract

surgery where the cataract was

moved and patients were given

ery thick glasses—half were not

ctually wearing their glasses and

vere thereby functionally blind

Owing to the lack of proper

nodern equipment cataract

ere very high..

urgical related complications

'ilganga Eye Centre (TEC)

arted an intraocular lens

production lab in 1994 with

As an answer to the problem

sistance from the Fred Hollows

cataract, the leading cause of

eed to produce 400 more

nore supporting staff and

obliged to train ophthalmologists

eliminate leading eye diseases like

Now, the government has launched an ambitious Vision

#### HEMLATA RAI

wenty years ago, if Nepalis developed cataracts most either went blind or went to India for treatment. Today, the scene is reversed: thousands of Indian patients with cataracts and other eye disease come to specialised centres in Nepal or treatment.

It is one of those littleknown success stories of Nepal's development in the past 20 years that the country is now a regional leader in eye care. In 1981, there was only one eye hospital in Nepal, today there are 17 hospitals and 32 other eye care centres. In addition, six overnment hospitals have full fledged ophthalmologic departments. While doctors are still in short supply, there are 85 eye doctors for Nepal's 23 million population, there are 175 rained ophthalmic assistants. 335 specialised eye care paramedics.

While impressive, these numbers still do not meet the colossal need for eye care in Nepal. Like most developing countries in the region, the revalence of blindness is quit high, (Nepal .8 percent, India .) percent, Myanmar .9 percent. Bangladesh 1, Sri Lanka .5 percent): children often suffer eve infections which can easily be cured but due to lack of antibiotics many children go blind Cataract is still common and despite impressive strides to control it blindness due to vitamin A deficiency still exists

A National Blindness Survey in 1981 found that 80 percent of able or curable blindness, cataract, trachoma and glaucoma is the three leading causes of

blindness. The survey was a Foundation of Australia. The landmark exercise in the develop laboratory is now run by an alling world, and clearly identified Nepali team to produce world ne inaccessibility of eye care ndard intraocular lenses to be services as a major problem in the Third World. To improve used within Nepal and to be xported to southeast Asia. ccessibility to eye-care, zonal eye ospitals were set up in the 1980s

The Fred Hollows Founda ion was set up to carry on the work of Australian visionary Prof Fred Hollows who thought it was appalling that people in the developing world go blind from cataracts because they didn't have access to affordable reatment. He set out to provide local doctors in these countries, with the skills and tools they needed to give people back their sight.
One such doctor, Sanduk

Ruit, Medical Director of the Nepal Eye Program (synonymou with Tilganga Eye Centre) pioneered the modern cataract surgery: removing only the louded lens and implanting ar intraocular lens into the natural capsule.

"With this method the sight f an eye can be restored near to the normal level " says Ruit whose team proved that modern cataract surgery can be done safely and hygienically in developing countries like Nepal, Eritrea, Vietnam, China and Myanmar with results equal to those obtained in Australia and throughout the world.

Ruit is driven by a dream to have a self-sustaining eye care program throughout Nepal. TEC tresses a strict pricing tier, cross subsidies and high quality care. "A barefoot patient coming from Sindhunalchowk and a member of Parliament get the same treatment," says Ruit who as a general medical doctor attending an eve camp in western Nepal

# **Death in the family**

KANDAHAR - For any of us doing potentially dangerous work, the death of a colleague is a sobering and tragic experience. Whether you deliver life saving food and shelter to the innocent victims of violence, or provide information to the comfortable classes of the west, you don't expect

If you're lucky, you have been formally trained to cope with what are known as hostile environments. On the long list of inadequate euphemisms dreamt up by bureaucrats, that one sits near the top. Taking such a course means—for most of us in the media—going to the English countryside for a weekend of war stories too much alcohol and a staged kidnapping by ex special

It's not the sort of thing that prepares you for much, let alone life threatening situations.

I doubt that such training was much help to the late

Henry Burton of Reuters news agency, who along with three colleagues are the latest media victims of this wretched war in Afrhanistan, Henry, his cameraman and two others were dragged from a car as it drove through a nasty bit of territory east of Kabul. It was always a bad stretch of road, we old Afrhan hands said when we heard the news. That's small comfort to anyone, but it was something we had to say.

Frighteningly, it seems as if the four victims of this atrocity were singled out because they were journalists, representatives of a western media that has few friends in Afghanistan at the moment. We'll probable never know who killed them, it could have been rogue Taleban or Northern Alliance fighters, bandits, or al-Qaeda supporters from the Middle Fast-it really doesn't matter. There's no shortage in this

We all rushed here to catch the last of the Taleban. Life seems to go on, the murder of colleagues notwithstanding.



country, or anywhere else, of people willing to resort to murder to settle

scores, real or imagined. It seems as if the Reuters people fell victim to that.

We got the chilling news from the east here in Taleban-controlled southern Afghanistan as it happened. Along with 120 other journalists, I'm a slightly unwilling guest of the retreating Islamic militia at the moment. Belatedly, it seems as if the Taleban wanted to get its message out before it

fades from the maps of Afrhanistan. So in a chaotic frenzy, journalists sought and fought over visas to come here. All thoughts of safety and security were secondary to getting here. The nature of the beast, but not a very encouraging sign of our maturity. The deaths elsewhere in the country

gave us all a reality check, but it didn't last long. In Spin Boldak, amid sprawling refugee camps and smugglers bazaars the world's press is gathered to cover the Taleban's last stand. It's an alluring story and many here have waited a long time for the merest glimpse inside the minds of the militia that has ruled Afghanistan for the past five years. The turbaned men and boys with Kalashnikovs have a disarming simplicity and sense of humour. They laugh and joke when you take their photograph. They clutch their rifles fiercely on demand. They talk wistfully of how the dreariness and violence of this life will soon give way to the pleasures and seductions of the next.

Meanwhile, their leaders shout into walkie-talkies and generally behave like part of a regime that's on its last legs In the market, contraband dealers and truck drivers tell you they're used to authority rising and collapsing on a fairly regular basis. Eventually,

makes its deal with the smugglers and life goes on. Today the Taleban, tomorrow some other group

they say, each new government

that has as many drawbacks for the people of Afghanistan, And here we are covering it all. Is this what being a journalist is all about? It's a question we can no longer ask Henry



Dr Sanduk Ruit of the Nepal Eye Program pioneered modern cataract surgery: removing only the clouded lens and implanting an intraocular lens into the natural capsule (seen being done at left). This technique is now used by Nepali doctors to restore sight to thousands of blind patients from Eritrea to Cambodia. Here, Dr Ruit (second from right) speaks to a Tibetan cataract patient in Lhasa through an interpreter.

of blindness. "Opthalmology is a high tech branch of medicine, advancing very quickly. At the Centre, we

NATION

try to adapt the latest technology but still keep our feet on the ground, keeping Nepali condi-tions in mind." Today, TEC runs a griefcounselling centre and an eye

bank for cornea donations About 30 percent of patients receive free treatment, 50 percent are paying patients, and the rest are subsidised. It has started outreach centres in Ramechap and Dhading where eve health care facilities are lacking.

The production of intraocular lenses was a turning point for Nepal's fight against cataract blindness. TEC produces 100,000 one-piece lenses year for just Rs 450 (about \$6) each whereas the same quality lens costs \$150 in Australia. Presently, 95 percent of catarac operations are completed with implantation of intraocular lens In neighbouring India and Bangladesh, the percentage is only 50 and 35 respectively. What is the reason for this

remarkable success story? Dr Ram Prasad Pokharel, pioneer ve care activist in Nepal, has no doubt about the reason: "Nonnterference from the governmen allowed the sector to explore the development potentiality to the fullest." Pokharel's Nepal Netra yoti Sangh (NNJS) is now also offering its eye care expertise to oatients outside Nepal.

Major eve-care institutions in e country like Til Ganga and Netra Ivoti are non-go ral entities and run 16 zonal nospitals. These institutions have een successful in maximising cost effectiveness of donors funds and instead of depending on sale of expensive services to richer clients they have targeted attracting a large turnover to reduce the price for eye atment.

The economy of scale means that corrective eye-surgery in Nepal can cost between Rs 2,000-Rs 6,000, whereas a similar surgery in New Delhi can cost between Rs 20,000-Rs 40,000. The reason the treatment is better and cheaper here is the efficiency of Nepali ophthalmologists. According to

an unofficial evaluation, the number of cataract surgeries performed by an ophthalmologis per year in Nepal is 1,062, while t is about 300 in India and 150 at the ophthalmologic department at the government-run TU
Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu. Impressive as these achieve-

nents are, the distribution of eve are centres in Nepal is still ineven. The Central Developnent Region where Kathmandu i situated has seven full-fledged eve hospitals while rest of the country is left with ten hospitals imilarly out of the 17 hospitals, nore than half are in the tarai. while the high mountain belt does not have a single hospital. The high concentration of

ve-care institutions in the tarai nave put Nepalis at a disadvantage because the hospitals are mped with patients from northern Bibar and Uttar Pradesh across the border. In a country where health awareness and the concept of consulting doctors are unfamiliar, Indian patients are usually taking advantage of the inexpensive and high quality ervices available in Nepal I aban Eye Hospital and Lumbini Eye

Hospital, centres of excellence, serve locals as well as Indian patients from Ribar and LIP Data show that of the 80.000 cataract operations conducted in Nepali ve hospitals last year, 70 sercent were on Indian patients This trend has over-burdened hospitals near the Indian border. Last year, Lahan Eye Hospital, one of the most popular with Indian patients conducted 28.835 cataract operations with its five

"Unless all the hospitals run

anhthalmologists

outreach programmes, poorer Nepalis are not going to benefit much." said Nabin Kumar Rai. Medical Coordinator of Tilganga Eye Centre. TEC conducted half of its 7,300 cataract surgeries at mobile eye camps last year. Nepal Netra Iyoti Sangh (NNIS) sources said that only 40 percent of the eople who get care are served by hospitals at present, while the rest are treated at free mobile eye camps conducted by various organisations. The researchers also found that word of mouth was the main source of information for 80 percent of these natients who eventually go

### Fear of flying

The crew of a private airline narrowly escaped an accident in Jumla this week when a bird hit the windscreen, shattering it and spattering the pilot in blood. Feathered creatures have long been a menace at Tribhuvan International Airport. But it appears that another kind of four-footed trouble is causing concern in airports in other parts of the country. In Tumlingtaar. Sankhuwasabha, in east Nepal, airport authorities and the local municipality have got together in a campaign against canines straying onto the runway. Officials say the stray dogs are dangerous to domestic flights to and from Kathmandu and Biratnagar. They don't want to take chances, so they have taken to poisoning them. More than fifty have been killed so far and animal lovers will agree-it isn't the most humane way of aviation management

#### Also in civil aviation news...

Nepal's civil aviation sector is getting some money to brush up its awareness about European industry practices concerning airworthiness, safety and standards. With air connections between Nepal and Europe expanding, the industry definitely needs to know how Europeans manage and control their air traffic, as well as their take on product maintenance and customer support practices. The European Commission has signed six new financing agreements with Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, and Thailand for the EU-Asian Civil Aviation Co-operation project. The total pie is Euro 30 million. The EU press statement does not say how much each country will

### Muna Madan in Tibetan

Late poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota would be happy. His masterpiece Muna Madan, long considered a Nepali classic, is likely to be translated into Tibetan. That's what Han Shuli, vice chairman of the Literary Federation of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China told dignitaries and artists attending a reception marking the 93<sup>rd</sup> birth anniversary of Devkota. *Muna Madan* is a tragic tale of a young couple, the husband Madan who travels to Lhasa to trade, only to return to Nepal to find that the wealth he has earned has no meaning because his beloved wife Muna is dead. One of Muna Madan's best remembered insights is in the line: Maanis thulo dila le hunccha, iaata le huundaina (Man becomes great by his deeds not by his birth).

### Positive news

Nepali documentary filmmakers are coming of age. Four Years in Hell, a documentary about a young girl infected with HIV and her contribution to the promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness raising, has won the UNICEF Prize at the 28th Japan Prize International Education Program Contest in Tokyo. Says producer Anil Rijal of the Kathmandu-hased Young Asia Television Negal "I hope the film informs people that HIV-infected people have a right to work, live normal and happy lives."

### Barring children

Nenal has decided to relocate all children living in the country's Tuesday, the 12th International Child Rights Day. The children will be taken to different centres of the Nepal Children's Organisation, five have already been brought to the organisation's Kathmandu office. A Child Reform Home has also been set



up at Sano Thimi Bhaktanur. The government has not said how many children are currently living in prison around the country



international outcry. It may be

not alone in witnessing the

instructive to recall that Nepal was

abolition of multiparty democracy

luring the turbulent 1960s or in

welcoming its return three decades

could hasten the fall of the Berlin

Wall, the beginning of George W

surely help raise new fortresses in

forms and fervour that cannot be

Bush's New Kind of War could



RAMYATA LIMBU

awaraj Timsina, from Siser in Okhaldhunga had just paid his fare and was alighting from a microbus at the bustling Koteswor junction on morning a month ago. He climbed back on to say some thing to his aunt and uncle who were also on board. He alighted again.

Bus driver Umanath Pudasaini, a Nuwakot resident felt a bump beneath the wheels and heard people shouting that someone had been run over. "I then drove off, dropped the rest of the passengers at Naya

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CONTRACTOR OF

1 Baneswor and turned myself in at the police station in Gaushala," Pudasaini told us at the Hanuman Dhoka District Police Office.

intentionally," says Hem Prasad Several evewitness accounts in Timsina, Nawaraj's uncle who the next day's papers accused the driver of intentionally backing the like many Nepalis believes that drivers intentionally kill wounded bus to run over the wounded people they have run over so they Timsina Pudasini and other eve lon't have to pay hefty hospital bills and get away with only Rs. witnesses say it was an accident "I don't think it was intentional 17,500 in funeral expenses and The man fell. The driver pan-However, the Vehicles and icked, backed agitatedly, running Transportation Act 2049 (1993) over the man by accident." says Raj Bikram Kathayan, who was does not give any immunity to

is determined to file a case of

murder. "Several eyewitnesses

have confirmed with the police

that my nephew was run over

drivers who run over and kill

people on the street. In fact,

But the deceased man's family

Berlins by Blazer Brazer Brasilian (Ph.

security shot has building

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September.

It is an enduring myth that it is cheaper to kill, than just injure a person in a traffic accident. But is that what actually happens? .....

nowhere does the act mention that drivers can get away with just paying the oft-quoted Rs 17,500. "It does mention third party insurance, which many police, lawyers, and concerned professionals are not aware of, savs advocate Lav Kumar Mainali Article 163 of the Act, which

deals with the Payment of Medical and Obsequies Expen and Compensation, says: "If any loss or damage is caused to any person from vehicle accident, the driver or owner or manager of vehicle shall be ordered to pay to the victim the following amount as medical expenses and compen sation: In case of death of a person, the heir of the deceased person shall be paid with ten thousand rupees as obsequies expenses and as compensation the amount equivalent to Third Party Insurance payable for such death according to this Act, if no Third Party Insurance has een procured.

According to Clause 55 of the ewer Vehicles and Transport Regulations 2055 (1998), the wner or manager of the vehicle shall procure Third Party Insurance equivalent to Rs 300,000. "The law does make provision for compensation evond Rs 17,500 and the kin of the deceased has a legal right to claim it, but many people are not aware of this," says Mainali.

So .if Rs 10.000 is for obsequies expenses, where did the additional figure of Rs 7500 come from? "From what I understand," says Mainali, "this became an accepted practice after the courts in the absence of the Vehicles and Transport Regulations (which appeared almost six years after the Act), sought the advice of insurance companies regarding Third Party Insurance. They made a rough estimate and came up with the figure of Rs 7,500.

That's been the practice so far. Although it is not mentioned anywhere in the Act or the

person who dies in a traffic accident should receive compen sation equivalent to Rs 17,500, the general public, and authoriries and professionals concerned abour under this misconcepion. "It is a misinterpretation of the law." says SSP Keshay Prasad Baral of the Valley raffic Police. He finds it hard believe that drivers intentionally kill people to avoid paying arger amounts of money

Investigations by the lepartment have never come cross evidence that this appens and Baral does not now of any case of a driver ntentionally running over a erson filed in court. "To my nowledge," adds Mainali, cases of negligence, and reckles driving do occur. But in my areer as a public prosecutor an lefence lawyer dealing with such ases, I've never known anyone police officer being charged with running over omeone intentionally.

Granted, says SSP Baral, the urrent law is largely in the nterest of powerful transport obby and not in the interest of the public. But that in itself is a eason why drivers don't have to un over people to avoid paving expensive medical bills. "The resent Vehicles and Transport Act (amended in 2049 after the ransport lobby went on strike) offers plenty of immunity to drivers, who are also protected by

influential welfare associations and

rganisations," says Baral. The Vehicles and Transpor Act 2049 requires vehicle wners to procure third party nsurance. But, says Mainali, "Apart from long haul passenge rehicles, like night huses, who have begun to do so, most vehicle owners don't." The roblem with implementation and deciding what the letter and spirit of the law mean goes irther, explains the lawyer The Department of Transport doesn't withhold a road permit to vehicles that do not have



this insurance.

According to the Act, it is argely vehicle owners and nanagers who are required to pay the fines and fees in case of an accident, not the driver. Accidents may occur owing to negligence, but intentionally running down someone is equivalent to murder and would be tried under the stricter civil Codes. "Who would want to risk life imprisonment or harsher punishment?" asks a

NATION

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

The Vehicles and Transporta ion Act itself has provisions for homicide—driving with the intention of killing, reckless driving with no intention to kill, and accidents not the result of rash driving. The penalty ranges from life imprisonment and confiscation of property to a Rs 500 fine and two years nprisonment.

Still, almost every time there is an accident the local media dutifully reports that it was a case of drivers intentionally running over wounded victims. It happened to Timisina in Koteswor, in Tulsipur two months ago, to a woman scooter driver earlier this year.

"There may be some incompetence on our part during vestigations, but I just don't sec it happening. It is more a composite effect of a lack of educaon, enforcement, and engineer ing," says another police officer He thinks lack of sidewalks, jaywalking, speeding, dark streets are what cause deaths on the streets and 90 percent of traffic deaths in Nepal involve pedestrians.





nembers of rival parties to quit

their elected positions. A bullet-for

a-bullet strategy can only go so far

where hamlets are identified with

parties they took turns organising, our politicians must have shaken enough hands and felt enough pulses to prepare their strategies for Nepal Sambat 1122. Among the urgent items of busines are the upcoming local elections. For all the top parties, keeping the folks at the bottom firmly within the fold is of fundamental concern during these fluid times. Remember how fast the 400,000 panchas many thought were resolutely perched on the lower rungs of the polity went underground in 1990, only to resurface in local bodies two years later as elected representatives of the newly emancipated political parties?

their ideological affiliation down to in all conceivable directions. the party suffix. Democrats will Repalis might end up voting for a new parliament under an all-party entually have to act on their affirmation that power comes out o the ballot box even if they don't wernment including the Maoists efore they get to know who's on the ticket for their ward commitbelieve that's exactly true. With local and national politics living off tee. But national leaders can ignor the pleas and pressures of local each other, politicians and the functionaries only at the risk of people would do well to start imperilling their own careers at the preparing for two elections. centre. Since the last local polls, Maoists strategists have worked While mainstream politic were immersed in the flow of the estivities, the Maoists displayed towards reinforcing their rural base y, among other things, coercing

a republic. The real substance of

the shift lies in its timing. The

sor—Giriia Prasad Koirala had proceeded to unleash the full force of his arsenal to turn Nepal into a more active participant in the international anti-terrorism campaign. Since key Deuba allies who in the Nepali Congress are barely distinguishable from rivals—are too busy fending off allegations of holding foreign bank accounts linked to Global Terror, Inc, the prime mi might find cabinet meetings a little ss discomforting for a while. But tactical shrewdness by using the Deuba is certainly not about to take nterregnum between Dasain and off any of those astrologically l'ihar to withhold their demand fo sanctioned rings. He vividly remem-

Maoists tossed a lifeline to Prime

redecessor—and possible succes

bers how he defeated a no-confidence

motion in parliament four years ago

Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

precisely at a time when his

only to be tricked by party rivals into automatically trigger a thunderous seeking an unnecessary vote of confidence he was doomed to lose. Deuba is too hardened by experience not to realise that the margin of error n protean political calculations can b orohibitively high at a time when some Manist activists have started shouting slogans against Prachanda and others are barely more polite in saying they no longer recognise him a their comrade-in-chief Nepalis today find themselves in

> from the reactionary right is the most serious since the spring of

1990. With the military ruler of

new darlings of the West, rightist

attempts to fine-tune Nepal's

Pakistan and the Soviet-era

strongman ruling independent

elections might hold some surprises. Then again, they might not.

the unusual position of having to fully comprehended today. malgamate the aspirations of a There are palpable shifts in violent campaign to overthrow their egional dynamics as well. Indiai hard-won multiparty polity with ewspapers are offering insightful increasingly sombre musings from ınalyses on how an imminent gush within the system on the need to of visitors from China could help Nepal revive its economy. At the ponder alternative forms of lemocracy. The framers of the ame time, we're told that security onstitution are split between thos analysts in New Delhi are caution reking a radical reconstruction and ng their government not to overlook foreign policy and defence those with a stubborn predilection for preserving the status quo at all onsiderations while twisting costs. Amid this snarl, politicians Nepal's arm over the surge of GI pipe exports to India as the trade may be forgiven for seeking refuge in the rhetoric of ambiguity and reaty comes up for renewal. ambivalence. But there are some We've already had the christ things they can do right away with dignified resolve. Since Paush 1 is

ng of a new Ravamaihi on the left nd remain to identify today's Giris iust around the corner, our leader and Biswabandhus in the ruling might want to welcome the winter arty. Maybe we should take a by issuing their annual alert against loser look over the next three the pratigami conspiracy. Given the veeks. This rule of thumb straight symmetry of national and internaout of satra sal might work: Count tional realities this year, the threat the number of influential Kangresi who you feel have extracted the most concessions from their leader out still can't quit complaining. The list may become too unwields ecause politics has become a more Uzbekistan having emerged as the nriching pursuit today, but do keep it handy. Even if this Paush 1 passes off quietly, there will always be another one coming our way. political institutions may no longer

Kooki Tappu Wildlife Comp-

28 Hothol babel Tenah Corp.

Special Window Ottor





"We offer promotional rate"

Nepal Wildlife Resort: Thakurdwara-6, Royal Bardia National Park.

Kathmandu Office: Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal GPO. 1044, Fax: 419237, Tel.: 258492 E-mail: nwr@mox.com.ap, www.nepalwildlife.com.np
Japan Office: Office of the State of the St



#### Chinese tourists

Nepal hopes to get a large number of Chinese tourists starting next year after the two countries sign an agreement to that effect, most likely later this month, the Nepal Tourism Board says. The NTB led a group of Negali tourism operators to the China International Travel Mart at Kunming earlier this month to do some preliminary marketing. The number of China's outbound tourists in 2000 exceeded 10 million, of which about 5.6 million travelled abroad for leisure and holiday. China's State Council last year approved 17 outbound destinations for Chinese travellers: Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Myanmar, Nepal, Hong Kong and Macau, Three more countries, Germany, Egypt and Malta, were added to the list in June 2001.

Nepal has direct air connections with China, but the service is far short of meeting the demand for seats should the Chinese actually decide to visit. The situation is compounded by severe aircraft shortage faced by the Royal Nepal Airlines. Chinese tourists can, however, come via Hong Kong—there are two Dragon Air flights each week—or direct from Lhasa, on the thrice-weekly China Southwest flights.

### **CNI Update**

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), a rival to the existing Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), says it has moved one step forward towards formalising the organisation. The CNI, whose most powerful proponent is former FNCCI chairman Binod Kumar Chaudhary, says it has finalised its constitution and is ready to complete the registration processes. In a recent press state-ment, the group says failure to renew the Nepal-India trade treaty before it expires on 5 December could

### Greenline to Lumbini

Greenline Tours, a tourist transport operator from Kathmandu, has introduced luxury bus services to Lumbini, birthplace of the Buddha. Its fully air-conditioned luxury buses already service Pokhara and Chitwan, the two destinations most frequented by visitors to Nepal. The fares range from \$8-15 depending on the destination.



Euro Gears P Ltd (Autoland P Ltd) has begun marketing three models of Peugeot vehicles in Nepal. The 406HDI comes with a common rain diesel engine, on board computer, front and side airbags and ABS brakes. The 206 is a rally-winning model and the Partner is a multi-utility van. The vehicles' emission and safety features meet Euro III standards, an Euro Gears statement says.

### Jogbani rail

The residents of Biratnagar are finally to get something they've wanted for a long time—a broad gauge rail link to the neighbouring Indian town of Jogbani. The project, which was inaugurated by India's rail minister last week, is expected upon completion in 18 months to facilitate trade between the two countries through the direct link it would provide to the Kolkata port.

# **Sweets and the world**

What does globalisation have to do with Tihar? Plenty.

concluded when we Nepalis were busy celebrating Tihar. The way that meeting went, it became clear that developed nations will have their way in dictating the world trade order. If the initiatives through the WTO were to fail. they would force on other arrangements like regional trade

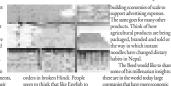
and new rules and agreements and thus relentlessly pursue their agenda of charting out the future of global trade After all the WTO is nore about politics than economy. For a far cry, it is too much to expect that we would come out winners in nternational trade diplomacy. Globalisation is a buzzword to

v. What is in store for Nepal in future can be witnessed by the surge in the consumption of "Indian sweets" opened on New Road with millions invested in it, and others have also sprung up in the Valley. What these outlets are pushing is the concept of branded sweets. Despite a couple of business groups supporting the cause of indigenous lakhamari, the traditional Newari sweetmeat, by sending that out rather than Indian mithai, the jerris are in general an becoming passe. The crowds in the sweet shops are generally Nepali, but it is amusing at first and then a little disturbing to watch them place their support advertising expenses. The same goes for many other products. Think of how agricultural products are being packaged, branded and sold or the way in which instant noodles have changed dietary abits in Nepal. The Beed would like to share

> there are in the world today large companies that have more economic powers than even the colonial perpowers of vore. The total business that a company like Coke or Citibank does is more than many larger economies of the world. No surprise, then that the future will be dictated by these companies and they will influence the economic policies of untries. Countries like Nepal will be silent spectators to this change if they do not react now.

The next step in the world economic orderwould probably be the linking of trade with investments. We will never be able to change the world order, but it would be a much wiser idea to predict it, be pro-active and think of how to regulate it Foreign investment and management in media will come, so will foreign travel agencies and consulting companies. I'm right. Just consider the Tihar sweets this year.

sahujis do not innovate by automating arthabeed@vahoo.com



order burgers at McDonald's or

This Beed wonders where,

precisely is the anti-Indian sentimen

behind Patan's Darbar Square will

succumb to the onslaught of these

and branding their production, and

trans-regional companies if local

with foreign sweets

Wimpys, Hindi is essential to deal

that causes Indian political thinkers and media so much heartburn? Perhans it is simply wishful-or some misguided souls. Or might it not simply be dead political rhetorics

becoming more important than political ones. One lesson that we need to lear from globalisation is the importance of branding a product and reinforcing that with relentless advertising to ensure continuous brand recall. The traditional sweetmeat shops in the lanes of Maru in Kathmandu or

Readers can post their views a

# Should Nepal change its official calendar to "Nepal Sambat"?

Nepal should use its own calendar as an official calendar because our present one is based on an Indian emperor

Sanoj Shakva The Bikram calendar has flaws which makes it difficult for planning fiscal years. As for the English calendar, the date cycle repeats predictably and so is efficient and easy to use.

Manjil Joshi

The Nepal Sambat has a cultural history but is impractical for modern use.

Use the international calendar. Think forward not backward. And it doesn't mean we are losing or culture. Culture is never rigid.

Joju

Newars, Bahuns, Magars, Tharus...are all brothers and sisters, like a family. If one member of the family is feeling cheated, it is wise to see why they are saving so, instead of lambasting them with insults. To prove to them that they are not being mariginalised as they are claiming would make more sense to me. To turn a deaf ear to it would bring crises in future.

Our country is rich in cultural diversity, and we should keep it alive. But changing something like the calendar or the language may just divide

Hemanta Shrestha Why do we need to change something which is working perfectly fine? If it isn't broken don't fix it. Simple as that.

Even though I am a Newar I am a Nepali first. The development of a nation does not depend on its calendar. We can follow the Nepal Sambat for our festivals and traditions. But for official use, neither Nepal Sambat

What now? Nepalis have nothing to do? Is this the only thing remaining to be done in Nepal? There are so many other urgent matters besides changing calendars.

Raiak Sundar, Minnesota

There is nothing wrong if Nepal Sambat is introduced as national calendar to indicate all our feasts and festivities celebrated according to lunar calendar. And we can use the Gregorian calendar for solar-based dates. Then we don't need the Bikram calendar.

Puran Bahadur KC A very unnecessary issue. It's idiotic to change our calendar. We have been used to it for generations and let us keep on rolling as we are.

I don't understand why we are so upset because something is Indian. Hinduism too originated in India, so should we stop practicing our faith? I think we should stop defining our identity by what we are not (Indians) and should instead define ourselves by what we are. All this ethinic talk of who

originated where is out-dated and so typical of the closed mind sets of some people in Kathmandu. Whether you like it or not, Nepal is a diverse country of Bahuns, Chettris, Rais, Limbus, Gurungs, magars, Tamangs, Madhesis and Tibetans. I see no reason to be so puritanical when it comes to culture. This brand of cultural conservatism stems from insecure minds who are dead scared of diversity and pluralism.

"Whoever I see no point in discussing things which are pretty irrelevant to today's state

of the country. You people at Nepali Times should think of more pertinent issues, which really matter to the country. These debates will get us

Don't mix politics, ethnicity, economy, globalisation into this debate. This poll is about our calendar only. There is no choice but to go for the

Harka Gurung, Tanahu Since Nepal Sambat is based on lunar calendar on which most of our festivals along with birthdays are based, it may be useful and easy if our

official calendar is changed to Nepal Sambat.

Should Nepal change its national animal to buffalo? Should Nepal change its national bird to crow? Ridiculous questions aren't they? The main reason why Negal will most likely not change for the better over the

next fifty years is precisely this attitude among Nepalis. Richar Nenali Is the type of calander we have now a hurdle in our development? If not, let us try and focus our attention to make our nation economically sound rather than just creating an environment which is not healthy for our nation.

Do you want to see another Afghanistan in our beautiful land? Let us rid ourselves of such divisive discussion. Govinda Pandey If one is free of prejudice one must agree to discard Rikram Sambat from

Nepal and replace it with Nepal Sambat which should be used for festivals celebrated according to lunar calendar. And then we can use the Gregorian endar for day-to-day administrative work. Tashi Chiring Sherna This is very controversial and dangerous for the unity of multi-ethnic Nepal.

The question of changing a calendar is not of any importance before the question of changing the economic status of the country. Let us talk about how we can develop our country economically, technologically and morally if we have to change our calendar then let's change to the international calendar. Otherwise let us stick with the Bikram calendar. It is working ok

Kishore Manandhar Since the founder of Nepal Sambat has already been recognised as a national hero of Nepal it is not an important question whether one accepts Nepal Sambat as national era or not

What exactly is Nepal Sambat. Never heard of it. Ramhari Joshi

Some people misinterpret Nepal Sambat as the calendar of only Newars and this is not true at all. As all our social activities from lots o ethnic groups are carried out based on tithi (days in Nenal Samhat). It is a calander that gives us identity as Nepalis. We must use it and improve relations between various ethnic communities. Let's start this good effort to improve our nationalism further.

Balaram Shrestha Tokyo

Is Nepal Sambat the only alternative? What about the calendars followed by other ethnic communities like Tharus or the Kiratis? Does it mean that by just being the calendar of a privileged community we have to accept Nepal Sambat as the only alternative? The best way out could be following the Gregorian calendar.

I'm very proud that we have fellow Nepalis who can look on Nepali issues apart of their ethnicity/religion. I'm very proud to be a Nepali and very glad that Negal has multiple ethnic groups and religions, but would like to conserve this Bikram Sambat as it is because its not about Newar/Gorkha/Tamang/Gurung. It has been the culture of all

Though I am Newar, I think myself as Nepali first. Just because it has a word "Nepal", Nepal Sambat does not mean it has to be a national calendar. Moreover the calendar has not been followed by a wide

range of people in Nepal, but just limited to the vallley Rajesh Shrestha What is going on in Nepal? Are you mad to raise such an issue at this

time? If you guys in Nepal have nothing to do then do nothing, but please don't destroy the country's harmony. Do something productive, don't fight over unnecessary things.

I would like to request all those fellows who are ignorant of the history of our country to read its history and understand the truth about the Nepal Sambat. It is not a Newar calendar, but a Nepali one. When it started 1.122 years ago there were no people called Newar.

Gyanmani Nepal Nenal Sambat must be introduced as soon as possible. Nenal Samba is not just Newar it belongs to all Nepalis.

Dhananjaya Subba, Washington

I am not Newar but I think Nepal is a country of diverse nationalities and everyone has the freedom to celebrate their ethnic origins, but when we talk about the nation, we all are Nepalis. We have already wasted decades and if we still get lost on useless things like this, we will

Curious

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# "The notion that multinationals are harmful is outdated..."

As chairman of Hindustan Lever and **Nepal Lever Vindi** Banga looks after Unilever's South Asia operations. Nepali Times spoke to him last week in Kathmandu.

Nepali Times: How did you find the business mood in Nepal during this trip?

Vindi Banga: The mood is quite positive. Our company is strongly focussed on growth in domestic business, we are seeing that with proper channelisation of strategy and effort that growth can be realised. I am looking at an even more aggressive plan for local sales. As far as the general mood is concerned, I sense one of cautious optimism. There is a hope that the political stability and law and order issue will be resolved.

What are the main challenges and opportunities in Nepal for Lever?

We have enough manufacturing capacity for our current portfolio, our concentration will be on investing in market and brand development, in communication, education, in distribution systems and we will continue to make significant investments over the next several years.

There is immense opportunity to really build markets for many of our product categories. The potential exists because the level of consumption of our products is very low. The basic challenge is in reaching people. Television reach in Nepal is not good enough so we have to rely much more on unconventional media. As you are aware the Indian government has initiated several incentives for investment categories to source from India, and therefore you've seen exports come down. I think the important question for us is how can we develop the domestic market faster. Rather than worry too much about what Indian fiscal policies are. I think we should be spending more time thinking about what can be done proactively here to positively drive sourcing, for example by setting up special eco-

Whenever a big company like yours enters the market of a small country like ours there is fear that you will overwhelm local husinesses

Our philosophy at Unilever is that we believe that our prosperity as a company lies in the prosperity of the country. We start with that, and then take steps to match the country's priorities. You can see that in every sten we have taken in India over the past 50-60 years, and today we are one of the largest companies. We've been in Nepal only for 8-9 years and even during the time we have provided direct employment to 200 people, indirect employment to more than 2.000, and if you count the number of people associated with the company-the stockists, their manpower and traders—it runs into several multiples. We pay a very large sum to the national exchequer, we contribute to training of people who work for us. If you go to Hetauda you will see what it was 10 years ago and what it is today. It is vibrant and the contribution is visible. The an absolutely outdated one.

What possibilities do you see for developing intra-South Asian trade?

Immense! There is a lot of potential. I am a great believer and think we must exploit our own proximity with each other to achieve that even though most countries are at a reasonably early stage of

economic reform. Trade can no hand in hand in resolving tensions Would trade liberalisation after WTO be conducive to busi-

I think so. Joining the global world is a foregone phenomenon. The only question is that we should prepare ourselves for that. It is very rtant for everybody to ensure that they are competitive. You cannot be competitive at everything. So I think you have to, as a country, pick and choose areas where you can be competitive. Countries have to play to their natural strengths.

One of the big opportunities for Nepal is to harness hydropower and leverage that. That is the core capability, which is sitting here,

which no one can replicate. Look at Bhutan and look at the enormous progress it has made by harnessing hydropower. Hydropower and tourism are the best for Nepal, and you can even combine the synergies of the two. If you are able to do away with the passport requirement between Nepal and India, you can increase tourism. But tourism will require law and order, stability, infrastructure, flights.

Nepal and other countries in the region have a crisis of governance. What lessons does the private sector have for government?

You have to undertake the judiney man. political parties, local and global industry, and judiciary and with the people. The real challenge for leaders today is to learn how to build this consensus. choose the path very carefully and use each step to cement and make the consensus stronger. Give

everybody a little bit to win so that they feel confident about taking the next step, and the next step and the next step. Sometimes all you need is one person who has vision. And leaders can make that difference, because they can make the vision happen.

# **Lever leverages local sales**

the domestic Nepal market. Still, year-

that Nepal Lever still managed a

reasonably tidy profit. Domestic

growth was up 21 percent over the

previous year, which offset the drop is

xport earnings. "We could have had even higher

domestic sales had it not been for

internal disturbances in the last two

fiscal years" says Ghose "Because our

primary focus is on growing domestic

sustainable value added exports side

Even so, the export drop hit the

ttom line. Nepal Lever's net profits

in the year ending mid-July 2001 dropped by half, from Rs 120.5 millio

a year ago to Rs 68 million. Duty

rovernment also contributed to low

responding by targeting products to

innovative ways to take the products

drawback payments due from

profits. Nepal Lever says it is

the local market and finding

ales and maintain a thrust on

by-side, we are still doing well."

An export slump forces Nepal Lever

to focus more on domestic markets.

Lever's Managing Director sat down to do his

arithmetic recently and realised that it had stopped making husiness sense to continue exporting toothpaste to India. The loss on every ton of export added up to Rs 20,000 after nev Indian excise on manufacturer's end price. The CEN-VAT differential made producing a ton of toothpaste here Rs 6,000 more

> expensive than doing it in India. Toothpaste sales—Nepal's second largest export to India and Nepal Lever's second largest export after soaps—took a major hit after New Delhi levied tariffs in the last budget based on the manufacturers end price or MRP and not the transaction cost. The second whammy was India's new policy of extending credits on central Value Added Tax to local businesses on raw

and packaging materials. There was nothing else for Ghose to do: stop exporting to

to the people. ment is its "Hub and Spoke" distribution odel where there is a condary hub, say, ir Baglung, which is an offshoot of a larger Pokhara, From Baglung its

end sales up to mid-July 2001 showed local distribution instead of the company trying to sell directly to wholesalers and consumers. Examples of some newly introduced products, tarveted to the

stockists within a given periphery.

The smaller stockholders then do the

Nepali market, are the Wheel detergent sachet priced at Rs 2 and a new variant of its hand-wash Lifebuov (Rs 10) Lifebuoy's launch is accompanied by a nationwide ad campaign encouraging people to wash hands, a commercial that has a public advocacy role in a country where poor hygiene leads to serious infections, cially among children "We realised people in Nepal

ashed clothes at one go at the dhara and what they needed was a one-time ise, affordable pack," savs Ghose, who personally goes around the country exploring opportunities to nnovate products. That is how he got the idea for the two-rupes sachet. Eighty percent of Nepal Lever is owned by Hindustan Lever Ltd, and its chariman Vindi Banga was in Kathmandu last week He told us in an interview (see above that the company's philosophy is that its prosperity lies in the prosperity of the country it works in. Banga's success in turning Hindustan Lever around in the pas year has put him on the cover of Business Today and featured prominently in Indian media







# 'All these will not be destroyed...'













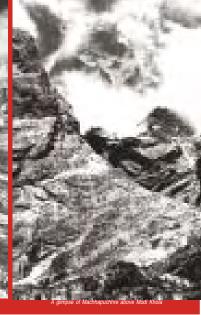


PHOTOGRAPHY

We asked Deb Mukharji to pick

Probably the best been in the world









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Will interactive **Internet television** turn into a twoheaded monster?

It should come as no surprise that the Internet is headed to a very familiar technology: your television.

run a modified version of the open | photographs and Flash animations. source operating system, Linux. Ch.1 is using Linux in the hope it will lure designers to write applications for example to ransfer data to Palms and other hand-held computers, and embedding certain kinds of video and audio formats in the system. "We don't see our product as a

replacement to the PC but as a supplement to it," says Rey Roque, vice president of Ch.1. Today, there's a lot of content emerging on the web tha can be viewed or heard, such as streaming video Internet radio MP3 music, weather maps

sports scores, online games, large graphics such as

APRICAL STATE

All of these things become more accessible with a fast broadband connection to the Internet.

The Web site Yack.com (http: www.vack.com), for example, list hundreds of live and recorded Web events in video or audio formats, verything from talking pundits at the Cato Institute in Washington to an interview with a Belgian dominatrix. There's every reason to believe that people will watch a wide variety of web content online through their TV sets, sharing the experience with others.

There also are growing opportunities for creating audio and eo content for others to see. Apple Computer's user-friendly and free) iMovie software is being used by thousands of people to create quick and interesting video

files. The Independent Media Center, whose Los Angeles branch was created during the Democratic Convention last year, allows people to post video and audio files (under 100 megabytes) on the Web for free (http://la.indymedia.org). It's obvious that a battle is

shaping up about whether the Internet will quickly become dominated by giant companies that will mimic the programming and advertising models of TV today, or an explosion of creative and diverse content gradually will replace mass market programming. Whichever model wins will have an immense effect on society for years to come

Gary Chapman is director of The 21st Century Project at the University of Texas

he idea of merging TV and the web typically has been greeted with scorn, scepticism and disbelief among heavy Internet users. Critics of the concept have pointed out that the Internet is a "lean-forward" technology of active engagement, whereas TV is a "lean-back" technology of passive

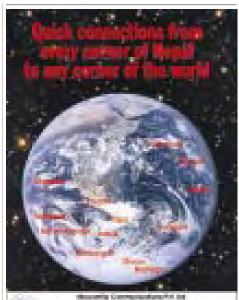
However, market studies have shown that at least one in four Internet users watches TV while online, and companies are keen on catching the interest of these "multi-taskers". There are also new kinds of content on the web that might be better suited to TV than to the PC monitor, and at least one of these innovative, interactive web TV systems is Linux-based.

But plainly, some of these new Internet-based interactive TVs are not likely to convert critics. For example, Microsoft's WebTV-a set-top box and subscription service that allow limited Web and e-mail replaced by the company's new Among longtime Internet users Ultimate TV platform. And giant there is a widespread contempt for AOL Time Warner is rolling out commercial TV and its "lowest-AOLTV at the same time. Both of ommon-denominator" marketing these services will feature Internet and programming, and thus access on TV as well as the features irritation that the Internet might be found in products such as TiVo or pulled in this direction by the likes ReplayTV, which let TV viewers of Microsoft and AOL. record programs on a hard drive or There are some emerging

stop and replay live TV broadcasts. alternatives for interactive, Both Ultimate TV and AOLTV also Internet-based TV that might will provide unique content to subscribers, a step toward both appeal even to the critics. A company in Santa Ana called Ch. 1 services becoming new, national http://www.ch1.com) is working with TV set producers such as But AOLTV and UltimateTV Princeton Graphics and Sylvania to still have the constraints that hard-100k high-definition, digital TVs core Internet users disdain: the low directly to the Internet. The Ch.1 resolution of current TV screens system, which is both the hardware which makes web pages look inside a digital TV and a subscription service, allows full access to the cartoonish and often unreadable the "dumbed-down" look and feel Internet through any Internet of services oriented to people who Service Provider, even high-speed feel intimidated by a personal cable and DSL services, and the computer; and the overwhelming high-definition sets display web pages and e-mail the same way they sense that interactive TV is aimed appear on computer screens. primarily at vacuuming users The Ch.1 TV sets offered now



TV networks.



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# **Closer to whom?**



### TIM SHORROCK

WASHINGTON - US-China ties have improved dramatically since 11 September, but Washington's single minded focus on the 'war against terrorism' and its new emphasis on "homeland defence" is likely to draw he Bush administration away from key issues in Asia, say analysts here.

"There's a very real prospect of the United States spending much less time thinking and worrying and strategi-cally minding the store when it come to Ásia," said Kurt Campbell, the former deputy assistant secretary of defence for Asian and Pacific Affairs i the Clinton administration Campbell, now senior vice presiden at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington said "there really is a sense already of not very much high-level attention being paid to Asia," adding, "that will v be a much more signif development than people realise."

But the focus on terrorism and

what US policymakers like to call "asymmetric threats" coincides with a najor shift in US-Chinese relations, away from the deep tensions of recen years over Taiwan, human rights, weapons proliferation and other ensitive issues, and toward a new era of cooperation and diplomatic engagement, said Jia Qingguo, a professor at the School of Internationa Studies at Beijing University who is a visiting fellow at the Brookings

After the attacks. Chinese leader acted forcefully to condemn the acts of errorism and make clear their determination to work with Washing ton to prevent future incidents. The Chinese response included a \$1.6 billion purchase of Boeing aircraft when Boeing's prospects were very bad, the sharing of intelligence about Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network uspected of masterminding the attacks, and the use of the Shanghai meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic

The US is feeling rather warmly towards China. But this may be challenged as the focus on Asia blurs. \_

Cooperation (APEC) in October. which Bush attended, to further the

sponded by dropping references to China as a "strategic competitor". At the APEC meeting, where Bush met Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Bush referred to China as a "great power" and emphasised the US desire to shap constructive relationship with Beijing, "This was a contrast with his former statements," said Iia "US-China relations are far better since 11 eptember. But the important estion is, will it last

omy to one dominated by mark forces, US policymakers have grown uncomfortable, as they perceived little accompanying change on the political front, said Iia, With US Chinawatchers in government and the private sector concerned about China challenging US supremacy, pushing for internal change in China became : op policy priority for conservative Republicans and liberal groups, such as US organised labour, alike. This threatened to undermine the politica gitimacy of the Chinese government which strongly resisted and insisted that Washington respect its soverrignty, Jia said. Tensions were xacerbated by the Bush administra ion's support for a missile defence stem designed to counter China's small arsenal of ballistic missiles and

plane incident near Hainan Island in

April this year. Jia believes the September attacks The Bush administratio ınd China's willingness to cooperate in the fight against terrorism showed the Bush administration that the real threats against US security came not from China but from terrorist group such as al-Qaeda. The Bush admi tration appears to have dropped its view of Beijing as an implacable futur nemy, he said. But the new attitude toward China will only last if the US stops trying to force internal change i China, Jia asserted. Campbell agreed with lia's thesis, adding, "There was a Over the past decade, as China real sense in the foreign policy is moved from a centrally planned community that rising nowers (such

> The shift in perception and policy has immediate implications for Taiwan, Campbell said. "One hopes Taiwan will not do something in this timeframe that is inappropriate or trigger something not in our intersts," he said. David Shambaugh, a professor of political science at George Washington University, said 11 September has strengthened the hands of the moderate internationalists versu the hawkish unilateralists in the Bush administration. But he noted that many problems remain in US-China relations, including Taiwan, missile defence, the role of Japan in East Asian

villion The WHO Commission estimated tha

eight million people each year could be saved by a properly funded effort. America has been the

developed world's stinglest donor, a fact unrecognised by Americans. In recent opinion

surveys. Americans believe they are the most

ends around 20 percent of its federal

budget on foreign aid. The real figure is less han one half of 1 percent! When aid is

neasured as a share of GNP, the US is last

mong all rich countries, Many European

untries contribute ten times more on a

President Bush further demonstrated

American attitudes on economic development when he said "trade can conquer poverty and

lespair." Many Americans believe market forces

alone, including international trade, can solve the problems of poverty. As a trade economist I

know this is only half-right. Trade does benefit

generous of all, and estimate that America

s China) was where the action was,

that inevitably China and the United

States were destined to come to

oggerheads and be absolutely

## **Fuming over diesel**

LONDON – TSmall particles found in diesel exhaust fumes can penetrate into the lungs of children, research indicates. The study is the first offering what is said to be conclusive evidence that PM10. particles from diesel exhaust, reach, and are taken up by, cells that reside on the deepest part of the lung. PM10 are tiny particles—less than 10 micrometers in diameter-and their small size allows them to nenetrate deen into the lung, where they can approvate respiratory disease. Dr Jonathan Grigg and his team at the Institute for Lung Health at the University of Leicester looked for particles in cells sampled from the lungs of 22 healthy children—and found evidence of diesel particles in them all. The level of particles was significantly higher in children living on a main road, although there was no difference in the proportion of these particles in children of different ages. The government has estimated that there are 24,000 deaths of adults a year, which can be attributed to the inhalation of PM10. Dr Grigg said: "This research, which shows particles in cells that are known to cause lung injury supports enidemiological studies which demonstrate an adverse effect of particles on the respiratory health of children. PM10 are one of the most damaging pollutants and can penetrate far into the lungs—causing inflammation, coughing, respiratory symptoms and even permanent damage. This biological evidence is very important in furthering our understanding of air pollution and its effects."

#### Aid. but no blue helemts

BRUSSELS – The United Nations has ruled out creating a traditional blue-helmet peacekeeping force in Afghanistan and is instead considering a multinational force, Francesc Vendrell, UN deputy special representative to Afghanistan said recently. But the ELL in cooperation with UN bodies, hopes to resume humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. The EU Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) is finalising \$13.5 million in aid for needy Afghans. This includes significant assistance for the area around Mazar-I-Sharif, a town captured by the anti-Talihan forces that should allow the establishment of a vital corridor to send food aid via Uzbekistan.

There are an estimated one million internally displaced people (IDP) in Afghanistan and near four times that who fled the violence and drought and remain outside the country. I northern Afghanistar the country's so-called

"hunger belt", about three million people will have to rely on aid agencies to feed them through the winter. ECHO will support three NGOs (Action Contre la Faim-France, SCF-UK and Aide M,dicale Internationale-FR) in Mazar-I-Sharif that are implementing relief and aid programmes. Measures for this region include therapeutic and supplementary feeding centres, special food rations for children. and support for hospital and clinics. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) have already begun assistance, with help from FCHO, But the WFP is concerned for the safety of its local staff, problems with communications, and the coming winter. Doubts also remain over whether the food is being distributed to the most needy, or whether rival fighters are commandeering the supplies to feed their armies. NATO is reportedly considering offering logistical support to ensure the

# Freedom from want

hen Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill set forth the Allies' World War II aims in the Atlantic Charter, they talked about securing "economic advancement and social security" for the entire world. In his 1941 Inaugural Address Roosevelt said that the world should be founded on four freedoms, including "freedom from want." He called for global economic arrangements to secure for every nation 'healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants."

President George Bush recently echoed then ov declaring that "we will also defeat terrorists by building an enduring prosperity that promises more opportunity and better lives for all the world's people." This is a worthy and urgent goal but it requires significant changes in rich-country policies, particularly in the US itself.

Over one billion people struggle each day for mere survival, and many do not succeed. During the past two years I have been Chairman of the sion on Macroeconomics and Health of th WHO, Our Commission received detailed evidence that millions of impoverished people die each year because they lack the barest means to stay alive. The most shocking losses are those resulting from preventable and treatable diseases, such as measles, respiratory infections, malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS.

The problem is that prevention and treatment costs m much more than is available to the world's impoverished. In the poorest countries, annual health spending is around \$11 per person per year, while at least \$33 per person per year is needed to provide minimal health services. Rich countries must provide roughly \$20 per person to close the gap. Instead they provide just \$2 per person and believe they are meeting the needs of the poor When millions of people die as a result of the lack of financial help, the US and other rich countries act as if this outcome is a "natural" occurrence, not the resul of political neglect.

If every rich country contributed one-tenth of 1 percent of its national income-roughly 1 cent for every \$10 dollars earned-the result would be \$25 billion a year, a sum that would make it possible to extend essential health services to the hundreds of millions of people who lack medical attention, including treatment for AIDS, immunisations of children, and the distribution of bed-nets to prevent malaria. Rich countries actually contribute around \$6



the poor if rich-country markets are opened, but trade by itself is not enough. Targeted financial assistance, not trade policy, can help the millions who die of disease. Besides, where disease rages, export-led growth is nearly impossible to achieve American stinginess results in high costs to US security. The US intelli-

gence community has long understood that disease and impoverishment contribute to "state failure," the technical term for political collapse, revolutions, civil wars, state-sponsored terrorism, and military coups. When "state failures' occur, they are often followed by costly military interventions by the US and its allies. Rich countries seem only to intervene when it is too late, rather than working to head off crises and collapse in the first place. It is time for the rich to promote real economic development through

rign assistance commensurate with the needs of the poor and through open markets that allow the poor to export their way to prosperity. Until then, the poor will suffer and die unnecessarily, and instability and political upheaval will reign.

leffrey D. Sachs is Galen L Stone Professor of Economics, and Director of the Center for International Development, Harvard



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### India's Vitamin A tragedy

NEW DELHI - The deaths of 15 children and the hospitalisation of hundreds more following a Vitamin A supplementation drive in India's north-eastern Assam state last week may be a classic case of too much of a good thing. Internationally-known nutrition-ists, such as C Gopalan of the Nutrition Foundation of India (NFI), say it was a case of toxic overdoses. Gopalan said the tragedy underscores the need for India to have "a food-based approach rather than a medicinal one to Vitamin A deficiency." He added that "these massive doses should be reserved only for emergencies." He hinted that the "commercial exploitation of malnutrition" was linked to a mishandling of the approach to Vitamin A deficiency. UNICEF, which is responsible for a prophylactic programme directed against deficiency diseases, especially childhood blindness, sees no link between the programme and the tragedy. Maria Calivis, UNICEF representative in India, said: "I see no correlation between these most regrettable deaths and the programme. We are still trying to find out what happened." Although the reports are not yet released, the central government has issued a circular directing all states to stop mass Vitamin A drives. Soon after the deaths were reported. Union Health Minister CP Thakur, himself a doctor, said that the federal government was opposed to the Vitamin A campaigns and that the states were carrying them out on their own with UNICEF support. Calivis, who toured the affected districts, said a Vitamin A overdose could not have produced such disastrous results. UNICEF experts said Vitamin A sunnlementation was being carried out in 40 countries and that it was absolutely essential in states like Assam, where coverage has actually dropped over the years. "It is all very well for nutritionists like C Gopalan to talk about leafy vegetables and papayas, but how many people in this country can afford these?" a LINICEE eynert, who asked not to be named, said, (IPS)



### The big test centre of political gravity, in the form of a Supreme Council. A political

The UN believes the former king and the Cambodia model may be vital to Afghanistan's future.

N JANARDHAN IN DUBAI ■ ith an ominous politica vacuum in war-ravaged Afabanistan the only clear sign yet of the shape of things to come is the role that the United Nations must and will play in establishing a consensual and working government Diplomats say the manner Kahul was taken over-against the US gameplan—represents an important opening for the UN, whose representative Lakhdar Brahimi has been negotiating the formation of a new overnment, Among the formulas

eing thrown up as solutions for

Afghanistan are the UN-sponsored plans in Cambodia, Kosovo and The Cambodian peace agreement, signed a decade ago with the UN in charge until elections were held, is being touted as the best model for transition in the present circumstances. "There is a lot of talk about what to do in a post-Taliban Afghan stan, and Cambodia is the first model that comes to everybody's mind, Nanvy Soderberg, a former American ambassador to the UN Security

of gravity is possible if Shah returns. Though most factions have vowed allegiance to the 84-year-old former king, he appears reluctant to take up the shambles, promising to return as a "worker" rather than a "niler" communist rule and overbearing Northern Alliance leaders have also external influence are the common oured cold water on the suggestion denominators for the two countrie that the former king return from exile. But saw Amin Saikal Professor a except as a private citizen. the Centre for Arab and Islamic For now, the LIN Security Studies at the Australian National University: "It's possible but wrought with difficulties, going by the deep

divisions along ethnic, tribal and

Some analysts predict another

round of prolonged civil war in the

shattered country if the Northern

Alliance used the Kabul takeover to

block a major role for majority ethnic

Pashtuns in a post-Taliban adminis-

tration Between 1930s and the

1970s, Afghan ethnic groups-

linguistic lines.

Council has unanimously endorsed an Afghan political plan envisaging a twoyear interim government bringing all ethnic groups under one umbrella with a multinational security force to protect them. The UN has also proposed a five-point plan to establish an inclusive post-Taliban government in Afghanistan, which it said should be backed by an all-Afghan security force rather than a UN or multina-

system will have to evolve around this

upervision," said Saikal. That centre

nd that can be done under UN

tional peacekeeping operation. As those plans are operationalised, another factor bound to delay progress will be the composition of a multina

ruled out a blue-helmet force.) Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, is ready to join the acekeeping mission. But Egypt— Washington's biggest Middle Eastern ally—has ruled out sending troops to Afghanistan as part of a US-proposed "Muslim peacekeeping force", fearing the soldiers might return to Egypt as "termrists", alluding to Fountians who went to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation in the 1980s and returned to Egypt in the 1990s to wage a violent campaign against the government. Cairo advises that it is better to look to Muslim countries from East Asia.

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Commenting on the enormity of the task for the UN, Soderberg said if one compares the Cambodian operation which cost about \$1.6 billion over two years, the likely UN role in Afghanistan, would probably require \$45 billion worth of support over a period of time, including the cost of peace-keeping and also rehabilitation and reconstruction



# The problem with proxy wars

Fighting a war might be possible by remote control. Rebuilding a country after that is not so easy.

rincipal agents rely on proxies to carry out their plans. But you cannot be sure that proxies will do what you tell them to do, and your

hands may end up as dirty as theirs.

In Afghanistan, the Uzbek and Tajik militias—Hezbi Wahdat, Junbish, Jamyat Islami—are the proxies the US has chosen to overthrow the Taliban. When last in Kabul, between 1992 and 1996, these militias fought each other and turned the city into the Dresden of the post-Cold War world. Knowing this, the Americans have tried over the first six weeks of the war to hold them back, bombing Taliban positions just enough so that they break apart, but not so hard that the Northern Alliance breaks through.

A bloodbath after a Northern Alliance victory would be like the reve killings by Kosovars that followed the June 1999 NATO victory. In both cases, the principal agent, not the proxy, would take most of the blame. A bloodbath in Kabul or Mazar (captured by the Northern Alliance) would be played out before a television audience of the entire Islamic world. If a war against terror is a battle for hearts and minds, it is hard to imagine anything that would do more harm to the principal agent's moral case.

Controlling a proxy war from the air is not easy. Too much bombing and the proxy breaks through to commit mayhem. Too little bombing and the war stalemates. Just enough allows the Taliban to melt away or change sides. In addition to air-power, America's government hopes to control its proxies by means of the Special Forces and 'advisors' working on the ground. Again, the balance the Americans have to strike here is delicate. Too many troops on the ground risks sucking America into the type of ground war that destroyed the Soviet empire. Too few exposes the principal agent to the risk of losing control of the proxy altogether. The hundreds, possibly thousands of Special Forces units on the ground now may be just sufficient to spot targets for the US Air Force and restrain the essentially lawless

Another consideration essential to fighting a proxy war is to prevent the

proxy from appearing the stooge of the principal agent. The legitimacy of the proxies to their own people—the Afghanis—depends on their appearing to be independent of the Americans. The legitimacy of the principal agent also depends on not looking like an imperialist. America fought most of its wars against Communism through proxies. It funded Jonas Savimbi in Angola when it looked like he would be helpful in overthrowing the Marxist regime in the capital. Luanda, Unfortunately, all that the principal agent achieved was complicity in a devastating civil war. In Afghanistan, bin Laden himself was a proxy in the jihad against the Soviets. Here, victory was followed by devastating civil war. Proxies have a nasty way either of disgracing principal agents or turning against them.

Yet it is moral perfectionism to suppose that America can fight a war gainst terror without proxies. The only real alternative is to itself fight. Al-Qaeda must be hoping to lure long convoys of American soldiers and their equipment into those high, narrow mountain passes where the Russians were drawn in to their deaths. American strategy would be wise to deny Osama bin Laden that satisfaction.

The principal agent uses proxies to avoid being sucked into a quagmire. But depending on proxies puts the principal agent's fate in the hands of ople who may not define victory as the principal agent does. For a warlord n American pay, victory might look like secure control of heroin producion, together with death to his warlord rivals, not an Afghanistan rebuilt on solid political foundations. The real problems with proxy wars begin once victory has been achieved. Revenge killings by militias, score-settling between militias, and battles over turf and resources could inflict still more agony on Afghanistan. A durable peace, however, cannot be built by remote control proxies. Peace will require substantial commitment by the principal agents involved: peacekeeping troops, humanitarian assistance, re-building of infrastructure. No one in the international community has the stomach to

actually disarm the proxies.

That will be the test of this war: whether a warrior culture can be turned into a political one, whether proxies can become principal agents in their own right, rebuilding a country they once devastated. (Project Syndicate)

(Michael Ignatieff is Carr Professor of Human Rights Practice, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.)

# Stand up for your community's rights

Jana Ekata, 12 November

Dalits are barred from entering the very places that have been built using their skills and labour. They, too, are Hindus, but the doors of most places of worship are closed to them. Why is this? Dalits must unite to break the barriers in their way.

They entered the Baglung Kalika Mandir on 15 October. But the question arises, "Why do Dalits have to enter temples." and what do they gain by doing so?" Thinking that by entering the temples they have broken all barriers, is a very shallow way of thinking and one that will prove detrimental to them in the long run.

Dalits are in the state they are in today largely because of the Hindu religion and the reactionaries who use it as a shield for their own selfish purposes. This religion is a curse on us-they use our skills to erect places of worship, but bar us from entering them. Temples are public places, so we must also have the right to enter and utilise them. Entry into such places is our right and we need to oppose moves to

In our country today, our enemies are very active and they are inciting people against us. It is necessary for all Dalits to be aware of this. We will be our own greatest enemies if we do not unite and make an effort to bring down social barriers. Our enemies will gain greatly from this. But some of our Dalit brothers are singing the praises of our enemies, they are prepared to sacrifice our community for their own personal benefit. We need to remove such characters from our ranks.

The liberation of all Dalits is a political question, Dalits should be active in the political arena and Dalit strupples should become political struggles. The Dalit problem is a political problem. If our struggle does not turn political then it will not be very effective, it may even just fizzle out. So it is incumbent on our struggle to become politicised. We have to be politically active, but in such a way that it helps our struggle. We have to organise ourselves, form platforms and participate in politics.

We know that many political changes have taken place in the past. Many different people have attained positions of power and prestige. They said all kinds of things, and we Dalits have believed them and voted for them. They promised us the sky. We believed them. But, as you can see, there has been no change in our lives. We Dalits have been exploited on all fronts, political, social, economic, cultural, even in the field of education. Despite all this, we still vote for the same parties. This will only make our situation worse. From now on, if anyone sneaks in our favour, we should make sure that they really want to help us and will not make fools of us again.

Many organisations are using our cause to reap economic benefits for themselves. They are collecting donations in our name and not giving us anything. It is time we took this seriously. This does not mean that we should not accept any help that is extended to us. But we should do so only if those who come to help us come as equals and with respect. In fact, we were assisted by human rights organisations when we entered the temple in Baglung. We must work for the liberation of Dalits with an open mind and not fight to take credit for the work done. Raising slogans will not help, actions will. If we keep jostling for individual glory, we will never be free. We must fight to liberate all Dalits. That will mean freedom for all of us.

# The rise of

on policy and means of action are growing within the Maoist party. There are differences among its leade and supporters even on the issue of dialogue with the government. It is inderstandable that the party leadership is trying very hard to

Prachanda is the most important leader in the Maoist party. After him come Dr Babu Ram Bhattarai, Ram Bahadur Thapa, Mohan Vaidya and others. Even though the differences re not out in the open, there are unofficial reports that differences har a fact crept in.

The differences are mainly on the issue of dialogue with the overnment—a faction within the party is opposed to the talks. Ram Bahadur Thapa, alias Badal, seems more inclined to support the military thrust of the revolution, its military ampaign, than dialogue. The party arion has been trying downplay the fact that most of the nilitia support Badal.

Maoists have put forward for up. The source further states that the flexibility the party has shown on he issue of a republic. And Badal, who was never in favour of dialogue, onvinced that the talks won't produce a solution. Since he was in a ninority in the party, he never raised this issue earlier. But now he has developed a very good rapport with the armed cadre. He has won them wer and begun letting other party

# roblems for the top leadership leading?

460 in a press statement that his party does not have a policy of harming embers of other parties. But on the night of 10 November, a group of Maoists manhandled Pemba Ringhi Lama of Junbesi Village Developmen

QUOTE OF THE WEEK Our main point ... is that Nepal's present constitution is not even a capitalist constitution. The biggest proof is

Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai in Kantipur. 21 Novembe



Budhabar, 21 November

# Comrade Badal

THIS DACE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEDALL PRES

Committee in Solukhumbu. Lama

had refused to feed the Maoists and

was beaten up so badly that he is now

fighting for his life at the Teaching

Hospital in Kathmandu, Lama isa

also an active member of the

ormer chairperson of the VDC and

Communist Party of Nepal (United

Marxist-Leninist). Similarly, the

Maoists also kidnapped Bhujung

Sindhunalchok on 7 November, H.

has not yet been freed. The UML

Lama from Nawalpur VDC in

has publicly condemned these

orced to ask if Prachanda is

activities and has demanded that

the captives be freed immediately.

n light of all these incidents, one i

actually leading the party. UML central committee member

and secretary Yuvraj Karki recently

said that UMI leader Madhay Nepa

nversation) that violence between

mmediately. This attack came right

Either the Maoists are not honest in

elements and hooligans have hijacked

after this agreement was reached.

their commitments or anti-social

reasons, this is detrimental to the

progress of the nation, the people

use arms for defence, the recent

attacks prove that is no longer true

"The government

Excerpts from an interview with

Shanta Neupane lives in Gitanagar,

Dandapani Neupane in 1969 at the

Chipchipe Village Development

Committee in Tanahun and joined

the couple migrated to Chitwan.

Party, was arrested on and off at

Dandapani, member of the Maoist

regular intervals. He was last arrested

in 1999 and his whereabouts are not

et known. Even lawsuits that require

produce results. His wife has not given

up hope; she is still looking for him.

Following are excerpts from an

interview with Shanta Neumane

When was your husband

arrested? Were there any

He was arrested in the third week of

witnesses?

is presence in court have failed to

student politics in the 1970s. In 1973

one son. She was married to

age of 13. Dandapani lived in

Chitwan with her two daughters and

effq.

will be at stake

is lying"

Shanta Neupane

Sanghu, 12 November

democracy and the communist forces.

Although the Maoists claim that they

and Maoist leader Prachanda had

recently agreed (in a telephone

their two parties would stop

It is becoming public that differences onceal this

A source tells us that Badal does ot want compromise on any issue the dialogue, even less giving any of them oct of the party cadre disagree with

eaders know his views. Sources on hat most party cadre now support Thapa's views, which has created

# Who is Prachanda

Maoist leader Prachanda recently said

April 1999 at around 7.00 PM by police in Tehbahal near Sundhara, My that this constitution was not written by elected people's representatives, or issued by them, or ratified by them. neighbours Poudel and Sita Adhikary who are students, saw him being arrested. In fact they were the ones

who informed me about the arrest. The government says Dandapani is not in its custody. arresting him they kept him in Maharajgunj Battalion for a month. On the 25th day of his arrest, he was blindfolded and allowed to move or of his room. A policeman who happens to be from Chitwan told me this. He told me that they also questioned him. The policeman's description matches the name, address and age. Later they started moved him to Pokhara, Bhaktapur and other places. I came to know last February that he was ill

What steps have you taken to locate him?

In the first week of May 1999, I filed a writ with the Supreme Court, which was overruled in the third week of June. I filed another writ some days

later. That too was overturned. Last year, I held two press conferences, nothing came out of them. Human rights activists have trie to locate him, and the party is also looking for him. Why do you think the government wants to hide

Maybe the government wanted him to surrender. It would be its way of getting back at the party. Leaders will never want to do anything tha would bring shame to their party. That is why they might have just locked him up.

# Giriia's other. dangerous side

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba recently said that he is open to the idea of forming an interim government. As soon as he had made he announcement, Girija Prasad Koirsk president of the Nepali Congress stated that the Maoists should be classified as terrorists, adding that even the king was in favour of mobilising the army against them so they could be dealt with in a proper manner. This shows that he i in favour of a military solution. This also clearly shows that Koirala wants to be in power again, and that the only way he sees of getting Deuba out is by claiming there has been a breakdown in the law and order situation. If the dialogue with the Magists is successful then it will definitely give a major boost to Deuba and his camp. The very existence of Koirala and his followers



Girija Koirala, Sushil Koirala and their faithful are trying to create problems for Deuba, but Krishna Prasad Bhattarai has stepped in to defend him and asked everyone in th party to support Deuba in every

The major opposition party, the LIMI seems to be closer to the Koirala side The informal alliance between the two is very significant. It seems that the UML is prepared to support Koirala's call for an alliance

of all democratic forces. Clearly, all political parties and their leaders are going all out to cash in on the troubles facing the country And they are creating great trouble for the country to get what they want The Maniets have to work harder to maintain their love for the ountry and the people.

### No licenses

Tarun, 12 November

Parliament recently passed the seventh amendment to the Education Act, which the Nepal Teachers' Organisation (NTO) and the Nepal National Teachers Association (NNTA) have both vehemently opposed. The

mendment will destroy the education sector, which is already in shambles, and they are both now preparing to start an agitation against the bill. On 20 October, the two organisations presented a protest letter to the Ministry of Education

Many teachers formerly aligned with Nepali Congress-supported NTO are now slowly leaving the party. Already 350 members of the organisation have left the party in walnarasi. 147 in Surkhet. 129 in Bara. 32 in Dang and 1,200 in Kavre. This is happening in other districts too. According to the seventh amendment, teachers will be asked to retire if they indulge in politics, are members of any political party, canvass for political parties or start publicly expressing their political affiliations. It is because of these clauses that many teachers nave now started deserting the Nepali Congress, says NTO President Bhattarai.

But both the major teacher sociations claim that this is not the only reason they are starting an agitation. The new amendmen clearly states that all aspects of running schools—especially those concerned with salaries, allowances, nsions and provident funds—will be handed over to public school management committees. The teachers have made this the main agenda of their protest.

They say they are also protesting the proposed system of licenses. which permanent teachers will have to take exams to obtain if they want to keep their jobs. They feel that asking teachers to take exams is an insult and that it is detrimental to those who have been teaching for over 30 years and are now close to etirement age. Many teachers say such a move is against the law.

The teachers state that the examination is not necessary for eachers who have passed the Public Earlier the NTO and the NNTA had asked that teachers be provided with teaching permits. To dear the mess in the education system the povernment has taken the easy way out. To weed out teachers who have acquired fake certificates, the vernment will now require all achers to take an examination within five years of being hired. If they do not, they will be dismissed. Teachers think that this s an insult to them.

The teachers also believe that the amendment will increase politicisation of the education sector People on the managing committees of schools feel that education should not be held completely in the bands of the government but should be the responsibility of the community, and this is the best way to decide what is best for community schools. They feel that parents will also certainly take an interest in the management of the schools once they are given a voice in the day-to-day affairs of the institutions. The active interest of parents and communities as a whole will be beneficial for the whole

Efforts are also being made to institutionalise all private and community schools. The government will give all new teachers temporary teaching permission within six months of their being hired. Teachers will have to take the government-administered examination within five years of receiving teaching permission. If they do not, they will automatically be dismissed

education sector.

MUKULHUMAGAIN

here's plenty more to adventur

you get to see that dangling from one finger off a sheer rock face, o

inching through a crack in a wall that

Rock climbing is perhaps one of

seems too small for anything more

ecognised sports in Nepal. But

though Nepal has a long way to go

the least promoted and under

sport than meets the eye. And

# six years to school and college students

training program and providing more information on the sport.
The training program is held twice a year for a minimum of 15 amateur Nepali climbers. The NMA appually trains about thirty people at Nagarjun in Kathmandu and Chiwong in Solu Phaplu, a high altitude region. Climbing is an adventure sport in its own right, but it is also a necessity for those who want to receive training in

untaineering. Since 1998, Eco Himal and the NMA have also been jointly organising mountaineering training courses in Thame, Solu Khumbu, The five-week ourses include rock climbing. The two organisations last week also held a refresher course at Nagarjuna for alumni of the Mountaineering Schoo

Aang Norbu Sherpa, a climbing

and officials say the response is

improving, particularly after the

association started publicising the

faces have been developed as training expert associated with Mountaineering School in Thame, says a lot needs to be ooth local and foreign. done to create awareness about rock The Nepal Mountaineering climbing. Adventure sport enthusiasts ociation (NMA) and other private come to Nepal to go mountaineering. parties have been instrumental in trekking and rafting, but you never romoting rock climbing, and slowly hear of anyone who comes here to go the sport is entering public conscious-ness. The NMA has been providing rock climbing. Aang Norbu is convinced that if the sport were pushed

before it can compete with other Asian

climbing countries such as Japan, the

Philippines and Indonesia, some rock

by tourism authorities and private dventure tour operators, we would see a substantial number of tourists increasing their stay by a day or two.

In contemplating the possibilities of rock climbing in Nepal, the While most of us think of the archipelago as superb diving country, among professionals Indonesia is slowly gaining a reputation for good climbing, articularly through its indoor npetitions. Outdoor rock climbing is mostly around Jakarta or nearby Bandung, but Sumatra has some pretty spectacular outdoor climbing cliffs. This sort of adventure sport branding, ay people like Aang Norbu, would be asy to do in Nepal The NMA does have rock dimbing

experts such as Ang Nuru Sherpa, Prem Bahadur Gurung, Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Kilu Temba Sherpa, Iman Singh Gurung and Da Gombu Sherpa. Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme in France and could play an important part in popularising the sport. But along with that, we also need to improve training facilites through, among other endeavours, building indoor walls like the one the Pasang Lhamu Foundation is building near Maharaiguni Anyone up for a climb



Kathmandu offers some terrific places for those who like inching up sheer vertical cliffs with their fingernails.

entrance walk up the road that leads to the army checkvarying degrees of difficulty.

The other interesting, though less explored, climbing site in the Valley lies north of Kathmandu on the slopes of Shivapuri adjacent to the Bishnumati river. The cliffs here are black granite, and need more effort, if not more expertise. To get here, head west past Budhanilkantha school and climb up along the left bank of the Bishnumati. The track passes through paddy fields before entering the Shivapuri Wildlife Reserve, where the cliffs are



Few people know that you can go climbing in the Royal Park of Nagarjuna near Balaju, a 20-minute walk northwest of Kathmandu. For a Rs 10 entrance fee, beginners and experts can have their pick of several cliffs within the park. The best one is about three km inside, from the point, just before the post, there is a track leading off the right which in five minutes gets you to a 10-12 m granite face. There are several piton equipment routes up this of

FILM REVIEW

# THE CRITIC AND THE POET:

# Govinda Bartaman

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Unlike most progressive poetry-which can be emotive but simple, resorting to common tropes that are easily understood by the Nepali everyman-Govinda Bartaman's poems require readers not just to work their hearts, but also to tay their brains. There is a studied philosophical timbre to his work that comes, perhaps, from his work as a literary and social critic. (He is one of the clear logicians in the progressive ranks of Nepali literature today). In the poem below. Bartaman uses the symbol of a walking cityand the menacing image of its unstoppable, stalking legs-to reflect upon the increasingly fast-paced, greedy and heartless nature of life in Kathmandu

#### THE CITY'S LEGS

On streets cleansed by currents of coins the city's legs walk to crowds and deserted corners to pubs and parlours hauling all the goings-on of the body The city's legs walk endlessly, without tire

With the same haste that national disasters feel to generate headlines in daily newspapers the city's legs pace back and forth in the aggrandisement resembling vile makeup on the faces of all the front pages
The city's legs walk endlessly, without tire

Storing sleep in a tranquilliser pill they walk all night through a jungle of pitches Sometimes they ride all night upon the horseback of words circling the unbounded world of their own idiocy When they step down, hungry they garge on the blood of time They ordain every shoe in the world a master, not a slave And currying favour with these shoes they forge ahead to stalk the marketplace No, the city's legs never tire

There are many of us like me here

Emerging from the hush of our brains our insufficiencies and our legs walk to factories and to offices seeking work and conducting work seeking loads and carrying loads tiring as they walk walking as they tire Among these legs, my own legs walk now towards rice grains and lentils towards the vegetable market These are but food products sometimes they are available sometimes not On days when I can't find a face for the body that I have erected my legs disappear into my own eyes and stride towards brutal dreams In my dreams, the butt ends of rifles My legs become bloodstained as they walk From nearby the city's legs chant slogans of the global village at my legs Tell me if anything can be done to stop the city's leas which become more and more brutal with each new rise of day

The most dangerous thing-These days our city has started gorging on human flesh and the city's legs are out stalking for prey

This poem was originally printed in the "Koseli" section



# Harry Potter: the film

s there anything as exciting as the legend of JK Rowling—lone mother, would-be writer, churchuse poor, sitting in a local cafe for warmth, and writing down these word rom what was to be the first chapter o Harry Potter and the Philosopher's itone: "He'll be famous—a legend—l vouldn't be surprised if today was Harry Potter Day in future—there will e books written about Harry—every child in our world will know his name!" Was there a crash of thunder outside? Did the sky fill with portent Did the cafe fill with owls?

It certainly ought to have done. That was the beginning of the remarkable Harry Potter trajectory, a rajectory which may only end around 2007 with a possible projected seventh HP movie from Warner, by which time we might all feel differently about the bespectacled one Roman conque ors had people whisper "You are but mortal" in their ears. Maybe IK Rowling employs staff to send her Jar Jar Binks merchandise. At any rate this richly accom-

plished entertainment spectacular, the quickest, zappiest two and a half hours ou'll spend in the cinema, made me ery nostalgic: not for boarding schools CSI ewis or Angela Beazil by for the old-fashioned pre-11 September cultural news event. In those nnocent days, giant global phenomi for the west sprang from the culture industry—Madonna, Hannibal, amazon.com—and their newsworthil disruptive implications could be chewed over in the knowledge that our peace and plenty were essentially undisturbed So Harry Potter. ensational, earth-shattering Harry otter, is said to be, variously, a rebul to political correctness, a repudiation of he fallacy that children want a dour reflection of broken homes and ethni strife, and a clarion call for literacy

Chris Columbus's movie is otable in its utter subservience to th written word: it is tightly, shrewdly respectful of the book, clearly very eluctant indeed to alienate any part o the 100 million-strong reading fanbase, and even its tiny swervings (no Peeves the Poltergeist) have been oudly regretted by the faithful. Exercising her massive clout, the author has insisted on British actors and British accents, and her Hollywood sponsors, now yearning for escapism, are awfully glad she did. Only when the time comes to film Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban might echoes from the outsid world start to intrude again. As all the world knows. Harry is

the little wizard boy, or should that be

wizard little boy, whose magus parer Lily and James were killed by the inspeakable Voldemort (shhhhhh!!). Bur he is then delivered to his Muggl e non-magician, civilian aunt and ancle, and beastly fat cousin, to be bullied until Harry is whisked off to Hogwarts, a glorious boarding school or trainee wizards where you are allowed to say "bloody" to a beak without getting into trouble and where Harry is tutored in the art of potions spells, and riding a broomstick. He is vatched over by the headmaster Dumbledore: a wisely bearded and nowy-haired Richard Harris, whose habitual and very slight away-with-theairies screen presence is here absolutely disciplinarian Professor McGonagall: a very Jean Brodie-ish Maggie Smith. on Hart is the timid Professor Ouirrell, and Alan Rickman luxuriate n the role of the superbly, hilariously inister Severus Snape, speaking his

immobile mouth, the comers of which

The young prince of light himself is played by Daniel Radcliffe, who has harm and a lovely, open face, though he is subtly but distinctly outclassed b his pals. They are somehow a touch nore lively than Harry himself, who accepts his destiny and heroism with a kind of evenness bordering on insouciance, and is never troubled with any doubts or reversals that are not wiftly erased. Rough-and-ready Ron is Rupert Grint, playing a muted lack Wild to Daniel's Mark Lester and Emma Watson is the magnificent Hermione: imperious, impetuous but eart-breakingly loyal in the tradition of the subordinate Enid Blyton girl.

The special effects for this movie are just staggering: John Seale's inematography and Stuart Craig's esign come together superbly. My jaw dropped at the magnificent shots of Hogwarts' central hallway, with its moving staircases and animated chattering portraits. The central Quidditch scene, that strange game played while flying on a hmor supremely exciting. No Etonian will ver pine for the wall game as much as Hoowarts fantacists will love Quidditch and they'll take it more seriously than Thomas Hughes and Dr Arnold ever

took rugby football. And those houses! Can it really be true that in 2001, children from Amersham to Zambia can be made to care about which wackily named public school "House" the stars get into? The ssigned their house by the talking ha in the great hall was like nothing so much as the master's speech in Chariots of Fire in which earnest oung Cambridge matriculands were made to feel that being Caius men was a deeply and fascinatingly different thing from being, say, Trinity men. The difference is not half as compelling as the difference between Slytherin, the ouse for talented but sinister types, and poor old Hufflepuff, the house for wimps and nerds. Director Chris Columbus plays all

the fantasy straight—insofar as it can be played straight—and thankfully never succumbs to the temptation to twist an of the story for adult laughs or impose an extra layer of obtuse adult "surreality" which would have been utterly wrong, and condescending. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if Terry Gilliam had been hired to direct it. I have an awful feeling that it would have been coloured with precisely this sort of wrongheaded, patronising loopiness. Or if not that exactly, then it might have looked like those Christmas all-star adaptations of Alice's Adventures in Willows in which TV comedy stars at knowingly latexed up as the well-loved lead characters. Columbus's movie, albeit corseted in utter fidelity to the book, never talks down to its material

It is an investment of seriousness which is repaid when we arrive at the nal centrepiece, far more important than Harry's battle to etrieve the Philosopher's Stone itself, a plot point which, on the screen as on the page, is disappointingly fudged. This crunch is when Harry sees a vision of his dead parents in the fables Mirror of Erised, the enchanted glass which, as it name hints, reflects the nlooker's deepest desire . Harry Potter's story—his oppression by the Muooles and then the empowerment without the fact of his parents' death.



JK Rowling's schoolbov sorcerer provides the quickest, zappiest two and a half hours of entertainment vou'll ever see.

mething which speaks to every child's fantasy life: the fear of abandonment coupled with the thrill of

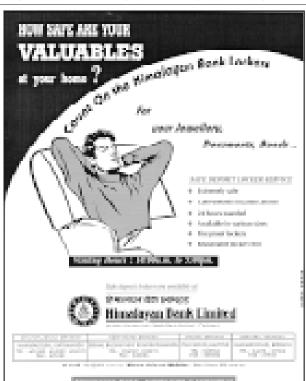
Harry's dad is a smiling, middle iged, speccy version of himself. His num is-well, tall, aubum-haired serious-looking, very much like a Their seraphically calm, heroically selfeffacing presence makes them look like Superman's parents Jor-el and Lara, placing their defenceless baby Kal-el in spaceship and blasting him away to afety before the planet Krypton explodes. Or even, dare we say it. oseph and Mary themselves. Certain Harry's dad is effectively supplanted in Harry's world by Dumbledore: that white-haired, white-bearded divinity figure. And the movie makes no bones vhatever about Voldemort's Luciferian background, the wizard who challenged authority and fell from grace, and now, with a whiff of sulphur, persuades his ollowers that there is no good and evilonly the "power".

Nothing could have more of the nakings of an epic series than this, I has legs. It has wings. It has broomsticks for whizzing about on. The great (The Guardian)

HP saga might conceivably rival the Bond movies for staying power, and it s interesting, and challenging, that Harry is set to age in real time, taking his fans along with him through the rocky road of adolescence and beyond Even just on its own, it's a wildly successful picture, and I grinned with ouldn't help thinking that however well executed it is, the movie is ddressed to fans, rather than a general udience. It takes its customers' lovalties ssentially for granted, without, like other movies, needing to persuade and excite us from first principles. For the oment, this is hardly a problem. A the screening I was at, children and adults alike were simply delirious with wall around me: I was the cautious raditionalist among charismatics.

Jenace a terrible creative complacency and sclerosis can so easily set in. At the end of a fantastically enjoyable 152 ninutes, the old adage "Leave them vanting more" popped unbidden int decade, the HP franchise will test that





Festival of French Films 12 feature films presented by the French Embassy and Alliance Française, All films subtitled. Free passes at the French Embassy (Lazimpat), Alliance Française Thapathali), Chez Caroline (Babar Mahal Revisited), Himal Media (Sanchay Kosh Building, Pulchowk), Tik 'n Tok (New Road). 27 November-2 December, Russian Cultural Centre.

Kenichi Komatsu 2001 Exhibition and sale of photographs by Japanese photographer of Mustang, Dolpa and pilgrimages to old Nepali temples. Organised by Japan-Nepal Photographic Exchange Society, 22 November-7 December, Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal, 220735

Digital Art 1995-2001 by Jyoti Duwadi. Until 26 November. Siddharta Art Gallery Baber Mahal

Colour of my mind Paintings by Mona Ghosh. 20 November-2 December, Alliance Francaise,

Nepali classical dance and folk music at Hotel Vaira, Dances of Hindu and Buddhist gods Tuesdays and Fridays, 7PM onwards, the Great Pagoda Hall, Ticket and tea Rs 400, Nepali folk tunes Wednesdays and Saturdays, 6.30Pm onwards, hotel restaurant. Hotel Vajra, 271545.

Siemens Action Asia Himalayan Mountain Bike Race Series 2001 Final event 24 November Onen to all, five race categories, great prizes. Himalayan Mountain Bike. Info@bikingnepal.com. 437437

Contemporary Jazz dance classes by Meghna Thapa. At Alliance Française Sundays and Tuesdays 4.30PM-6.30PM, 241163. At Salvays and ruesdays 4.30PM-5.30PM, 241163. At Barus, Kamal Pokhari, Wednesdays 6.30PM-8PM, Saturdays 1.30PM.

Visions 2001: The World Of Fashion Nepali and Indian professional models model ethnic and modern ensembles designed by top Nepali designers. Modelled clothes and iewellery on sale. Rs 1.500, including dinner, Baber Mahal Revisited, 23 November 6PM. Tickets at Baithak, K2 (251647), and Chez Caroline (263070).

Ganesh's Trunk Exhibition and sale of Christmas ornaments and cards, hand-painted baskets, woven Thankas, paper products, iewellery, hand crafted soaps and herbal products Newar wood carving, luxury homeware, cashmere and silks, carpets, Raffle with prizes to benefit the Harelip Project. 24 November, 11AM- 6PM Hotel Yak & Yeti.

Blast from the past Sixties theme night with Rusty Nails, Red Sky Walkers, Robin & Looza. 28 November, 6PM onwards, Radisson Hotel. Rs 450 including one beer or soft drink. 423888

Live acoustic music Dinesh Rai and Deependra every Friday and Sunday at the Himalatte Café 7.30PM-10PM 262526

Weekends at The Jazz Bar The Jazz Commission on Thursdays, Chris Masand's Latin band on Fridays and on Saturdays An Fainne. 7PM onwards, Shangri-La Hotel. 412999 Live music by Catch-22 Tuesday and Friday nights at the 40,000 ½

ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant, 414336

Afro-Caribbean night with music and speciality food. Rs 500, 30 November, La'Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque, Pulchowk. For reservations ring 525290.

BBQ and Thai buffet dinner every Friday with live band Las Sonidos Latinos, Adults Rs 500, children under 12 Rs 250, Taxes extra. Summit Hotel, Sanepa. 521810

Far Pavilion Indian cuisine with Sapana Pariyar and Suresh Manandhar. Everyday except Tuesday. 8PM-11PM, The Everest Hotel Spa Rejuvenation Cuisine Special brunch offer with use of health

club and swimming pool. 25 November, 11.30AM-5PM. Rs 750 Hotel Yak & Yeti

Himalayan Feelings Fusion band every Friday night with full Sekuwa dinner and complimen tary beer or soft drink. Rs 555 per head. Rs1010 per couple at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488 Le Cafe des Trekkers New Tibetan and French restaurant. Special 10 percent discount on Nepali menu until 7 December. Jyatha, Thamel, opposite Hotel Blue Diamond. 225777 Barbecue lunch with complementary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children, Satur

days and Sundays at the Godavari Village Resort. 560675 Rox Restaurant Traditional home-style European cuisine from a wood-fired oven. Steaks, trout, roasted vegetables, desserts. Hotel Hyatt Regency. 491234

Chiso Chiso Hawama Summer B&B package for Nepalis and expatriates. Rs 1,250 per head. Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort. 410432, 414432

Escape to Jomsom Two nights, three days, B&B package with tours and Pokhara-Jomsom

return airfare. Expats \$250 per head. Valid until New Year. Jomsom Mountain Resort. 434870 Nagarkot Escape Weekends in cottages, views of the Himalayas, valleys and forests. Special rates for Nepalis and resident expatriates, Hotel Keyman Chautari.

keyman@wlink.com.np 436850 For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com

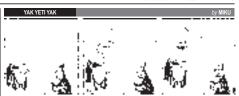
Not much to report. The westerlies travel across Iran and Afrihanistan, and then just when it looks like they are headed our way they veer off northwards to the Pamirs This is why Nenal has only seen the edges of several of these fronts in the past two weeks. Western Nepal has received a dusting of snow, but otherwise it has been an uncharacteristically warm and dry November so far. And it looks like it will stay that way for the foreseeable future. What this means is dry days ahead, thicker ground fog in Kathmandu Valley and z further drop in minimum temperatures, while the maximum stays at a halmy 24













Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet Ulrich von Schroeder Vol I: India and Nepal 655 pp, 766 illustrations (749 colour, 17 half-tone) Covers Gandhara, Swat, Pamir, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Pala, Lichhavi and Malla

Vol II: Tibet and China 675 pp, 987 illustrations (949 colour, 38 half-tone) Covers the origin, development, technical and ritual aspects of Tibetan art through the Imperial and Monastic periods, and also Chinese metal sculptures from the Ming Visual Dharma Publications, Hong Kong

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# Radio Sagarmatha

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# Champadevi sunrise

# Shhh. Here is Kathmandu's best kept secret.

grey to pink, silhouetting the nountains and framing the sky, a few early risers are huffing and puffing along the pine ridge They are racing the sun to the top of Champadevi on Kathmandu Valley's southern rim.

But the sun is rising at the speed of the earth's rotation, and pretty soon the first rays catch up with the climbers and bathe the dew-wet pine forest in a warm golden glow. Below, the scene is primordial, the fog covering Kathmandu like a blanket at the exact height of the lake that was once there. Only the temple at the top of Kirtipur and Swoyambhu's golden stupa pierce through the mist like islands.

To the north, the snow pyramids of Dorje Lakpa and Langtang reflect the yellow light and loom over the Valley, Along the horizon, dwarfed by the saw tooth summits of the nearer Rolwaling mountains, is Mt Everest. You'll miss it if you don't know where to look, but the bhadgaonle topi outline of the world's highest mountain is unmistakable Gauri Shankar's imposing west face is in shadow and despite being more than 100 km away, it has a dominating presence. Welcome to Kathmandu's best-kept secret: The Champadevi Sunrise.

Start early. If lethargy or nangover conspire to keep you in bed, persevere. This time of year, 5.00AM is a good time to start off, because the sun rises early and your progress along the Dakshinkali Road will be slowed by fog. By the time you pass Chobhar, the fog will be as thick as pea soup, mixed up with the overnight dust from the cement factory smokestack. But as

View from Champadevi in 1956 (above), and in 2000, with the built-up town and the plume of the Chobhar cement factory in the foreground.

the car climbs up the hill, you break through the mist to be accosted by a sky full of stars Venus is rising behind Phulchowki just beginning to be visible in the pale pre-dawn to the east. Take the turnoff to Hattiban Resort, and climb the narrow, steep, sementine bends through pine orests. Pass the resort and drive up another kilometre along the ridge and park the car. The smell of fresh air after the stale air of the Valley floor is so intense that the oxygen makes you dizzy.

The climb to Champadev should take one-and-a-ĥalf hours. and the last bit to the round and wide summit at 6,200 ft is steep. The more adventurous can continue along the ridge and climb another two hours to the summit of Chandragiri at 8,700 ft, from where the views of the Himalava from Dhaulagiri to Everest are even

more spectacular. The great thing about this hike is you can just keep walking along the ridge for as long as you can take it. Some hike right up to Chitlang Pass and descend to Thankot, but this will take you the whole day. Unlike other tourist areas around the Valley, there are no resorts, and the likelihood of eeing other hikers is minimal.

Take plenty of water, there are o streams or water sources. One great way to finish off your Champadevi climb is to make a leisurely descent to Hattiban Resort (keeping an eye out for the abundant bird life), order brunch and stay around for tea while watching the haze clear from Kathmandu Valley laid out at your feet.



PREMIER AND HERO: Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuha unveiling statue of national hero, Shankadar Shankhwa in Thimi on 16 November to mark the Newari New Year 1122.



trainees of the National Hair Institute at the Royal Singhi Hotel on 20 November.



NKING ALOUD: South Asian participants at a conference on "Regionalism and the Nation State "organised by HIMAL South Asian magazine at the Dwarika's Hotel on 18 November



20 23-29 NOVEMBER 2001 NEPALITIMES



# **Under My Hat**

by Kunda Dixit

# Bijuli ko tar, tar, tar...



here are a few things that distinguish human beings from non-human ones. Humans, for instance, have the well-known tendency to sprout fur under their armpits, whereas other laser ammands whose amminis I have penoually inspected while researching this airtick don't. Humans are also the only species dide from the Common Himalayan Blue-throased Blueh Chart that can compose music and sing. How the genes responsible for music evolved in early humans is still amstare of conjecture in the scientific community at large, but the latest theory is that our primate anceston made nature of conjecture in the scientific community at large, but the latest theory is that our primate anceston made nature of conjecture in the scientific community at large, but the latest theory is that our primate anceston made nature of conjecture in stringing when, after a land day of hunting, gathering and stalking mammods in the peat bogs, they started taking the farts pre-bistonic showers. This is why, to this day, my significant other sings popular Negali folloss onega while in the lost fact, the it would not be a singuistic control of the con

doing so even as we speak. Nexpl if ifs soons, as those of us who have made multiple visits to Blosjan Golha know, are a facinating blend of rinthum, needly and post joins. It is the harmony of these three important musical elements that made. Nexplif filed is oriestable. There is not a redder who does not leave this country humming Resham phiririwhile being frished amidst heightened security are the diparture gate. I have often wondered at the popularity of that particulars ong, and have one to the condition that it is the lytics that make it the hot favourite. The words are imbued with deep symbolism and relevance. Take the second stans of the choruse.

Ek nale banduk. Dui nale banduk. Mrigalai take ko. Mrigalai maile take ko hoina, maya lai dake ko.

Translation:
One-barrel gun, two-barrel gun, aiming at a deer.
Pm not aiming at no deer.

These are poignant words. And the juxtaposition of an emerging gun-culture and latent violence with words of endearment lend the song an ominous sense of foreboding. The uncertainties of love are symbolic in a land where life itself bee became uncertainty.

Let's take another popular Nepali song from yesteryear where the lyrics evoke the nostalgia for a time when the world was young, love was sweet, while through the medium of music the Nepali public gets a lesson in horticulture and the vital significance of the insect kingdom in cross-pollination.

Ma mahuri hun Radha, Timi aanp ko maniari hau

My good friend Salil assisted me in translating it thus:

I am a bee, Radha, You are a mango tree.

I see some dancing in the aisles, so let me present another popular folk tune, this one by Sambhujit Banskotæ

Rato tika nidharma, talakka talkiyo Chhati bhitra mayako, aago salkiyo. Eh, bijuliko tar, tar, tar... Phureato bhave, eh baiur, bhetaun sanibar

Red dot on your forchead shining, brightly Flame of love burning in my chest, fiercely. Hey, electricity wire, wire... Let's meet on Saturday if you're not tied up already.

Here, the lyricist has cleverly shown us the connection between a high-voltage transmission line and thermal energy. Then, subdy, he drives home the important message that our nation's future rests in the prudent harnessing of our hydropower potential so that young citizens will have the leisure to rendezous on weekend.

Hydropower is a recurring theme in Nepali folk songs, as we can see in this next one which is the lament of a paanchewing tehnician working in the Middle Marsyangti Project whose responsibility it is to power the nation day and night:

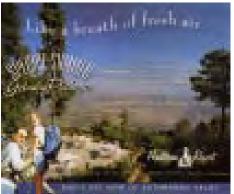
raan ko pat Maya timilai samjhanchhu din ko raat Marsyangdi sa la la...

Darling betel leaf, I think of you day and night Like the lean season flow of the Marsyangdi.

And it is when the river goes dry because all the water has been diverted to the turbines that there is hint of trouble in paradise and the first signs of psychosis:

Dhunge bagara, dajai, dhunge bagara Maya chhadaichha halla nagara.

Rocky bugger, brother, rocky bugger OK, OK, Hove you, so shut up alread



#### NEPALI SOCIET

# Headline twins

in they were born joined at the were born joined at the were born joined at the the bead at Prasuit Githa in Thapathali, twins Ganga and Jamuna are back in Kathmandu. These conjoined sisters, the youngest Nepall duo to hit world headlines, were separated at the Singapore General Hospital in early April. The operation, initially expected to last 30 hours, ended up taking the team of about 20 expert surgeons over 90 hours to complete.

There have been only four

instances of twins joined at the head being successfully separated and it was, if nothing else, an extremely expensive undertaking. Neurologist Dr Basant Pant says Nepali doctors did a commendable job, but the operation was impossible in Nepal due to lack of equipment. Even in Singapore, the procedure could only be undertaken because after news of the twins' plight hit the headlines, generous contributions came in from Singaporeans and Nepalis. Bhushan KC and Sandhya Shrestha now have enough money to take care of the medical expenses of their children for the next few years.

medical expenses of their children for the next few years. The twins are said to be in reasonable health and are now at home in Kathmandu mow at home in Kathmandu.



Angiophone environment for close to a year, they seem to respond more to English that to Nepali. "No matter," says delighted grandad Arjundev Shrestha. "I'll talk to them in English."

