

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

ated and situated on a hilltop. A fellow

soldier on the watchtower had already seen them coming, and we started shooting at

anyone who came near us. They came in

droves—I guess they numbered over a thousand. There were only 36 of us. We

just kept mowing them down, and after a

12 bodies in our compound. My guess is

that night."

that they suffered more than 200 casualties

The army and the Maoists are playing a cat and mouse game

VIJAY KUMAR IN KAPURKOT ber. As in Salleri on 26 November, the t is a cold and lonely life for the 40 soldiers Maoists suffered heavy casualties in Kapurkot. guarding the Kapurkot telecommunications

tower here in mid-western Nepal. This windy hilltop at 2.000 m is also at a point where the Maoist-infested districts of Dang, Salyan and Rolpa meet. On 8 January, as part of their effort to target the country's telecom-munication network Maoist rebels attacked the tower, but were repulsed and suffered significant losses. The army found 12 bodies in the area around the barracks. Nearby, villagers found two dozen more.

As they usually do, the Maoists attacked in a human wave. Not all of them were armed. and while preparing for the attack they chanted slogans, sang revolutionary songs and beat drums. They were hit by withering fire from army sentries on the hill. When a comrade was hit, an unarmed Maoist cadre would take up his weapon. In these remote mid-western hills such tactics used to terrify locals, and the consequent fear was overwhelming. It is a measure of the Maoists' earlier confidence that they made no secret of an impending attack. Still, a demoralised police either abandoned their posts or cowered with their World War I vintage 303 rifles waiting for the devastating attacks.

The tables have now turned. Such psy-war tactics are not as effective with the Royal Neral Army, and the Maoists have not been able to overrun a single army base after the surprise attack on the Ghorahi garrison on 23 Novem-

tions to many districts. There are also indications the Maoists have abandoned such Infantryman Suresh Pun gave us this frontal attacks on fixed positions and are account of the attack: "It was 11 o'clock at night when we heard four gunshots and people shouting slogans. Our outpost is very

concentrating on ambushing army patrols. Over in Rolpa, the district headquarter of Libang has two faces. By day it looks like r poor, remote mountain town i Nepal. By five in the evening everything shuts down, a nalpable sense of nervous grips the market. Even the dogs slink indoors. Maoists in the surrounding hills no more shoot in the air, set up bonfires and shout slogans on loudspeakers at night to few hours they gave up and fled. We found intimidate the bazar. The army has now brought in its long-range howitzers that have a range of 5 km, so the Maoists have fled into the hinterland.

The Maoists have two cardinal rules of But Libang residents are still scared: the memory of the police crackdowns during Kilo combat: never leave a weapon or a dead body of a comrade behind. So the fact that so many Sierra Two in 1998 and Maoist brutality of bodies were left behind was an indication of recent years is still fresh in their minds the rout they suffered both here and in Salleri. Fearing that they will once more be caught in "I don't think they can stand up against the the crossfire, most residents and political leaders have fled. But this has been made up army," says Pun. "We are much better trained and have sophisticated weapons. We are also for by the influx of refugees from outlying exposed to war situations when we go abroad villages: people fleeing the fighting to the as peacekeepers. Moreover, our morale is high. They made a bad decision when they thought relative safety of Libang. The army barrack located above the town has given Libang residents a psychological boost, and a sense they could scare us like they did the police. Even so, the army has been forced to withdraw of security. But mindful of recent Maoist attacks on Rukumkot, Kalikot and Jumla Maoists have destroyed at least three towers in they know that even here they are exposed.

Myagdi, Nuwakot and in the far-west in the Today, you can still take a bus to Libang past two months, cutting of phone connecbut it means submitting to the strictest

HEMLATA RAI AND ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

from vulnerable telecom towers, and the

he SAARC summit suddenly stirred the Valley's municipali-ties from their deep slumber. The main intersections got repaired and widened, traffic islands came up overnight and suddenly there were parks and wide open spaces. It came at a price: Rs 60 million

But Kathmandu's ambitious mayor Keshav Sthapit assures us all this was not a flash in the pan. "The Negal mindset needs a big event to get inspired to work. SAARC was one, and the next is the king's coronation," he told us. He seems undeterred by the local government elections scheduled three months from now that will decide whether he remains mayor.

Even Sthapit's diehard critics would agree with that. And despite the cost, they say Kathmandu badly needed a facelift. Maitighar intersection was a case in point: suddenly up popped a garden consisting of the largest mandala in Nepal, surrounded by an astamangala and three traditional spouts. The garden is nearing completion, and the utahina spouls. The garden as nearing completion, and the dathmand Metropolitan Council is already identifying a private sponsor to maintain it. Jyoti Bhushan Pradhan of the KMC's Public Construction Department says: "We are hopeful. Industries, business houses and offices... have volunteered to help maintain 20 traffic island gardens." No less impressive was the way uply shanties and sand depots gave way to a four hectare park over a matter of days In Tinkune. "We had to clear things overnight for SAARC, but the challenge now is to figure out what this city needs in the next

ey came in droves, and we t mowing them do iew from the Kapurkot wate

security, and if you are not a Rolpali, it may be impossible to get through. For ordinary people, life is hard as always but made harder by the fighting. Bhim

Bahadur Magar walked nine hours from his home village to Libang to make his citizenship card. While waiting, he chatted with us in a tea shop. "There is no future here. I'm going to the Gulf to work. Earlier it was the police harassing us, these days it is Maoists," he said. "Now that the army is here, the situation has improved. But the army can't be eventswhere at the same time In Libang, local officials tell me that

hundreds of Maoists have surrendered. But by all accounts these are not the hardcore cadre. Most of the leaders have either fled the district, according to local sources, or have gone off to India. Beyond the reach of the

army, the Maoists are still active in the remote villages. The army's main challeng here is logistics: even if they know where the Maoist hideouts are, it is difficult to get there. A local army commander sums it up 'In Rolpa, the Maoists are down but not out. But it's just a matter of time before they realise the only alternative is to come back to the negotiating table." ♦

Interview n5

Endangered national parks p4-5

(Vijay Kumar is a television journalist and editor of the fortnightly magazine, Nepal. He is one of the first journalists allowed to visit the frontline in the army's counter-insurgency war.)

Tinkune will look like this.

decade," says Renchin Yonjan who has been the mastermind behind the KMC's high-profile beautification projects. If Yonjan has her way, Tinkune will turn into a horticultural paradise with a pond, lush trees and walkways. Disagreement over whether it should be the statue of a Buddha or of Maniushree had earlier delayed Tinkune's rehabilitation. Yonjan doesn't think much of either idea. "Look, we have enough Buddhas in our city which are neglected," she told us. "The Buddha himself was against megalomania, he would have preferred a patch of green that is in harmony with nature." After Tinkune, Yonjan wants to work with the Department of Roads on a green belt encircling the city along the

Ring Road The mayor, for his part, is on a building spree. He wants to build 22 km of bicycle tracks, widening 27 km of roads, building 37 new pedestrian overpasses. And he is determined not to let the breakneck pace of SAARC rebuilding to slow. He has enlisted the help of the Department of Roads. Anand Prasad Khanal of the department told us: "We worked hard to meet the SAARC deadline, but it is part of our routine work, which will be continued." But wasn't most of the repair for SAARC shoddy? Khanal admits the repair work was quick fix, but says it will last a year, which is when the next major repair is scheduled.

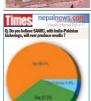


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We and the west

he flying visit of US Secretary of State Colin Powell to Nepal on Friday is the highest-level visit ever after Spiro Agnew stopped by for sight-seeing in 1970 This is as good a time as any to look at where Nepal fits in. After 11 September, every state that had beer fighting an insurgency or separatist movement quickly hitched on to the USled global "war on terror". It was convenient to look at a domestic uprising as part of a larger worldwide conspiracy so that we would be allied with the most powerful nation on earth. This may have given us someone to lean on, but such moral support is only a psychological consolation. It is not going to help us resolve a crisis that needs a domestic political solution

It is important for us to learn lessons from Afghanistan, and do everything in our power to prevent Nepal from being turned into a battlefield where regional and world powers can play their proxy wars. This is a Nepali problem, and we should resolve it ourselves. The worst thing that can happen is for us to get sucked into regional rivalries that turn Nepal into another Afghanistan, or (god forbid)

Cambodia. The Colin Powell visit to South Asia is just the latest in a flurry of diplomatic activities: Musharraf to Beijing, Blair to

Islamabad, Zhu Rongji to Delhi. Nepal's foreign policy is a legacy of our unique history. And there are some contradictions we have had to live with in exchange for never being colonised. One of them is the diplomatically embarrassing subject of Nepali citizens serving in foreign armies and fighting countries with which we have friendly

If there is one word Nepali leaders hope never pops up at NAM and SAARC Summits (just as well Nepal is not in the Commonwealth and we don't have to attend CHOGM). it is the one beginning with "G". When Indian and Pakistani forces were eyeball-to-eyeball in the Poonch Sector during the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, a lot of the eyeballs on the Indian side were actually Nenali

possession.

established nation state in the region. But

the British in Lucknow during the Mutiny,

in Afghanistan as part of the British com-

Nepalis laid down their lives to defeat Ger-

world wars of the last century, 100,000

Nepal's total population at that time! No

died in Sri Lanka while serving in the Indian army against Tamil separatists Gurkha soldiers faced and fought against

another friendly country. China, in Askai Chin and NEFA in 1961. Fortunately our neighbour ing countries understand the historical reasons why this has been so. But others don't. When Gurkhas landed in the Falk-

by CK LAL

18 - 24 JANUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

lands, Gabriel Garcia Marquez (among London today, and aside from a lone khukuri others) questioned the neo-colonial practice exhibit inside a glass case, there is no other of our soldiers fighting to keep an imperial recognition or tribute to this bloody contribution of the Nepali nation. And what a su-We like to repeat at every conceivable preme irony that the two countries we helped opportunity that Nepal has never been the west defeat-Japan and Germany-are colonised. And it is true: we are the oldest today Nepal's two biggest donors. And

Britain and the United States? what is often overlooked, Mr Powell, is that Nepal has always been a west-leaning Nepal has also been a western ally for nearly member of the non-aligned. One of the 200 years. In fact, ever since the 1814-16 things that used to irk the babus at South Anglo-Nepal War and the Sugauli Treaty, the Block no end in the 1980s was that Nepal Kingdom of Nenal has been the most convoted differently from India in 78 percent of sistently pro-western country in the region. all UN resolutions. Nepal was one of first After Jung Bahadur became the first roval countries in Asia (after Thailand) which had from the subcontinent to pay a state visit to diplomatic relations with Israel.

Britain and France in 1850, we helped rescue We are not passing judgement on this support to the colonialists, the west, the allies Gurkha soliders were deployed in the disas-It is just a historical fact. So why are we raking trous British Afghan campaign in 1837. (What all this up? Just to remind Colin Powell that a historical twist that Gurkhas are now back Nepal always stood by the west during its hours of need. Maybe the west should stand by mando force in Kabul.) Then through the two the Nepali people when our democracy is in crisis. Not by beefing up our military or cosving up to authoritarian evolution, but by a Marshal many and Japan-a shocking two percent of Plan-type economic aid for infrastructure, trade and tourism. In return, our own leaders must colonial possession sacrificed as much for attend to the rot by improving governance and Britain and the allies as independent Nenal by devolving more decision-making power to did. And yet, visit the Imperial War Museum in the grassroots.

an attempt to bypass the Constitution? n 15 October 2001, the cabinet approved a new hydropower development policy for Nepal. The document does indicate some understanding of the weaknesses and challenges facing the sector, but it is a cumbersome labyrinth. What we policy statement.

needed was a lean and dynamic But more seriously, clause 6.11.4 of the policy document cunningly attempts to bypass Article 126 of the constitution that requires a two-third majority ratification of resource sharing treaties if it is of a long-term and serious nature. The clause states: "Permission to implement large multipurpose reservoir projects will

be granted by HMG through this policy itself. However, the question of sharing of natural resources is outside of this policy's framework' So, with this policy (which has been approved by only the cabinet and has not been presented to the utility

transmission and distribution. This, however, is an admission that the merger of Nepal Electricity Corporation and HMG's Electricity Department under donor pressure in 1985 was a mistake. A look back at history tells us how a few astute power bureaucrats of the Electricity . Department manoeuvred to have themselves deputed to the Ministry of Water Resources instead of the NEA and thus undercut HMG's stated policy of having one power

parliament for a simple majority approval) Nepal's water

company set up by the lower riparian, ignoring the parliament as break up its rival, the NEA, but to create three new bureaucracies with well as clause 126 of the constitution. What is even more alarming is full HMG control: a regulatory how our elected representatives, office, a study and promotion specially the opposition parties, center and a management body have chosen to remain silent (clause 16 5 1) It is positive that clause 6.15.2 states that the monolithic Nepal existing Water and Energy Commis-Electricity Authority (NEA) will be sion and other paraphernalia within the Ministry of Water Resources.

or Sapta Kosi to a government

Is the government's new Hydropower Development Policy

Shenanigans in the power bureaucracy

of the NEA Act. Now, through this

policy the FDD not only hopes to

We already have the EDD, the

Still, the power bureaucracy is on

an empire-building spree that is

breathtaking in scope. Village and

district governments are denied any

meaningful role in power genera-

tion, distribution or regulation as

ner the local self-governance act

severe conflict in future.

can, as net felt needs, build and

operate hydropower projects by

development agencies through

Freudian slip undercuts all the

platitudes in the policy document

nvestors. Most Nepali acts have

similar escape clauses that essen-

tially say that no matter what is

iolly well do whatever it likes.

regarding encouragement to private

written in the document HMG can

Those who want to discipline

others must first learn self-disci-

pline. By keeping the institutional

this policy document diminishes

investor confidence, especially of

Nepali investors. Genuine foreign

investing here only if Nepalis

themselves are investing in

hydropower development.

BACK-TO-FRONT

vestors will be convinced about

In a multiparty democracy, policy is

legitimise their policy commitments

through elections and have them

implemented through the bureauc-

however, things are back-to-front:

policy is made by a clique of self-

to get it implemented through

liticians that do not read. A

We are working as per policy."

What it must say and do is, "We

are working as per the law." This

policy document is an attempt to

override the constitution as well as

existing legal regime without going

through the parliamentary process

The power sector in Neral

needs serious reform, for which this

unwieldy policy document will not

just four points stated with firm

Nepal's hydropower will be

developed with the objective of

agriculture competitive advantage

ensuring Nepali industry and

w providing them cheap and

olitical will

be of much help. What we need are

of changing laws and regulations.

nterested bureaucrats who manage

overnment bureaucracy cannot say.

made by political parties who

racy. In this fabled kingdom,

mework opportunistically fluid,

is has opened up the possibility

What's more, the last clause in

the document (6.16) states: "HMG

itself or with friendly countries and

treaties or agreements". This single

A decade later this group vas able to resurrect the epartment as the



NATION

LETTERS

AFGHANISTAN

reliable electricity. 2. To produce and distribute this

electricity, instead of a single

tic, all-inclusive institutional

government monopoly, a pluralis-

framework will be adopted which

will support the private sector in

generation through transparent

competition and maximize the

participation of local self-goverr

ance units in distribution. The

transmission grid will be main-

ownership and regulation, but open

reaching 85 percent of the population

will lie with the national transmission

maintain. It will be this national grid

which can trade excess electricity with

that still has no access to electricity

grid that HMG will develop and

neighbouring countries under the

4. If a Nepali or foreign investo

Indian market, it will be encour

aged under the following policy

of-river project through the

national grid will be seen as not

sharing matter as seen by clause

b) For a storage project, if all the

regulated water can be used within

Nepal, if the displaced population

electricity export will be done

too will be deemed to be of a

through the national grid, then it

simple nature not requiring a two

c) For a hydropower project with a

thirds approval by parliament.

large reservoir which wishes to

export independently outside the

national grid, the investor must

apply to the government stating

clearly the export price as well as the

royalty it proposes to deliver. The

government can permit the investor

relation to projects where HMG has

come to some understanding with

India regarding downstream benefits,

and the modality for sharing them

The application, which must be

accompanied by all supporting

documents, will be placed before

parliament for approval by a two-

thirds majority by the government

together with what HMG proposes

as royalty, tax as well as social and

environmental mitigation measures.

that it will place before parliament

amendments to the electricity acts

and regulations to match the four

policy commitments stated above.

There is no need for a cumbersome

and conflicting policy document of

clauses that belong more properly

(Dinak Gyawali used to be board

member of NEA and resigned over

the Arun-3 in 1993. He is a

member of the Royal Nepal

Technology. A version of this

of Mulyankan, Magh 2058.)

article appears in the current issue

Academy of Science and

fifteen pages with multi-score

in an act or regulation.

The only other matter that the

rnment needs to state firmly is

to survey and investigate such

projects, but they will only be in

is less than one thousand, and if the

126 of the Constitution.

constituting an "all-encompassing serious and long term" resource-

) Export of electricity from a run-

wishes to export electricity to the

"avoided cost" principle.

3. The primary responsibility for

tained as a national electric

highway under government

to all.

Mushahid Hussain's analysis "Afghanistan's potential" (#76) threw some light on Afghanistan's extraordinary history. But could this history repeat itself in Nepal? We should not make the same mistakes the Afghans did and open the Pandora's Box of ethnic divisons. Let us shun groupism and communalism and remember that we are first Nepalis before we are anything else. If we don't do this, there will be no possibility of peace, and without peace there will be no development and without development we will be pulled into a vicious cycle that may cost us our independence. Abhas Parajuli

INTERNET POLL Your Internet Poll question "Should the Maoists now return to the negotiating table?" (#76) is timely. Yes, the Maoists should come back to the negotiating table. Everybody should agree that poverty is the root cause of extremist politics. Poverty alleviation should be given highest priority. Both the Maoist and the government side should agree that there is rampant corruption in the country. To root out this malaise, some known select politicians from both the Nepali Congress and the UML should be barred from active politics. Indeed they should be declared anti-nationalists. Maoists and royalists should work together under a government headed by the Nepali Congress. What better tribute to BP Koirala's national reconciliation dream? Indeed, BP's thesis of national reconciliation should be interpreted differently under the new changed circumstances. Mike Sharma

bv emai

Your question "Should the Maoists now return to the negotiating table?" should actually have read "Should the Maoists now be eliminated?" and to that my answer would have been a strong "ves". They have caused enough mayhem and destruction. P Rana

1154

This is to congratulate CK Lal for his most recent columns, especially "Celebrating South Asianness" (#75) and "Worrving about Nepal in Paris (#74). I find Mr Lal's broader cultural and social canvas transcends the pettiness of most other political commenta

tors and are unlike the tired columns we have become accustomed to in Nepal. I'm sick of the banal analyses of how and why things are going wrong. It is always refreshing to see attempts at generating constructive, original insights into our society and polity. Raiib Sarka by emai

PASHUPATI SJB RANA

Thank you for that most forthright and plain-speaking article by Pashupati Shumshere JB Rana ("Reform vs revolution", #76) and your editorial "The morning after" in the same issue that bolsters his argument that this is the time the government should launch a serious drive to address rural developmen control corruption and to simply show that it is there. The government must use the emergency to galvanise the political will to raise internal resources, give the economy a kick-start and address the roots of the Maoist crisis. Time is running out. Gaurab Regm Tokyo



CHECKLIST

SCARY

I liked the checklist of ten points in your editorial ("The morning after", #76) that urgently need government intervention. But I doubt if anyone in government is reading it, or even if someone is, that they are actually going to take those pointers. Maybe Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba doesn't have the attention span to read all ten points and should just do something about your number ten: "Show us some proof that we have a government." Rabin Gurung

Have I been misinformed or are the following facts and figures I have seen in past issues of your paper to be believed: - Some 56,000 of the 92,000 HMG employees got their jobs through presentation of fake certificates?

Some 32,000 citizenship papers issued during the time UML was in power were revoked by the Congress government? Bahuns and Chhetris who constitute only 15 percent of the 23 million Nepalis hold 90 percent of government jobs? What else is in store for Nepal?

DB Lama Surrey, UK

CORRECTION



just wants to catch his breath fter trying to bang Indian and Pakistani heads together, and before heading off to Tokvo for new concubine. Afghan fund-raising. The Americans have blown a fortune in bombing desolate places like Tora Bora to dust. Now they need the coffers of Japan, Saudi Arabia and the Europeans to If Kathmandu is just R&R for a former soldier on a mission to wage diplomatic war in the

most dangerous region of the world, then we have nothing to fear from Secretary Powell's conditions on the political itinerary. But the mandarins at



STATE OF THE STATE

Colin Powell's R&R

We have nothing to offer, and nothing to ask except understanding. more to do with South Asia in general, than Nepal in particu-

ar. Or is it that the secretary

elp rebuild it.

deep throat inside Panipokhari Fort insists ecretary of State Colin Powell is coming to Kathmandu of his own accord. Maybe true. But Secretary Powell's surprise call is going to be another great photo-op for Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, still euphoric over being the middle man during the historic handshake between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee during SAARC. In 54 years of relations

between Nepal and the United States of America, no Secretari of State considered it worth his while to visit these boondocks. This time, too, the transit through Kathmandu has perhaps



aying that when a powerful *iamindar* blesses the huts of the poor in his village, he is probably on a lookout for a Despite the fawning accounts that IVP-returnees unleash in the Nepali press, American assistance to Nenal has been steadily decreasing over the years. The United States is now way down on our list of donors—it ranks fifth. nelled through multilaterals

Shital Niwas should tread

carefully. There is an old Nepali

Much American aid is chanlike the World Bank and the IMF, which impose suffocating economy of the country. And

Fischer, finds it troubling that outrageously expensive consultants ensure that much of the aid "the United States devotes less money flows back to where it came from Trade between Nepal and the US is not very encouraging either. The fallacy of free trade in the absence of free movement of labour can clearly be seen in the sale of millions of bottles of branded colas even to the poor who struggle to make a living in less than a dollar a day, while garment exports from Nepal to the United States languish in utter neglect. It is entirely in

U.S. DEPARTN

WAS

keeping with the tradition of free-for-all capitalism that the company with American vestment produces the most expensive energy in one of the orest countries of the world Iad Enron not gone bust, a similar fate would probably have en lying in store for the

Karnali at Chisapani. Nepal's strategic location is also of little interest to the US. when both India and China are falling over each other so desperately to woo the sole superpower. Gone are the days of the Cold War when Americans literally bank-rolled King Mahendra's political adventures with \$15 million, just to keep the communists from surfacing in one more Asian hotspot. American foreign policy these days is entirely reactive.

image intact. A pro-American Nepal remained one of the west per-capita recipients of American aid—a fact that surprised Henry Kissinger no end when he came visiting. But the failure is entirely ours: we didn't know how to market Even an IMF official, Stanley ourselve

tenth of 1 percent of its GDPto economic aid, less than half the average of other industrial countries, and a third of the verage for Europe." However, t has little hesitation in footing a bill of over \$1 billion a month to fight its war in Afghanistan. A war so pointless that Ralph Nader compares it to burning a haystack to find a needle, and then refusing to see that the needle is not in the ashes after all. The guest is god for us Nepalis. But why is this particuar one here? To what do we owe this darshan? What have w done to deserve this blessing In the value system of global capitalism, whatever is cheap is tot worth its price. In the past, Nepal has always offered its upport to the Americans for next to nothing. Indira Gandhi extracted \$9 million from President Johnson for he xport understanding of America's eopolitical role in Vietnam. and still kept her anti-American

mighty of the land. Ambassador Malinowski likes to tell his friends in Nepal-and he has many here-that having facilitated American relief assistance during the flood disaster of July 1993 is one of the most satisfying events of his long diplomatic career. He knows that what of association.

chan \$10 billion a year—only a ortunate to have our own man in his camp. Ambassador Michael E Malinowski is as much of a

seller as a buyer-he understands

Nepalis, having served as Deputy Chief of Mission during the tenure of the feisty Julia Chang Bloch. Back then, Malinowski was the Quiet American who co ordinated American assistance while Madam Ambassador played matchmaker to the high and

During Secretary Powell's

isit, however, we are singularly

Nepal really needs are not helicopter gunships, but more schools, hospitals, and bridges in the countryside and easier access to the American market for Bridges like the ones that Malinowski got flown into Nepal on giant C-5s in 1993 have more than metaphorical meaning here In a country that is drowning in the roiling waters of poverty and apathy, and an insurgency that feeds on it, we have nothing to offer. We have nothing to ask for, except understanding that comes from over half-a-century



4 NATION

18-24 JANUARY 2002 NEPAULTIMES

we're making use of whateve

department. "In Chitwan,

resources we have." says Tirtha

Maskey, director general of the

we've reinforced park staff by

takes place every January, in

the first week of Magh. "We

have allowed a regulated

adding 15 security officials from

Nepal's national parks are endangered



In between, if they can

n remote outposts in pro

RAMYATA LIMBU IN KHUMBU

to patrol the area and are t's been quiet in Phungi Tenga this January. Apart from locals on their way to Namche for business, and the odd tourist east, possible entry points for stopping in for a cup of tea at one of two lodges en route to Tengboche Monastery, this little National security is a priority. wooded enclosure in the heart of the Sagarmatha National Park shuts down early.

out their original duties— The two lodges close their doors before the evening light fades, and are cautious about musk deer and other endangered species, and the illegal trade of entertaining latecomers. Even the small group of soldiers based at mber and medicinal plants. the tiny army outpost in Phungi "Even with the army more Tenga, located at the base of the nvolved in guarding against hill on which Tengboche Monas-tery stands, has shifted to the Maoists, we're managing to carry out patrols," says Mingma security of Namche, where a sherpa, a game scout. "There has company of an estimated 250 been the odd case of poaching, soldiers check the foot-traffic but nothing big." Since the Maoists attacks on coming in from Lukla.

From their perch on a plateau enclosed by barbed wire fencing Salleri in Solukhumbu, and in Dang, and the consequent state of and surrounded by freshly built mergency, the army has made it dugouts, the soldiers watch over point to pull in their troops Namche Bazar through pine saplings. They're careful about tected areas-especially hilly maintaining strict evening curfew Since the emergency began on

HERE AND THERE



26 November, soldiers take turns It is difficult to reinforce cially careful to watch the roops on time here, owing to the rugged terrain. "We've cleared Tashi Lapcha Pass to the west and the Amalapcha Pass to the the small, isolated army outposts. where 10 to 12 soldiers were oists from Dolakha district based, and merged them with the bigger groups of 40 or 50, so they and Sankhuwasabha, respectively don't become sitting targets for the Maoists," says an army source. "It is much safer, since squeeze it in, the soldiers carry our communication sets aren't ery good and it's difficult to working with the two dozen park staff to check the poaching of the connect waves in mountainous

the abandoned posts. areas, and then helicopter there have been lapses in large einforcements are extremely



difficult to fly in."

egions, where the insurgents ar Dense pine forests inside the Sagarmatha National Par most likely to attack by night and

With the emergency, guarding national parks can't be a priority for the army any more. areas," says the source. problems in Chitwan, where During the day, the army Since the emergency and the poaching activities are on the companied by park staff, ithdrawal of soldiers from rise. "Keeping in mind that national security is a priority

v patrol in Babai Valley of Bardiya Natio

conduct mobile sweeps in these abandoned posts. Park authoritie isolated posts, three dead rhinos were found inside the Royal Chitwan National Park, their have also deployed game scouts and rangers in pairs to monitor nooves and horns missing. "It's definitely a case of poaching," "We're trying to maintain our source in the army told us. double duty, but frankly speaking, By now local poachers probably have figured out from where

the palace's Wildlife Protection ve've pulled out and are getting Department." The department is intent on mobilising its anti The army has been guarding Nepal's national parks since 1976, and are partly responsible for the low level of poaching tere compared to neighbouring ountries. National parks now over nearly a quarter of Nepal's area and an estimated 5,000 oldiers are stationed in seven national parks and four wildlife eserves around the country.

rotected areas remain relatively

inaffected, department officials

acknowledge that there are

poaching units and local formers, in Chitwan, Sukhlaphanta, Parsa and Bardiva to work with regula park staff. Concern for nationa security may also prevent more than 60,000 villagers from entering Royal Chitwan National Park this winter to collect overgrown elephant While stressing that other grass—an annual event that

Sisters are doing it for themselves

e of history's least-learned yet off-tested lessons is in the erican proverb, "the devil makes work for idle hands." Now such phrases sprung up in distant times when gender workshops hadn't made us sexually secular. So there was no need to state the obvious, that the idle hands in question belonged to a young man. Women are never idle, or if they are, the devil—any culture's versionis not interested. Part of female superiority is the apparent inability of most women to wreak capricious havoc simply to pass the time. Here in Nepal, it should be self evident that idle young men are at



of Nepali society as it now stands. None, that's how many. Go to more orthodox parts of the country and watch it all unfold before your eyes. The women, well, it's hard to find them. They're out in the field. proughing, planting, harvesting, weeding. They're home making meals. They're taking children to health posts or getting them ready for school. And the men, what about them? Well, those people

male hands that wreak havoc just to pass the time.

Women are getting on with the business of living, despite those idle

sitting in the sunshine, listening to the radio and debating distant and arcane Kathmandu politics-deep voices, furry cheeks, idle hands ... men, all of them. Later, the same bunch goes out and spends hard-earned (by women) money on booze and unleashes a volley of domestic violence on the exhausted better half at home. And not just in

Nepal. In America, spousal abuse skyrockets on days of major sporting events when men get drunk watching television and women get on with real life I've always wondered why this was so, and how we get away with it.

Tradition and orthodoxy of whatever religious flavour almost always glorify the male. Perhaps a starting point is the major deities and prophets of religion, all men. Then the notions put about by clergy, again always male in gender and attitude. Women "were created from ien, made from Adam's rib". One man's word is worth the witness of four women. Men are "closer to god". Women can't own property or make their own way in the world, ergo they are property, first of their father, then of their husband's family. The gender that makes all the trouble-drinking, whoring, warring, rioting-committing 99 percent of the crimes, is the one that has divine sanction to do so. The all-male

riesthood of every major faith on the planet goes out of its way to teep it so. Men not only steal, rape and pillage exclusively, they also pollute, abuse, harass, lie and conceal more than their counterparts cross the sexual divide. No wonder they call women "the fairer sex" It's not a reference to appearance, trust me.

So what to do? Well, in richer lands, sisters are doing it for themselves. Slowly, by evolution and creeping infiltration into reviously all-male enclaves, women are taking over. I'm not talking ere about Margaret Thatcher—she was more of a Benazir Bhutto figure than a clarion call to arms for her fellow women a lady who married money and then launched a political career, freed from the need to support herself. No, the west (outside of Scandinavia) is still awaiting its first female political leader of substance. But women matter in every other walk of life, and they'll continue to expand their role.

It's happening here in more orthodox, less developed lands too. Forget Ms Bhutto or Ms Gandhi, and look to the anti-globalisation campaigner, Vandana Shiva of India, or the amazing Asma Jehangir of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission. They make their own way, and leave a trail of useless, discarded men behind them, those without the wisdom to follow and learn. We have great sisters in Nepal too, but I won't embarrass them with a mention. They know who they are

But I'm really worried about all those idle male hands and their ability to wreck what women achieve as they do it for themselves. Maybe we need to make a deal with the devil. ♦

NATION

in designated plots in Sukhlaphanta, but haven't vet decided about Bardiya and

Chitwan," says Maskey.

number of villagers to cut grass

While the army, which

maintains two companies in the

Bardia, has tried to maintain as

many of the original outposts in

western and eastern part of

the park area, at least 30-35

unreachable. Says a Bardiya National Park official: "This is a

relatively Maoist-sensitive area.

Some areas are under direct

and the company of army

soldiers operates from the

they've burnt and destroyed out

outposts, but so far they haven't

been able to attack the central

points. They underestimated us

They thought we were like the

police But soon realised we're

better trained, better equipped

for such an attack. At least we

and rations to sustain 24 hours

the emergency don't mean bad

news only for the unprotected

animals and ecosystems of the

national park. They have also

managed to scare off tourists.

many people dependent on

wildlife tourism is in danger.

inside the park are barely.

simply dried up. 🔶

While a few hotels and resorts

functioning, hotels outside the

Mandala House

uxury Apartments at

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parks find their clientele has

which means the livelihood of

of fighting in a remote post,"

says our army source.

have troops, weapons, supplies,

Frequent Maoist activity and

vision of the army at all times

percent of park area is

He is 38, and an active member of the leftist Samyukta Jana Morcha party. He was picked up by police in 1998 during the Kilo Sierra 2 counterinsurgency operation. He has been languishing in Libang Jai with 23 other inmates (one of them a woman) without trial. He

but they do maintain high does not want to be identified security during the day even in and spoke to Vijav Kumar the areas they've pulled out earlier this month. A major problem the army is facing in trying to maintain How come you could make it national security are the large to Rolpa during such difficult groups of landless settlers times? maintained by political parties Vijay Kumar: The army gave me

as vote banks in places like a ride. I came for my TV show. Bardia and Sukhlaphanta Says an army official, "While How did you get inside the we do conduct body searches on VK: The DSP in Liwang gave me people passing through the area, and also interrogate them, it is nermission extremely difficult to identify How long have you known Maoists from the crowds of him?

landless settlers who freely pass VK: Just met him for the first time through the park corridors. n my life. But I have heard of They don't dress any differently him. By the way, how long have It becomes easier for the they kept you here Manists to infiltrate the area In the remote Khantad

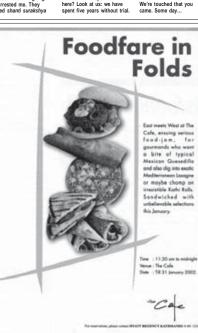
Slightly more than five years. National Park, located at the VK: What charges? junction of Bajura, Bajhang, Doti and Accham districts, all They (police) came to my the outposts have been merged

village and one day said there is Kilo Sierra going on and arrested me. They headquarters based on a plateau slapped shanti surakshva inside the park. "In some places,



one is addressing the basic others about us. And, oh yes, can you tell the CDO to needs of the people. Politicians are busy amassing vast allow us to watch televiwealth. How many of these sion? After the emergency leaders have come to Rolpa? we haven't been allowed to Even you, big names in watch. VK: Sure. Some day I hope to journalism, you just send juniors here. Can the prime see you in Kathmandu

minister dare spend a week We're touched that you came. Some day...



Return to sender

Kathmandu's water could be in danger of being seriously contami-nated. Greenpeace volunteers have begun packaging toxic pesticide waste at an unsecured storage facility at Khumaltar. The group, which savs the waste poses a severe danger to Kathmandu's drinking water supplies, has prepared a detailed inventory of the waste and the companies that manufactured the products. In addition, the activist

have secured the toxins in larger barrels and asked the companies concerned to collect and safely dispose of the poison. The toxic waste in Khumaltar, which originated in companies in Germany, Nether-lands, USA, Japan and India, includes 18 organichlorides (which



travel swiftly up the food chain and are carcinogenic), 5 heavy metals (including mercury compounds, banned in Europe and the US many years ago due to their cancer-causing properties) and 20 other classe of chemicals. The larger companies listed on the inventory include the German Bayer AG, Dutch Shell, Swiss Ciba Gegy and Sandoz, American DuPont and Monsanto, and Japanese Sumitomo. Most of the pesticides were imported under aid projects aimed at increasing agricultural vield.

Greenpeace activists have been trying to organise the garage-like storage facility since July last year. They found the walls of the store lined with unstable, rusty iron shelving, filled with hundreds of tins. bottles, bags and cans, the contents of some spilling over, and mumr fied comses of rats and cockmaches caught between the crates Verbally the companies are positive (about helping with the clean-up), but have to date refused to take initiative. They never do unless pressed to," says Greenpeace's Andreas Bernstorff, leader of the Khumaltar clean-up operation. "We're now doing first aid work, that is putting everything in safe packages for transport." In Germany, a spokesman for Bayer AG told the German newspaper Bild am Sonntag that if indeed it were true that his company's products were identified it would contribute towards the detoxification process.

Bayer has the largest waste deposits in Khumaltar, including organic mercuric-chloride (Agallol 3, Ceresan) which is banned in most developed countries. Others, such as DuPont's dozen bags of Marlate (50 percent DDT), and Shell's Dieldrin, of which there are a number of 50 kg sacks in Khumaltar, have also long been out of use. By the Stockholm Convention 2001, all stores and stocks of such old pesticides have to be destroyed. At present Nepal has over 74 tons of obsolete pesticides stored in Amlekhgunj (50 tons), Nepalgunj (20 tons) and Khumaltar, which is estimated to hold about five tons.

Say no to plastic

There's a campaign on to ban plastic bags from the scenic Pokhara valley. In an appeal to the Pokhara Apellate Court. Advocate Bishwa Ghimire has asked for a ban on the production, distribution and use of plastic bags inside the valley. In the campaign, Ghimire has named the Pokhara Sub Metropolitan City, the District Development Committee and District Administration Office, Kaski, the Pokhara Industry and Commerce Organisation, the Pokhara Valley Town Developmen Committee, the Small Cottage Industries Office, Kaski and the District Irriaation Office, Kaski, as defendants, Experts say that excessive use of plastic bags has polluted Pokhara's Phewa Lake and the Seti river, subsequently ruining surrounding agricultural land. The plastic bags have also harmed Pokhara's biodiversity and caused environment degradation and killing animals. The Pokhara sub Metropolitan City estimates that 39,750 families live inside the town. Each family uses an estimated five bags a day to carry fruits, vegetables, medicines, and clothes. Going by these numbers, close to 200.000 plastic bags are used in Pokhara every day.

Special intervention

The Nepal Oil Corporation is cracking down on petroleum pumps around the country. According to recent reports, the NOC has fined at least 10 gas stations up to Rs 75 000 for selling consumers diesel and petrol adulterated with kerosene. The NOC has also banned some sumps from selling fuel for six months. Meanwhile, the Special Police Branch is also looking into the adulteration of petroleum products. Following numerous appeals from irate consumers regarding the adulteration of transport fuel, a working group has been formed to look into the adulteration of petroleum products from third countries. The working group, headed by the director general of the Nepal Quality Control Department, will include members of the Nepal Oil Corporation and the Special Police Branch. Adulterated diesel and petrol not only cause environmental pollution, they also seriously damage engines. The Special Police Branch says it is monitoring petroleum tankers transporting fuel from Amlekhgunj to Kathmandu. The Nepal Oil Corporation acknowledges the adulteration, and has been carrying out checks at the estimated 80 gas pumps in the Valley.

ELD workshops

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NEPALI ECONOMY

Nepali Times: This is your 10th anniversary year.

Himalaya S Rana: The bank has been doing well.

Our ninth annual report is just out and we have been

highest among joint venture banks, even higher than

successful in collecting over Rs 17 billion as deposits, the

Standard Chartered and Nabil. Similarly, we were able to

highest amount lent by a joint venture bank. Profits went

up by 40 percent, we were able to announce a bonus of 30

dividend of 27.5 percent. We were the fourth joint venture

bank, and those who begin earlier have a head start. We

Asiaweek, which recently listed the top 500 banks in Asia.

We are essentially a commercial bank, which means

that our bread and butter comes from opening LCs

(letter of credit) for imports and exports, and then

an investment bank in the sense that we don't buy

shares we don't subscribe equities in other organisa

Iron, steel mills ... almost all industries, the tourism

tourism sector is only 22 percent, which has not

You also have some very bad consortium

Most consortium loans are not doing well, we have almost

we lead it, because there are many pressure groups in Nepal

taken a decision that we will not join a consortium unless

and when there are four or five banks, some group can

always apply pressure on one bank or other. All right, all

businesses do not succeed, all businesses cannot become

profitable. When you recognise that, then we have to say

pressure groups and there is always one bank or the other

You've been quite successful, what decisions

would you say were critical to your success?

One was the decision to attract deposits. One very

successful product we introduced was for our savings

there are 19 prizes, sometimes we gave gold coins,

accounts mostly go to the older banks, embassy

accounts and INGO accounts also. Our deposit

mobilisation has also been very successful. We then

success, but it has also attracted customers, as it saves a

lot of time. We have also been leaders in introducing

On the surface, all private sector banks seem

due to the poor performance of public banks?

to be doing fairly well. How much of that is

can be turned around But this bank was modelled after

new products, new technology, ATMs and our own

Himalayan Bank credit card

introduced tele-banking. It was not a resounding

sometimes watches sometimes cash wouchers so our

savings accounts have been very popular. I think current

accounts-if the account holder dies accidentally, we pay

to the heirs four times the deposit amount, subject to the

ceiling of Rs 500,000. Every month we hold a lottery and

"all right, we will close the deal". But then there are

opposing that and we cannot take the desired action.

tions. We lend to various sectors, most for industries

guaranteeing performance for commission. We are not

were ranked as the number two bank in Nepal by

What are your major investments?

Which sector among industries?

the tourism sector have to be careful now

loans...

ercent to shareholders and for the last fiscal year we gave a

extend credit worth over Rs 9 billion, which is also the

How is your bank doing

That applies more to public finance. I am really

worried. As far as the banking sector is concerned, it

will not go the Argentine way, but government's

regular expenditure has gone up and up. On top of

economic activities are not increasing, revenues are

Now on the general investment climate,

would you put money into a major project

Apart from bureaucratic tardiness, corruption, etc. what

many people are not realising is that the basic thing is law

and order. You can perhaps get 13 percent interest in

the capital is safe. For six years we have had violent

political activities. Industries have been attacked, and

tourists have stopped coming. I was in Bharatpur, I went

to Narayani Safari and there not a single customer and

they were beginning to fire staff. You got to the Hyatt,

you will see how it is. Unless the law and order situation

is resolved we cannot even dream of foreign investment

even local investment. On top of that something else has

happened (capital flight). When Madhav Kumar (Nepal)

aid let's have a sealing of Rs 1 million (on property),

about Rs 2 billion was withdrawn from here. Now with

the voluntary tax declaration scheme, even though it was

meant to bring those who had not been paying taxes into

the net and tax payers needn't have been worried,

spraying pellets from a 12-bore gun. They sent a

the publicity given and the action taken was like

letter to me also. Everyone was scared and again

Rs 2 billion more was withdrawn.

vigeria or Colombia, but people put money in Swiss

banks even when they do not get interest, because at least

How had is the investment situation?

to meet expenses?

now?

that there is this campaign against the Maoists. When

going to come down, so how is the government going

"Capital adequacy is going to be a problem ..." - Himalaya Sumshere Rana, chairman, Himalayan Bank



How prudent is it to rely on a consensus reached by parties in a perpetual process of fusion and fission?

sperately seeking to cipher the "broad national consensus" "broader democratic alliance and other wide-ranging propos als for national concord pervading the air in recent weeks. Nepalis have now become halfamused spectators to charges of plagiarism politicians are

FOLLOW-UP

Kangresis, bampanthis and former panchas are accusing one another of purloining their platforms, we will probably ever know who the progenitor of this howling obsession with harmony really is. Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Kojrala is collectaround Thapa's Maligaon

Bahadur Thapa (photo, left) said a few changes had been trading. Given the way nade to the programme because of the "changed circumstances" (Which mean has promptly moved into lamage-control mode). Those of us who detected inusual movements in and

ing and analysing the response to his latest clarification of his post-emergency entreaty to determine when he might need to issue the next advisory. UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, preoccupied with his own covenant on bringing Bam Dev Gautam's brigade back into the fold. wants to see in writing whether Koirala's blueprint is broad enough to accommodate parties outside parliament before offering a formal response. While the smaller communist factions are weighing how the big boys' deliberations would numerically affect the volatile "nau ham/das ham" configuration, the Sadbhavana family is on vacation because it feels the party's name conveys enough goodwill to last for a lifetime So it was the Rastriva Praiatantra Party's turn to show its hand. Peeved by the Kangresis' and Communists' pilferage, the ex-panchas decided to revise their seven month-old broad national consensus programme that was based on a concept paper made public two years ago. At a press conference last week. RPP president Surva the country's third-largest party

residence in recent weeks can forget that those were words now rest assured that Koirala coming from the only founding member of the Nepali was only trying to put togethe ongress on the planet. the details of a consensu As the RPP chief might package the Nepali Congress had mandated him to produce. uspect, Koirala probably calls vividly how his candour Rejecting the prevailing belief that the RPP's unity plea in front of then-prime minister was a ploy to gain power, Thapa Thana helped delay BP's said the platform was the release from Sundarijal prison requirement of the time. As an in the 1960s, especially when avid admirer of Thapa's GP was under express orders impeccable sense of timing eve from the palace to be discreet since he bounced back into the about the secret parleys that Panchavat mainstream from were going on. ("Bisweswar virtual oblivion in 1979 while Prasad Koirala ko Congress- and communist-Atmabrittanta" Pp 309-310) affiliated students were hound To be sure, leaders of all ing mandales from college parties in the amity caravan campuses across much of the would have to arrive at a country. I can hardly quibble with that argument. But I was on issues and procedures disappointed by Thapa's stand on Koirala's platform. "During my meeting with Girija Prasad Koirala, he did not give me any each party would have to reason to believe that the consensus [call] would be used aboard. Since the alliance to get back to power." Of partners would probably be course he didn't. Krishna Prasac Bhattarai still can't forgive institution, it's beside the himself for believing that Koirala had granted him the heads of government they prime minister's job for a full five years well before the early birds had cast their ballots in the last general election. "I points for inclusion in the don't want to share power with the communists and I will never oblige Koirala even if he happens to be the emperar of in economic social and the whole world," Bhattarai told reporters at the airport before departing for a weeklong visit to India. Call him yestergovernment; d) a code of day's man or today's icon of

gramme; and f) clear terms for good governance. Among the other specifics in

the RPP agenda are progressive taxation on fixed property and nvestment of funds so collected n soft loans to landless and poor farmers; introduction of a uota system for dalits and ianiatis for education and jobs: and empowerment of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

If I had to put all this in a entence, it would probably read something like this: Ensuring the people's welfare by creating a democratic, just, dynamic and exploitation-free society through coordination among Nepalis of all classes and occupations on a national scale. Don't the RPP luminaries recall this was precisely what Article 19 of the Panchavat Constitution of Nepal 1962 envisaged? Thana says any enduring onsensus would have to be forged within the framework of the present constitution. Now that's a tall order for politicians who can't stop calling each other crooks even while they say they are cooperating. Moreover, when three decades of partylessness couldn't prevent the three-way Thapa-

and introduction of an interim



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British-Indian banks in India, tokens, waiting and all. When They will have to tackle that problem. The directives the joint venture banks came—Nabil was the first—modern banking also arrived. The NBL and the Rastriya Banijya Bank should have changed operations, but they continued with old practices. They didn't change. Anand Bhakta Raibhandari was at NBL for 29 years, and he knew the credit worthiness of each party and made loan decisions accordingly. After he left, pressures were applied, loans were extended to parties who were not really business people. With bad loans, you either have to recover them or write them off if they are beyond recovery. Nobody had the courage to do that and they have piled up. But then they still have their network and depositors who still have confidence in the bank. I think it can be turned around What do you have to say about the role of the

central bank while all this was happening, in terms of monitoring and supervision?

It has always had the operational freedom to inspect and supervise. When the joint venture banks came licenses were given one after the other even to parties who didn't have a good reputation. It was difficult to inspect and supervise the increased number of banks. There was some kind of a complex, because when I started at the Nepal Rastra Bank, I said that the salaries of its staff should be 25 percent higher than government salaries. Later on they were made the same. Then the joint venture banks came and maybe the sons and nephews of some NRB senior staff members working in these banks began drawing a higher salary than them, so there was some sort of inferiority complex. All these years they have not been successful in timely inspection and regulation. The NRB is very much present, but its effective presence has not been felt. But things are changing now.

How would you rate the NRB's supervision of banks run by the private sector?

Central banking and commercial banking are slightly different. I was a central banker, a Ministry of Finance man, Prithivi Bahadur Pandey was a central banker and did a stint as general manager of the RBB. Commercial hanking has now become very complex. One thing lacking in the NRB is that they do not have people thoroughly conversant with the fine loopholes in commercial banks. They have a few top people who are quite knowledgeable, but the middle level staff isn't. Inspection will take place, but if the report wil sector, which is hotels and airlines. Our exposure to the come after six months, what is the use? Things are brought us down. Those banks that have lent heavily to changing, though. Now we have a dynamic man in charge of the banking operations, and he has always made his presence felt

Is a committed governor at NRB enough to bring about change?

The question of autonomy for the NRB is very much in ontext. Out of 12 governors only three have stayed for their full term Nine have somehow either been dismissed or had to leave. That being the case, the top management of the bank was a little diffident about putting their foot down. Especially after democracy, everybody started having connections and the best thin was not to ruffle feathers-that was the attitude

How would you rate the new NRB directives? The nine directives are welcome because they were issued to ensure that commercial banks operate under regulations in line with international standards. The basic concept behind it is welcome. But in this world you have both supersonic iets and bullock carts. They have taken norms from the Bank of International Settlements in Switzerland. That is a very developed economy. Let's take the capital adequacy ratio here-i was eight percent before, this financial year it has become nine, next year 10, then it will be 12. Ten percent is not there in India or Pakistan even. To apply norms taken from a very developed to a country like Nepal, this is one place where they should have been more careful. Capital adequacy is going to be a problem for many banks now. Because of that we have decided to raise Rs 360 million from the market to augment our supplementary capital. You have to seize the bull by the horns. Next fiscal year we are going to issue Rs 260 million worth of rights' share and raise our capital by one billion rupees. We started with Rs 240 million authorised capital and Rs 60 million paid up; now our naid up capital is Rs 390 million

Obviously, we have benefited from that. Even now Nepal Bank Limited is a giant. It will not go into liquidation, but Does this mean some banks could close down in the future once enforcement becomes stringent?

are welcome, but they should have been fine tuned looking at the state of our economy and our banking practices. Secondly, the timing was not right-when there is downturn, when we are finding it difficult to get interest payments and instalments of loan payments from clients... to come up with new regulations now was not right. Now if the payment is not made on the due date, you have to immediately set aside 12.5 percent as a possible loan loss provision. So the loan loss provision is going to be huge, which means we cannot extend credit with that money, so the opportunity to make profit is less, because you cannot use that money for business

Has the central bank been fair in enforcement so far? We were wondering whether the directives would be

enforced professionally. If two or three actions that they have taken is an indication of what they are going to do, they have applied them fairly.

What advice do you have for people trying to reform the financial sector?

I think we have to encourage professionalism in decision-making. Leadership is very important. In the central bank, it is not easy for the governor to assert his leadership, because he is aware that only two or three were able to stay there for the full term. But now under the new act, the governor cannot be removed for "exigencies," which were never defined. So that gives a sort of security to their tenure. I think (the present governor) is a man with guts, so we are hoping that things will improve.

People are talking about Nepal going the Argentine way if something is not done to shore up the financial sector. Would you agree?

Power to the people

BIZ NEWS

The Nepal Electricity Authority began the "wet test" of the Kali Gandaki hydroelectricity project last week. The project, after being delayed by over a year, is finally ready to come on line and is expected to generate enough power to meet Nepal's electricity demand for the another three to four years. The plan is to test each one of the three 48-megawatt generators one after the other before switching the turbines to produce 842 gigawatts-hours of power annually. The project will also have pondage capacity, which means it can store water to run the turbines at neak canacity for six-hours even in the dry season Leaks in the tunnel during testing and problems with erection of 12 pylons on the northern transmission line near Pokhara are threatening more delays. The project uses water from the Kali Gandaki diverted at Mirmi in Svangia district through a six km long, 8 m wide tunnel to the semi-underground power house at Beltari.

Dividends

The Standard Chartered Bank Limited has reported a profit of Rs 431 million, a roughly 10 percent increase over 2000/01. The 9 January annual general meeting of the bank has approved a 100 percent dividend to its shareholders, Likewise, the Himalavan Bank, which announced a profit of Rs 287 million-roughly 41 percent growth compared with the previous year-is to give its shareholders both dividends and bonus shares. Everest Bank has said its profits in the same period were Rs 147 million, and that it will issue both preference and bonus stock

Rs 22.5 million

That is how much the government says it plans to spend on tourism promotion this year. But the Nepal Tourism Board is conspicuously absent in the Tourism Ministry statement. The announcement also says the promotion program will be formulated, implemented and monitored by a committee headed by the Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation. Industry sources say there is a message there to NTB which might have been sidelined because it has been unable to produce results, or the money will simply be a source of slush funds. Everything the committee proposes to undertake is already being done by the Board.

Air India

Air India's maiden flight to Kathmandu bringing in WIP passenger, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajrayee for the 11° SAARC summit on 3 January, is a record in itself. The arrival of Air India also points to the possibilities that lie ahead for Nepali tourism, should there be revival in Indian arrivals in the future. Even though Air India does not have scheduled flights to Nepal, more and more Nepalis are using the airline for connections from New Delhi, says a company press release. Most of these Nepalis are headed to destina tions in the Gulf or Malaysia

High tea

Duncans Industries, one of the largest players in the Indian tea market, is launching in Nepal two products in the strong tea category, Double Diamond and Pikup. Double Diamond, made of dark brown pure grains of fine quality tea, will be available in the market in a 250 gm pack at Rs 60, while a superior blend of fresh tea from the best gardens, Pikup, will be available in a 200 gram pack priced at Rs 41. Both products are packaged in metalised foil-lined pack. Duncan Industries has been producing and selling teas for 160 years and is one the top three marketers of packed tea in India.



The camp with 12 deluxe safari tents with rustic but modern



Radha visits Govinda in jail

fter we reported the plight of Govinda Mainali who is serving a life sentence in a Tokyo jail on a rape-murder charge ("Here comes the H story of Govinda Mainali," #39), the judge who sentenced him has himself been accused of having illegal sex with a minor and disbarred.

Japanese and international activists have been campaigning with the Japanese government and the Supreme Court, which is expected to rule on an appeal to send Govinda back to Nepal. They are convinced Govinda is innocent and have formed the "Justice for Govinda" pressure group, which some Nepalis in America have also joined. The activists paid for Govinda's wife Radha to fly to Tokyo to see him in his jail cell last month. This was the first time in eight years that he has seen her.

"I don't know what I'll say, but I may cry when I see him," Radha told reporters through an interpreter before walking into the Tokyo Detention House. Believing in her husband's innocence, Radha finally made the trip to Japan from Jhapa to encourage him and to call for public support.

Govinda, 35, went to Japan in 1993 to seek his fortune, and was working in an Indian restaurant. He was arrested in Tokyo in 1997 on suspicion of murdering an executive in a Japanese energy utility who worked in a high-profile job by day and was a sex worker by night in Tokyo's Shibuya red-light district.

Radha and Govinda did not discuss the case much during the 20minute meeting. Govinda spent most of the half-hour asking about family especially about his daughters Mithila and Elisa. The younger Elisa was born after Govinda left for Japan and he has never seen her.

Also present in the visiting room separated by a glass partition was a lawyer and a jail guard. The lawyer said Govinda looked more composed than usual, apparently in an effort not to worry his wife. When she said she would be able to stay in Tokyo for only a few weeks, however, Govinda pressed her to stay longer. Radha was in tears when she came out of the detention house.

Govinda was arrested in March 1997 on suspicion of murdering the woman in a vacant apartment in Shibuya Ward and stealing about 40,000 yen (\$3,000). The apartment was near the condominium where he lived at the time. The case attracted extraordinary public attention in Japan because of



anti-communism, but don't

Govinda Mainali is still in a Japanese prison. awaiting the Supreme Court's ruling.

the double life of the victim. Govinda, who has never admitted his involvement

in the crime, was acquitted by the Tokyo District Court in April 2000 Nevertheless, the Tokyo High Court decided to keep him in detention after prosecutors appealed the case, instead of allowing immigration

authorities to deport him over an invalid visa. The high court then reversed the lower court ruling and sentenced him to a life term in December 2000. Despite the lack of new evidence, the high court turned down the earlier ruling that said there was "room for counter-argument" on every aspect of the version of events given by prosecutors .

Radha is convinced of her husband's innocence. "My husband is a gentle and quiet person and would never be able to kill anyone," she told Japan Times. "Knowing everything about him as his wife, all I can say is he did not do it." Radha is worried that their daughters are bullied at school by children who call their father a murderer. When she left her home for the visit to Tokyo, the daughters told her to "bring daddy home." she said

Ramesh Amatya, president of the Nepalese Americas Council, who was also in Tokyo at the time says 50,000 Nepalis in the United States are fully backing Govinda. "Anyone who studied this case comes away with the conviction that justice has failed," he said. Back home in Nepal, however, the Govinda issue has still not been raised either by the government (which depends heavily on Japanese development aid) or by activists. ♦

conduct for political parties: e) an anti-corruption pro-Đ+ **Special Winter Offer**

8 ADVENTURE





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two? Paraglide in Pokhara.



RAMESH POUDYAL IN POKHARA

Annapurnas etched against an azure sky. Now imagine that magine a Himalayan griffon vulture riding the catabatic griffon vulture is you. winds over Sarangkot. The ai That is what it is like to go roaring against her ear, soaring or agliding in Pokhara. Nepal's the mid-morning thermals, higher and higher until Phewa Lake is latest adventure tourism activity Get up there to look at central like a little green jewel, Nepal and the Annapurnas from

Machhapuchhre and the

the vantage point of the gods. Paragliding is the sport of flying—yes, flying—using a specially designed parachute. It is the best way to experience all the wonders of Nepal-lakes, mountains, natural splendour and for some, even nirvana, Note:

paragliding is different from the

ultra-lights that you hear whirring above Pokhara every morning that offer an hour-long sightseeing flight in small motorised gliders Few guidebooks urge us to go

In order to promote the activity, ahead and soar right into the crisp, fresh air of the mountains. That is a shame, because paragliding and Pokhara go together like tomatoes and timur, strawberries and swirly whipped cream. Now, finally, there is hope for those of us in Pokhara who want some activity, but cannot afford the time to go on a trek. No more is renting a boat (yawn) and paddling listlessly across Phewa Tal (snore) the only option. Now there is a chance to get one of the biggest highs of them all—getting up close and personal with that great inverted forked fish-tail of Machhapuchhre. asm was high Sunrise Paragliding, the first

Nepali company to start commerwhen Nepali participant Rajesh cial paragliding, has been in Bomjom won the solo flight

business in Pokhara since 1999 event, Raiesh, the first Nepali to receive a paragliding license from London, works for Sunrise Since then more than 1,000 people have been airborne in the skies above Pokhara, and got a Paragliding. Says the high flier: little bit closer to the mountains. "It hasn't been long since I

started flying, but the feeling is inimitable—once you're off, it feels as though you have wings. which has huge adventure sport cache overseas, the company has also been organising "interna-Jump off from Sarangkot and tional level" championships. In kiss the beauty of the Himalaya the third paragliding championand the lakes, and you wish you ship held here in December, there could fly forever." Many were 16 contestants from ten competitors had pretty adventurous plans, including flying different nations. Participants were required to take off from over Syangja, Palpa, Parbat, Sarangkot, fly above Torepani Kaski and the Annapurna and land at a designated spot on Conservation Area, but these had to be cancelled due to had Lakeside. They were judged on the varying levels of skills they weather. Despite that, some exhibited in the air. Although competitors showed off some there were fewer participants in pretty hair-raising tricks-even 2001 as compared with the anding on the waters of Phewa Tal with their girlfriends making up the second flier that the previous year, when there were close to 40 competitors, enthusiutes can carry. The highlight of the event was

make it an ideal paragliding country, especially from mid-

Nepal's terrain and weather

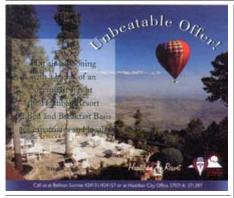
autumn to end-winter. You're best off flying between late morning and late afternoon, when the wind speed at this time of year is just right to soar like an eagle. Indeed, that is exactly who you fly with—paragliding is considered best and safest in the warm spaces favoured by highflying birds such as eagles. Quality flying needs fair wind, too much of it, or rain, is an obstruction As with anything to do with

ADVENTURE

It is strange that flying in Nepal, the bureaucracy although Nepal is has to get involved. And under promoted so often as an our 1994 Civil Aviation Policy venture sport destinathe Civil Aviation Authority has tion, the opportunity to fly approved commercial paragliding the majestic skies is such a taking off from the Torepani cliff recent one. Late it may be, but in Sarangkot, over Lakeside, the at least it diversifies a tourist Mahendra caves, Phewa Phaant, market that is getting just that little bid jaded, not to mention and landing at Naudada. Still, paragliders have to be on the lookout for the morning Pokharahaving to cope with all the craziness of the last year. Jomsom shuttles and get used to Commenting on how the sport the Twin Otters and Dorniers has brought about more variety in tourism to Pokhara, Biru

Bomjom, director of Sunrise Paragliding says with conviction We need to be innovative and creative if we are to take Nepal's tourism industry forward. We think paragliding as an adventure sport can help in this." Bomjom started the business with paragliding chutes that each cost about Rs 200 000 It is a big investment, and of

froning beneath their feet.





The January issue of Himal is now on news stands.

In addition to being a special issue on reconceptualising the region, this month's issue includes a free downside-up atlas-quality map of South Asia



course safety is an issue, so, until world body that governs there are more skilled pilots in paragliding rules. Trainees Nepal, Bomjom has had to hire completing this course can fly for ign pilots. And as there aren't an hour at a stretch, but because any training facilities or schools, Bomjom has been providing those Sunrise Paragliding is not listed with the FAL, they do not have terested unofficial training right the authority to issues licenses here in Pokhara, following the after the training is complete. three-level paragliding course set Bomjom is doing his best, but out by the Federation says dealing with an unhelpful Aeronautique Internationale, the bureaucracy can be wearving.

This means that though Pokhara is among the top destinations in the country for international as well as domestic tourists, the sport has not been able to attract as much excitement as it would virtually anywhere else in the world. The massive decline in tourist arrivals last year might be partially to blame, but it is a pretty expensive option, at \$70 for an

The only other Nepali paraglider, Narayan Parjuli, says we should be patient—and give it a shot. "Perhaps Nepalis are not aware of the fun of flying with chutes, but truly, once you start you never want to descend." Oh and there are discounts for Nepalis, so get ready for the ride of your life. \blacklozenge

Time to learn Nepali

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AKHILESH UPADHYAY

UNITED NATIONS - Civil society groups are deeply divided about the merits of the Global Compact, a UN nitiative to promote respect for human rights, labour, and the environment as corporations and states pursue economic globalisation. Numerous vernmental organisations have joined the year-old program, but have strong reservations about it. They would like all nine of the non-binding principals listed by the Compact to be

mandatory, but say that compromises their approach as pragmatic. "Our decision to work with the Global are necessary Groups that have staved outincluding Greenpeace and Friends of Compact is realistic." said Salil Earth-say the Compact is an attempt by multinational companies at "bluewash"- cleansing their images by association with the UN. The groups say the Compact lacks teeth: i relies on companies to volunteer to uphold environmental principles and abour rights, and for the most part, leaves it up to the firms to evaluate their own performance. They have asked UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to remodel the initiative or withdraw it altogether. Last week, the Global Compact

Advisory Council held its first meeting. UN officials touted the body composed of corporate, labour and civil society leaders, as key to finding concerative solutions to the dilemm and challenges of globalisation." Several hundred companies from countries such as Brazil, Britain, China, Germany, India, Indonesia Norway, Russia, Thailand, and the US have joined the effort.

COMMENT

Fripathi from Amnesty International ondon office. "If we demand early on that all the principles be met, chances are that they won't fly." He was quick to add that Amnesty was "not a partner" in the Global Compact, and sees itself as working together, but not in partnership with, multinational proprations-a distinction asserted by other groups on the advisory body. In their view, the Compact, however crude or flawed, represents a tacit recognition that globalisation has going wrong and it is time multinationals rt paying their social dues. Critics say the Compact should iold corporations more accountable for labour rights and environmental and human rights protection. Else, they argue, the UN risks becoming associated with corporate excess and abuses, and losing what they see as the world body's unique potential to provide some democratic control over

orporations and counterbalance the

NGOs at the session described

DAIMLERCHRYSLER

Can the Global Compact save citizens from the excesses of corporations and states in the pursuit of globalisation?

WTO and other institutions NGOs the past war. The companies cited. ee as agents of a corporate agenda. cluding Norway's Norsk Hydro, Among these groups is the US-based CorpWatch, which brought forth Hindustan Lever, the Indian unit of Unilever, Rio Tinto, and Nike, have hese arguments in a recent report denied the charges or discounted entitled "Tangled Up in Blue". The report cover shows Mickey Mouse them. Such violations could be revented, CorpWatch argues, if the wrapped in the blue UN flag. Holding JN embraced what a "Citizens" Compact" that would make independ he flag or trying to cover themselves with it are five men, each representing ently verified corporate responsibility : in industry titan: Rio Tinto for requirement of entry into, and nining, Shell for oil, Nike for ontinued presence in, markets and sporting goods and garments, and auto giant Daimler Chrysler. The man nvestments. The proposal has made little headway. rom biosciences major Novartis is At last year's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the International Chamber of Commerce hidden under the flag but for his protruding behind. Kenny Bruno, CorpWatch's UN (ICC), which has been strongly and corporations project director, believes the Global Compact has no ushing Annan to announce the Global Compact, sponsored a special promotional section in the Internaredibility without an independent nonitoring body. This is especially s tional Herald Tribune. The voluntar he said, since five companies in the group Corporate Europe Observatory says the ICC repeated in every article Compact have violated at least one of that while business is volunteering to ts nine principles, "after appearing on he podium with Kofi Annan. promote the environment, human Corporate watchdogs have reported rights, and social progress, "command abour, environmental, or human and control" be kept out of the Global rights abuses by Compact partners in Compact. \$ (IPS)

by IRMA ADELMAN

NOVARTIS

Poverty and terror

Real, balanced development

must be the west's goal.

within and between states

o simple equation can be drawn between poverty and terrorism, but glib assertions about the former breeding the latter do contain grains of truth. Poverty may not cause Islamic terrorism, but Islamic terrorists manipulate it. Viable strategies to prevent terrorism must address core issues of economic development.

Development took a wrong turn 30 years ago, when OPEC imposed ray severe oil-shocks on the global economy. Developed countries shifted from promoting growth to fighting inflation. World growth slowed dramatically (excep in East Asia) and the growth of world trade was halved. OPEC countries grew rich, the developing world struggled with unsustainable trade deficits and indebtedness, and experienced negative growth. In the 1980s-development's lost decade-and the1990s, half the IMF's developing members endured severe

financial crises and had to scale back social expenditures. Poverty, inequality, the potential

for strife all increased substantially. In the wake of this, development policies changed. The USA, the IMF, and the World Bank started emphasising globalisation by stressing trade liberalisation, restrictive macroeconomic policies and the institutional trengthening of markets—the policy package called "The Washington Consensus." Develop ment loans became "structural adjustment loans," intended to help heavily indebted developing countries avoid default and made conditional upon countries undertaking reform favoured by the Washington Consensus. Aid fatigue set in and, as the Cold War diminished. official aid flows declined. For most developing countries the results were stagnation, widened economic inequality, climbing unemployment and more poor people. Economic modernisation and poverty reduction suffered. In Africa, per capita GNP dropped at an average rate of 0.7 percent annually between 1970 and 1995 The median rate of growth in developing country

per capita GNP between 1980 and 1998 was 0 percent. Some bright spots did emerge: "high-development-level" developing countries—Taiwan, Korea, most of Latin America—became democracies. Between 1970 and 1990, the share of trade in GNP and the share of developing country nanufactured exports rose, except in oil-countries. Growth rates of Chile, China, India and Vietnam increased substantially through labour-intensive export-led growth and market-oriented reforms, albeit at the cost of burgeoning inequality. But poverty wasn't the only wound. Escalating oil-prices created a super-rich feudal aristocracy in the Gulf States. The gap between cosmopolitan oil-sheiks and

the disaffected, disenfranchised, nearly hopeless remainder of the population widened. Economic modernisation was practically non-existent. Increases in education coupled with little modern-iob creation and rapid rural-urban migration added to social and political unrest. The oil-regimes were oppressive nal, corrupt and quelled dissent through torture. Because of oil, they retained US support. No wonder some Arab youths became radicalised and easy prev for a small band of fiery Imams offering a nostrum to lift Muslims out of dependence, degradation and misery-the reestablishment of theocratic Islamic states, purer and more just than secular ones. They created a fapatical totalitarian movement that would stop at nothing to achieve its goals. Their enemies were modernising secular leaders (Nasser, Sadat in Egypt; the Shah in Iran);

intellectuals preaching a just, secular order and who exposed the fundamental-ist's excesses (Salman Rushdie); the small noderate Muslim middle class; the feudal, ecular elite; infidels (moderate Muslims, Christians and Jews): foreign powers who apported their enemies. For some decades, rir activities were largely limited to their own ountries, but when Arab governments clamped lown, they exported violence westward.

In the long run, something beyond a military response is needed. The west can learn a lot by studying the policies in the world's only mid-development Muslim states, Tunisia nd Indonesia. Both avoided falling prey to Islamic fundamentalism, and combined creases in secular education with rapid creation of manufacturing jobs. They stressed rural development and labour-intensive exports, and ursued rapid, egalitarian development.

But as a short-term ideology this isn't ompelling enough to compete with fundamen-alism, which has captured at least two generaions in the Muslim world. Terrorist leaders are not poor and uneducated states that sponsor terrorism are not the poorest. Sadly, the politics of crackdown seems the only immediate answer

to violence. But if peace, once achieved, is to be maintained, the west's goal must be real development that is balanced, delivers benefits to the poor and promotes economic convergence among countries. This might take decades to lessen Islamic terrorism, but could prevent radicalisation in other developing countries

(Project Syndicate)

(Irma Adelman is professor of economics at University of California, Berkeley)

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To deport or not

OTTAWA - The Canadian Supreme Court has concluded that refugees may be deported to their home countries, even if they face torture upon return, if they are deemed to pose a serious risk to Canadian security. The decision was handed down last Friday in rulings in two separate but similar cases, one involving a Sri Lankan refugee and the other, an Iranian. The court declined to define the term "serious risk" The Sri Lankan an LTTE executive member had been ordered deported by Canada's immigration minister and federal court, but the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 Friday that he should have a fuller opportunity to make his case to stay in Canada, mainly because he may not pose a serious threat to Canada. The Iranian. however, suspected of being a trained government assassin, and deemed a "danger to Iranian dissidents living in Canada", can be deported to Iran. the court ruled in another 9-0 judgement. Opponents of deportations to states that allow torture said the ruling gives some measure of protection to most refugee claimants, since presumably they pose no great threat to Canada. "We didn't get a blanket ban of deportations to places where torture is practised. But the court has set a very high bar, these deportations will be rare," said Alex Neve, Canadian executive director of Amnesty International. The Federal Court ruled in 2000 that laws which allow the federal immigration minister to send refugee claimants to states where they may be tortured violate Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms (IPS)

Meanwhile, in Australia

CANBERRA - The tiny South Pacific nation Nauru fears Australia will duck responsibility for accepting as refugees many of the 1,118 asylum seekers forcibly relocated by Australian military forces to the island during last year's racially charged election campaign. Nauru's president, Rene Harris, was surprised at reports that Australia may leave in his country many found by the UNHCR and Australian immigration officials to be genuine refugees, in the hope that other governments will take them. Harris would like the asylum seekers repatriated from Nauru-the world's smallest republic 4,000 km north-east of Australia with 10 000 people-by mid-May as was agreed with Australia. Australian Minister for Immigration Phillip Ruddock said last Tuesday Australia would only accept its "fair share" of those on Nauru deemed refugees. The UNHCR is assessing the claims of 300 people from a Norwegian container ship which was stormed by Australian Special Air Service personnel last August to prevent it landing in Australia. Frantic to resolve the crisis, the Australian government announced the Pacific solutiondiverting asylum seekers in Australian waters to Pacific nations on a short-term basis in return for financial support. UNHCR also required the Australian government to assess the refugee applications of over 1,000 other asylum seekers forcibly relocated to Nauru and Papua New Guinea-an exercise some estimate will cost Australia \$400 million. Margaret Piper, executive director of the Refugee Council of Australia, is dismayed. "Iran has 2.5 million asylum seekers and gets \$30 million from the international community. We are spending \$350-400 million to keep out a couple of thousand people." she said. UNHCR this week announces the results of its processing of 216 Iraqis in Nauru. Ireland will accept 50 of those found to be refugees, but no other country has indicated interest in the remainder "I don't doubt Ruddock called in UNHCR thinking they'd be tougher than Australian decision makers (in processing asylum requests)," Piper explained. "It seems the UNHCR will find the majority of these people to be refugees and Ruddock does not want to abide by the umpire's decision." (IPS)

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ASIA

Save your breath

NEW DELHI - Health and environment activists are aghast at a new automobile fuel policy that sets the clock back on a Supreme Court order banning diesel use by buses and taxis plying India's smoggy capital, and replacing it with environmentfriendly compressed natural gas (CNG). After a series of appeals by the government last year pleading inability to comply with the order on the grounds of poor availability of CNG, the court said all buses running on diesel had to go off Delhi's roads

M ISHAQ NADIRI

he term "failed state" is

frequently applied to

gained such influence there. But

country doesn't fail of its own

efinite, identifiable reasons for

failure that must be addressed if

Twenty years of invasion.

volition, nor is it weakened by

unknown causes-there are

Afghanistan is to be revived.

civil war, and drought have

demonstrate

There are three immediate

oncerns, the most important

being feeding Afghans within

the country and in refugee

amps outside Afghanistar

Humanitarian aid is being

delivered, but a distribution

nust be built—they have

ystem safe from the predator

ness of Afghanistan's warlords

already been given too big a say in distributing aid, and they

must be stripped of this power.

The second is relocating Afghan

efugees now living in Pakistan

displaced within Afghanistan.

and Iran, as well as those

deemed the reason terrorists

fghanistan and is often





ruined the country's institutions. Millions huddle in refugee camps or are displaced from their homes and millions are sick and poor, living at The report and the government have ignored the testimony of tarvation levels. Landmines leading cardiologists that Delhi's air has dangerously high levels of soot and respirable suspended particles (RSP), a defile the countryside. Rebuildproduct of diesel combustion. "Breathing Delhi air is equivalent ing Afghanistan's economy will to smoking 20 packets of cigarettes a day." says Krishan also require a reinvention of its Kumar Aggarwal, a leading cardiologist, CSE's published political and cultural instituestimate says annually at least 10,000 deaths in the capital tions. But such massive efforts which has 12 million people, can be traced to vehicular pollution. Anil Agarwal. CSE's founder who died last week. will fail if Afghanistan's neighbours intervene in ways that blamed the asthma and cancer he suffered from on the promote economic upheaval all capital's pollutants. Narain says the centre's objection to the report, authored by RA Mashelkar, head of the Council of over again. This is no place for cheap, quick fixes. The anti-Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), was that it again terror coalition cannot bail out emphasised controls on tailpipe emissions rather than fuel fast as the west did when it quality and type. "We have to specify the fuel and the technolabandoned Afghanistan after the ogy to make a difference," she argued. Mashelkar says Soviet withdrawal ten years ago nowhere in the world is a single fuel prescribed, and supports Doing this could mean renewed free choice of engine and fuel types as long as users conform chaos and violence, this time in to existing pollution control standards. (IPS a more destabilised region, as Pakistan's current problems

Making up through trade and aid

ISLAMABAD - Trade appears to be Pakistan's strategy to woo the new interim government in Afghanistan, which is dominated by Northern Alliance officials believed to be hostile to Islamabad because of its past support to the Taleban. As Pakistan explores diplomatic ways to befriend the new Afghan rulers, it is also concerned with getting a piece of the reconstruction of Afghanistan and has announced major incentives for its businessmen. On 7 January, Islamabad announced it would re-open its embassy in the Afghan capital Kabul, closed in October due to "security concerns", and a consulate in the eastern city of Jalalabad. Abdul Razak Dawood. Pakistan's trade minister who made the announcement, added, "It is likely Pakistan will open its embassy and consulate within 10 days so businessmen could visit Afghanistan to seek opportunities that have arisen as a result of Afghanistan's reconstruction." Islamabad sealed its borders and suspended supplies to Afghanistan on the request of the United States after 11 September. "We have stopped the clearance and all transporta tion of food, other consumer goods and equipment imported by Afghan traders from abroad or Pakistan," said an official of the Central Bureau of Revenues that supervises the Afohan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA), under which Pakistan gives duty-free passage to all goods destined for Afghanistan. The government now seems to have allowed ATTA to work. "The agreement is still intact and the government will honour it," said Dawood, implying that Afghan traders can again use Pakistan as their trade route under the 1965 bilateral agreement. While it kept Afghanistan dependent on Pakistan, this agreement has been used as means of smuggling high-duty goods into Pakistan and in earlier years, to bring in goods liable to stringent import licensing and foreign exchange restrictions. "These banned items covered 85 percent of the ATTA," said an official of the commerce ministry. "But with the military government's focus on steps to eradicate smuggling and deployment of regular army on all regular and irregular routes, we hope that smuggling will be curtailed." Senior World Bank economist Dr Zareen Naqvi says Pakistan-Afghanistan trade stood at \$2.5 billion dollars in 1996/97-but most of it was through smuggling The massive reconstruction effort will cost more than \$15 billion dollars over the next 10 years, to which Pakistan has committed \$100 million. In addition to allowing Pakistani busi-

nessmen to trade with their Afghan counterparts in Pakistani Rupee, the government also plans to create a revolving fund for suppliers' credit to facilitate exports to Afghanistan. But some businessmen and traders want more. "We want total elimination of the list of banned exportable items. The devastated Afghanistan needs everything, from needles to heavy machinery. I don't understand why the government has allowed export of some items while banned others under the presumption that they would be smuggled back into Pakistan. This will only restrict our ability to trade," said Ghulam Sarwar Mohmand, an industrialist from the North West Frontier Prov ince bordering Afghanistan. (IPS)

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There is no room for quick, cheap fixes in Afghanistan. help Afghanistan's democratic

n reconstruction—it is not a

society with a strong political

centre. Planners should take

advantage of the country's

decentralised nature and

emphasise private sector

A decentralised system will

espond better to local needs

and avoid an over-bureaucratic

public sector. But autonomous

voided, as they could play into

the hands of the warlords, and

poorer regions would do badly

Afghanistan has resources

there is potential for oil and gas

exploration, and mining iron ore

n such a system

economic regions should be

participation in reconstruction.

fworkers

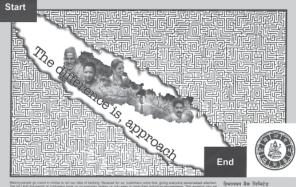
For this, the agricultural conomy needs to be revived roviding jobs and food, but the millions of mines left from the Soviet invasion are a massive impediment. The west has a big ncentive to be generous to Afghanistan's rural poor. Starving farmers, if unassisted may return to cultivating a reliable cash crop—the opium poppy, long a staple of the warlord economy. Eliminating it will help farmers and the west as it tries to curtail heroin use, and also Afghanistan's infant government struggling to assert s national authority. A bankrupt warlord cannot buy weapons or bribe people to maintain their loyalty. Major infrastructure nvestments will be needed if the economy is to be revived Housing, particularly for

and precious metals. These returning refugees, will need to should be explored in a framebe constructed fast. Kabul, work of economic development Mazar, Herat and other cities across Central Asia. Afghanistar need to be rebuilt as economic must be integrated into the and cultural centres. Village regional pipeline and other development schemes. Afghans housing must be provided on an enormous scale. Roads, airports can contribute in a tangible way and communications systems here by reopening the Northmust be revitalised to restore South route connecting the trade. The educational system resource-rich Central Ásian needs to be rebuilt almost from conomies to densely populate India and Pakistan scratch, especially outside cities, and with so many women This will be impossible unless Afghanistan's young males anxious to return to teaching, a

vived educational system will are disarmed and given productive work. It is essential to attract politicians gain a powerful lobby expatriate Afghans with skills and professional achievements who Afghanistan poses difficulties can help rebuild the country by stablishing small firms to provide employment. Expatriate involvement will also likely support the rights of women to participate fully and legally in economic and political life, as was the case before 1978. Finally, donor countries must

apply the lessons learned in restoring the war-rayaged former Yugoslavia. Grants and planning must be coordinated, and the onsent of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries assured. If they are ignored, regional interests could again incite chaos. An international conference on Afghanistan should be called by the US and held under UN auspices to affirm Afghanistan's territorial integrity, and ensure that donor commitments meet the scale of the job and that promises are kept. 🔶 (Project Syndicate) M Ishaq Nadiri participated

in the talks to create Afghanistan's interim government, is professor of economics at NVII and an economic advisor to Hamid Karzai's interim government.



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Talk to us

(Statement of former Chief Justice Biswa Nath Upadhava and other prominent pe

It has already been a month since an emergency was imposed in the country unde Article 115, Clause 1 of the constitution. The Manists withdrew from the neare process and started a bloodbath, and three decisions were taken by government-it imposed an emergency, mobilised the army, and issued the Terrorism and Disruptive Activities (Prevention and Control) ordinance. Besides suspending the fundamental rights

of the people, all the emergency has been able to do is spread chaos and terror, and

Dang, after the emergency create a vacuum in the minds of the people. Nothing else has come out of it. Just because an emergency is in effect, this does not mean that the government can do anything it wants. It gives absolute powers to neither the government nor to government officials. The constitution gives the people certain rights and an emergency cannot just withdraw them. Come what may, the rights of the people will always be there. They can only be suspended for a limited period of time. No action can be taken against people without the necessary laws. During an emergency, when some kinds of powers have to be limited, Article 115, Clause 7 gives the government powers to get certain orders issued. But no orders have been issued under this clause till date. Given this, it isn't surprising that people will question whether we need an emergency and what its outcome will be. The government does not seem interested in framing special orders.

The people were told that the emergency was imposed to control the Maoists and mobilise the army. However, it wasn't necessary to impose an emergency just to mobilise the army. Why did the government think it necessary? The people have no clue, and the government does not think it is important to provide answers. People ask why an all-party meeting was not called to take this decision, why it was necessary to impose an emergency simply to mobilise the army, why fundamental rights have been suspended and why the civiliar government does not have control over the army. These are some questions that media has been asking Earlier, when hundreds of people and policemen were being massacred, the government wanted to mobilise the army. The army always refused, saying that correct procedure had to be followed. Once the emergency was imposed, all procedures were completed immediately, and the army was mobilised within no time, which shows that the emergency was a pre-condition for army deployment. Outside the Valley, the people's reading of the situation seems to be that civil administration has

become weaker and is relying increasingly on the army. The police have been forced to hand over to the army all the reporters they take into custody. The army iself takes into custody people it suspects of being Maoists or Maoist sympathisers. Instead of handing these people over to the civilian administration, it takes custody of them, questions them and locks them up. It is one thing to deploy the army, but it is completely another matter for the army to enforce a military regime. The army has been mobilised to tackle the Maoists, they have to follow the orders of the government, ie, they have to follow civilian law and procedures, they cannot implement military law and order. This must be explained to the people, otherwise after the emergency has been withdrawn, there will be legal problems. We demand that the government explain all this to the people, immediately and in full detail.

At the same time that the emergency was imposed, another ordinance to control the Maoists was also put in force. Article 115, Clause 7 of the constitution clearly provides enough space for the civilian government to give orders to bring the situation under control. It was unnecessary to implement another ordinance for this. The government has not bothered to explain. This shows disrespect for the constitution, and will also trouble the people once the emergency has been withdrawn. This ordinance should be scrapped immediately and we request the government to immediately implement the provisions provided by the constitution

There was an ordinance issued alongside the emergency declaration. Because the constitution gives government the power to issue special orders, the necessity of legislating through an ordinance is unclear. i will not only remain a noose on the necks of the people after the emergency ends but will also remain as a permanent inhuman law. That is why we call on his Majesty's Government to scrap the ordinance immediately and issue the necessary orders to fight the Maoists using the provisions in the constitution (Article 115, 7). The government is also said to be preparing to issue other ordinances. In an emergency the government should be worried about convening parliament, not framing laws through ordinances. The emergency does not suspend the rights of the MPs or parliament, and any attempt to use the emergency for anything other than fighting the insurgents will be deemed a misuse of emergency powers. The government must convene the regular winter session of parliament to ratify the emergency and to make other necessary laws.

The constitution has clearly stated that if necessary, the fundamental rights of the people can be suspended during an emergency. However, the government must have adequate reasons for taking such a step. The government is responsible for protecting the lives and property of the people, protecting national wealth, taking action against unlawful activities and providing good governance. These can be done by using its powers and the security forces, but it is not necessary to suspend the fundamental rights of the people. It is not right to restrict information flow, even during an emergency. ... We request the government to not do anything that will weaken or harm democracy, the political system, or the people, and do everything that can be done to remove fear from the minds of the people.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Non supporters of the Panchayat system and the king were tortured, and even killed during the Panchayat era, but at least the cases were investigated. They weren't shot at blindly like now. - Chitra Bahadur KC, MÁSAL leader Jana Astha, 16 January



Adarman The Spacetime Dainik, 13 January

ounter. Not only did the man los is wife, she was also branded a rrorist a day after she died. After reading the daily government reports, even people who do not agree with the policies of the

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Hard to digest

A woman waiting on the veranda of

her house is shot down by army personnel. As her husband sees her

is not shot and he watches his wife

fall, he shouts out: "Shoot me too!" He

It is hard to imagine such things

vernment media committed anothe

nouncing the following day that a

appening unless one is an eyewitne

As if this were not had enough the

, trocity against this poor man by

errorist" had been killed in an

2017/212

Jana Aastha, 9 January

reathe her last.

Maoists feel betrayed. The governmer has branded the Maoists "terrorists" Government forces have been arresting many innocent people on the slightes spicions. Until and unless a crime has been proven, no one can be arrested. The government is doing exactly the opposite-it is arresting and harassing innocent people, ever many who do not at all support the

lepartments would be reduced. But hey have been proven completely rong-they have discovered that Maoists. It arrests a lot of people and orruption has reached new, shocking then issues press releases stating that eights. This ministry was known those arrested are suspected of being or the rampant misuse of Maoist sympathisers. Dhruba Hari Adhikary a teacher overnment vehicles, and this has ctually increased recently. at the Nepal Press Institute, is fed up Bijay Gachhedar, who is known with such behaviour on the part of th o be corrupt, is Minister for Water overnment, and says that the situatio Resources. Laxman Bastola, his PA has now become such that they

originally from Nepal Television), (journalists) no longer completeb trust government press releases. The uses a Paiero that used to have a white number plate now turned red Ministry of Information and Communication has asked all media private). In the same way, Manoi organisations to publish news that Biswas, a fourth grade officer in elps uplift the morale of the armed Gorkhapatra, has now been made personal PA to the minister and he and motivates them, and does the opposite to the morale and level o 00 uses a Pajero that earlier had a notivation of the Maoist forces. The white plate but has now been onverted into a red number plate. government on a regular basis issues statements in line with this agenda. Similarly, Narayan Sharma, PA to the deputy minister, also uses a Pajero The Defence Ministry forgets that a whose number plate has been changed nergency has been imposed in this ountry precisely due to such from white to red. Meanwhile, still wisting of facts. nother vehicle belonging to the

ninistry is always seen parked in After the emergency was put in front of the minister's personal office Sources say that after Gachhedar place, public meetings have stopped ompletely. Because of the emergency the ruling Nepali Congress has came minister, 22-25 vehicles of e ministry are being misused. indefinitely postponed all its progra Number plates are being changed and public meetings. The opposition parties, namely the UML and the ML from white to red to avoid dete f tomorrow will not come. All this is who also support the emergency, haw taking place when the country is in a called off all their programs. This is vhy no public meeting has taken plac state of emergency... n this period.

The government is doing

ouple of days ago, the Defence

in a village in Rolpa took out a

rocession against the atrocitie

ommitted by the terrorists But

eeting is supposed to have taken

place in, people are having a hard tim

People may recall that some time

ago the Defence Ministry put out a

release stating that the armed forces

activists and seized their weapons.

Nepal Television carried this news.

On one of the captured guns was stuck

a picture supposed to be of Prachanda

Even Himal Khabarpatrika carried this

nformation and a picture of the gun.

Nepal Television is doing all it can to

show that the armed forces are winnin

victories, and all the country's

wholeheartedly in support of the

emergency. In the same vein, the

government recently issued a releas

stating that the people of Surkhet were

d up with the Maoists and had taken

usiness institutions are

had captured a large number of Maois

believing the report.

linistry put out a release which

Maoist mines

out a procession, with thousands of

people participating and protesting against the Maoists. We were told that

he people were protesting the fact that

the Maoists had kidnapped people from the village, and demanding the

release of all the villagers who had

see this protest on television and

een abducted. But we never got to

there was no follow up to this story

As a result, many people came to

the conclusion after some time that

this was done to hit at the morale of

A few days later, the Defence

ourse of its "search and destroy"

six caves in Dohlakha that were

A watery grave

Employees of the Ministry of Water

organisations had hoped that with the

mposition of a state of emergency,

prruption in the ministry and its

Resources and its many affiliated

अन्दर्भः

Ministry put out the news that in the

peration, the army had destroyed

used by the terrorists...(There was

he Maoists.

no follow up).

erything it can to demoralise the Maoists. In this respect it sometimes Budhabar, 9 January uts out conflicting information. A The Maoists had laid a land mine for the army in Khara Village Development Committee in Rukum district. Instead, four innocent people lost claimed that more than 500 villagers their lives in that ambush, and a fifth vas seriously injured. In Kalika VDC because the release did not name th in Bardia, the Maoists laid another Village Development Committee this

Acharya submitted his six-page ng response. On the issue nine for the army. Instead of the tended target, the ambulance of the ming the monarch. Acharva explains that what he said in publ local Red Cross ran over it and was as within the guidelines set by the completely blown up. The ambulance ras going from Guleriya to Bheri central committee in its meeting in une and that this would not affect Anchal Zonal Hospital in Nepalgun Surely the Maoist "class war," had he party in any way. He claims that all he said was definitely within the othing against ambulances that ferry arameters set by the party.

QUE .

sick people. Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry Acharya's explanation goes on to s said that three army personnel mind Koirala that there have often n times when NC members have vere killed and 24 others injured by poken their minds-even if what nine laid out by the Maoists near Salang Khola in Chandisthan. hey were saying was completely contradictory to party policy. amjung. After the imposition of Acharya says that since everything h the emergency, the Maoists have started targeting the army with said was within the guidelines set by the party, there was no need to ask nines. Thirteen army personnel for an explanation. (Apparently have died because of such Koirala did not like what he read imbushes, two in Pyuthan, three in Gorkha, three in Banke, two in and last week he asked Acharva to esign from his post as head of the Myagdi and three in Lamjung. The Maoists have not been able t NC publicity department)

18-24 JANUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES CULTURE AND SOCIETY

penly face the army. They know

ried to take the army head on, and

that is why they are now relying on

nines. A truck of the Armed Polio

urkhet, and four personnel lost

heir lives. Recently, a vehicle of

the district police in Guleriva was

caught in a mine and completely

are very effective and have been

increasing use for ambushing the

The Magiers believe that mine

ecurity forces. They realise that this

inflicts the maximum damage on the

nemy with minimum damage to

hemselves. The mines are placed

in areas where vehicles have to

and bends, and this way they

low down for difficult crossings

inflict maximum damage. The Maoists learnt this art from

he People's War Group of India

1996 in Dhawang in Rolpa, Since

then, the damage and death caused

mines have increased.

Many individuals and

vrganisations are requesting all

cerned that the use of mines

hould be banned. According to the

Ban Landmines Nepal Campaign,

n 2000 alone, 115 policemen, four

Manists, as well as close to 90 other

people (including 29 children) have

Girija Prasad Koirala is having some

problems. He had asked the head of

explanation Koirala demanded was

gainst the decision taken earlier at

meeting of the Congress Central

Koirala asked Acharya if he had

tated publicly that the monarch's

he had suggested that the issue of

hould be taken to the public. He

further asked Achanya if this was not

contrary to the party's philosophy

nd whether he realised the effect

Congress. The party asked Acharya to explain the charge in writing.

this would have on the Nepali

amendments to the constitution

wealth should be made public and if

Working Committee, which

Koirala himself chaired.

the Nepali Congress' publicity and PR department, Narahari Acharya,

Koirala rule

for an explanation. The

Budhabar, 9 January

nave died

caught in mines. Ninety-four

QUEER

and used mines for the first time in

lestroyed.

was caught in an ambush in

hey would be decimated if the

NEPALITERATURE

A SMALL, GOOD THING: Nepal's first ever residential writing retreat their own. Some take morning walks money (or being able to afford the time to he thing about writing is, you have

the proper narrative structure for a book

on the first all-Nepali women's ascent of

Everest, Linguist Amrit Yonzon was busy

compiling Tamang-language writings from

Sarvahari) was working on a novel set in

Dang, among the bonded labourers of the

far-west. And Jovan Ilic, originally from

Yugoslavia but presently hailing from

Hetauda, was working on a novel on

identity issues in Yugoslavia and Nepal.

survive the monotony of two meals of

He was also wondering, secretly, how to

The writers converge four times a

day-for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and for

tea, but other than this, they are left on

the 1950's onward. Writer Krishna Rai

Chaudhary (whose pen name is

to be alone while doing it. Of course, you needn't be seques tered in a quiet hillside resort with nothing to distract you save for a view of the himals, but you need to be by yourself. More or less. You might be on a nacked hus when a noem strikes, but you must turn away from your chatty seatmate in order to jot it down before it is lost forever to the rush of time

This January, nine writers started off on Nepal's first ever residential writing refreat at the High View Resort in Dhulikhel, where they have nothing to distract them save for a view of the himals. They are acting as guinea pigs, in a way testing out Martin Chautari's hypothesis that residential retreats such as this-lasting four to six weeks-will

significantly enrich the writing of manuscripts in Nepal. All indications are positive so far. When I went to visit the writers (to make sure that they weren't cursing Martin Chautari for marooning them in a place where there was nothing to do but write). I found them lounging in the sun with books, sitting at computers, stooped over notebooks, scribbling to their heart's content, or staring into space in anticipation of inspiration. They were doing exactly what the organisers envisioned them doing And they were enjoying it.

Crisped by the winter sun, write

s some of our Nepali exiles

ations begin to accumulate

living abroad in western

wealth, status, renown (and an exile'

angst), they appear to be haunted by

that old Nepali song, "Pharka he

COMMENT

Diaspora in dilemma

daal-bhaat a day.

Khagendra Sangraula bragged of having

finished a play, and having started a new

into non-fiction. Writer Bhuvan Dhungana

shape, and putting together a collection of

was hammering a recalcitrant novel into

Bhupadhwaj Thomros Rai was finishing

transcribe interviews of members of the

Bhattarai had put Greece behind him, and

was moving onto other countries in his

Yogesh Raj had launched on a meditative

Journalist Sangeeta Lama was seeking

tome on European literature. Engineer

introspective work that left everyone

reeling with its philosophical scope.

up a Kulung dictionary, and starting to

Kulung Rai community. Critic Ramesh

short stories. Language activist

book that began as a novel, but turned

Foreign Resident Nepalis (FoReN) see only dirt, dust, decay, decrepitude, demagogic democracy, garbage, and graft the moment they clear customs. Maybe they should continue to wallow in the wealth of their adopted west.

when not carrying out dialogues with

tonologues that echo with the pros

But there is no such thing as free

inch, especially an expensive one.

high life produce their own stress,

an frets about the quality of

eir "tensions" Even as the family

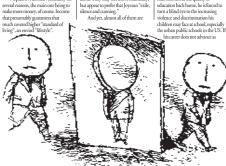
Thus the pursuit and pleasures of the

fellow expatriates, they are captive

audience of their own interio

and cons of life at home

pharka Nepali, timilai daakchha Nepal..."sung by Pushpa Nepali. Others are primarily concerned with Whenever two or more diasport Nepalis gather, the talk invariably, expanding their knowledge, skills, and santly turns to the declining state periences, which they hope at some point to utilise back home. Then there of the home state. Should one return home under these circumstances? And ire those rare birds-the types who the inevitable "Ke game?" has doubleonce used to join the Foreign Legior meaning: one is the perennially r become deckbands on tram pessimistic, fatalistic meaning that teamers—who expect to lie when Nepalis associate with that lamentable filling out the employment form. For phrase but the other indicates the lack essons known only to themselves their primary concern is to be left of ioh prospects: "Ke kaam game?" Nepalis live abroad voluntarily for lone. They may not thrive financial but appear to prefer that Joycean "exile, ilence and cunning



others sleep in; some work in the sun, others huddle indoors, under blankets; some steal over to Dhulikhel bazaar to buy local liquor, others observe strict abstinence on the matter of alcohol There is plenty of time to play, if they wish but most of the time they write and when they are sick of that, they read. During mealtimes they consult each other about problems in their work, and swap suggestions, examples, anecdotes, and jokes. When I was there I asked the group

did they think that this kind of residential retreat was helpful? (This is, after all, the first such retreat in Nepal: perhaps everyone was dving to get done with it already). But there were nods all around "As soon as I saw the announcement, I wanted to go." Ramesh Bhattarai said. The last time he'd had so much uninterrupted time to work was when he spent time in jail as a democracy activist, he said. "There was the same set schedule

the same focused atmosphere, and all the talk of a retreat site for writers and meals were taken care of." I took this as a artists in Banepa, or in Pokhara, or on remote hills. Kathmandu's mayor Keshav positive comment about the retreat, which is how he meant it, he assured me Sthapit has apparently been championing I left the retreat site pleased for the such ideas for years. This is all very organisers' sake-and also pleased that good to hear. May all such projects the Japan Foundation Asia Center had flourish. And may many fundersagreed to fund the program. There are including Nepali businesses-shower several organisations in Nepal that hand their resources on such efforts. The creative life of all Nepal will benefit from such small, good things, \$

out cash fellowships to writers and iournalists: but writing isn't just about

> One of the dirty secrets supadvice of the French philosophe ressed during the 'go-go' success of ilicon Valley was the alarming Sartre who stated that life begins or he other side of despair. incidents of wife abuse and domesti violence, especially among Asian immigrant communities Even before the dot.coms nose-dived, the newly hired immigrant was often the first to be laid off. During boom times, he consoled himself with humorous clichés such as "rags to riches to rag and riches again." But if the rags clung on longer than expected, well... it was

themselves, and the most dreaded cind, which they dare not reveal even o their own selves. Exiles, too harbour secret trandoors and exits within themselves, some which they reveal to others, but others not even themselves. One of these nurtured silently in the deepest recess of one's clamorous consciousness, is used to onsole oneself during moments of doubt, if not melancholia.

e going gets tough, one can alway ____back home! Usually after a long ight of drinking, certain deep-seated crets, if not sentimental clichés, fragmented utterances, or dribble our wly, like boiling, liquid forcing itself out from the cracks in the pot cover, such as: "It is wonderful to live abroad when young, brother, but once ou get old even your children will prost you. Then it is hell " But to return home, does one haw o wait until one is reduced to a

comfort. After all, "khaane mukh lai doddering, blabbering old fool? Does iunga le chhek daina " 💧 one really waste one's talents when one turns home when one is in one's prime? Life will be uncomfortable back home, but if a return is inevitable then it may be better to follow the

of Travellers' Tales Nepal published in San Francisco in 1997. He lives in Kathmandu.)

I would be the first to agree that ertain types of eviles should not return. These are the ones who expect to live a totally western lifestyle in our faux-modern Kathmandu, Foreign Resident Neralis (FoReN) on vacatio are quick to point out the dirt, dust, decay, decrepitude, demagogic democracy, garbage, and graft, among other transparent evils that grip our nation, the moment they clear customs Wealthy FoReNs who wish to invest and contribute to the nation's levelopment (and their own) who xpect not to grease palms or use ource-force' as means to their end ould continue to wallow in the wealth of their adopted west. Nepotism and corruption has

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write), it's also about having the right

kind of environment for in-depth re

search, sustained reflection, and an

exploration of craft or technique. Many

writers who have taken cash fellow-

ships have been too strapped by our

society's habitual turmoil and hectic

done; some have had to return the

long stretches of time to work. A

nut a swift end to any chance of

completing a manuscript.

husband demanding his dinner, or a

ringing telephone, wailing baby, intrusiv

relative (the list can go on and on) can

It is interesting to note that the idea

of residential retreats has been in the air.

these past few years. Every now and

then one hears that government funds

have been allocated to such centres, or

are going to be allocated soon. There is

by RAJENDRA KHADKA

social commitments to get any writing

money, while others have defaulted on

work. Particularly when launching on a

book-length work, it is crucial to have

een part of humanity since the beginning of time and will not disappear anytime soon. And, please to not return home for the sake of your children, especially if they are already teenagers, because you want them to "appreciate" their true culture and heritage. They won't thank you for it And don't even think of arranging their marriage with a uitable boy/girl.

If you are a FoReN with a college

e surprised at the number of jobs on

offer back home. I have lived in Nepal

being a rocket scientist, there is plenty

for over two wars now, and short of

to do. Even if you spent your years

viscerating chickens, they'd be after

nechanical, hygienic slaughterhous

abroad hacking hog carcasses and

ou as a technical advisor, since

are being planned. So, really, you

need not wait for death in western

lonne with skills and talents would

appeared to shudder inwardly. A Vepali mother who had two daughte This secret mantra, is that when was equally traumatized by the bility that her daughters might begin dating African-American boys Whitebox however were okay She admitted her racism but said she was suddenly burst forth in swift. unable to be "liberal" about it.

And then there is the Lady of the Castle, Educated, ambitious women quickly discover that when abroad, and in the absence of the dictates of saasuessues et al they are suddenly free to pursue their own version of "life, liberty and happiness" unless of course the Lord of the Castle says no. Alas, even today, for many educated, "broad-minded men" it is difficult to accept that their wives want to become professionals, and,

(god forbid) may begin earning

ore than they do

(Rajendra Khadka is the editor

ime for the abused members of the obsessed by the thought of home. And | quickly as he had expected, all things family to call the hotline or seek refug being equal, he cannot but suspect that a shelters for the abused he is being held back because of the Fyodor Dostoevsky, that incomp colour of his skin, aggravated perhaps rable diviner of human psyche, once by his insufficient grasp of the local wrote that human beings have three kinds of secrets: one that they reveal to iguage and social mores. Then there is that chilling spectre others, another that they reveal only to of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. I knew a Nepali father in America who sent his troubled teenage son back to Kathmandu because the teenager found music, drugs and girls a lot more fun than academics. He confessed that he was secretly relieved he had a son rather than a daughter because he felt could handle his son's problems but "if I had a daughter " he

4 CITY

MOVIES Nepali and Hindi movies online ticket booking at www.nepalshop.com

* St Augustine's Alumni Association of Nepal Lunch get-together at Hotel Nirvana Garden, Thamel. Rs 200 for singles, Rs 350 for couples, Rs 550 for couple with two children under 12. 26 January, 12 noon onwards. 439232

 Guitar workshop by two classical guitarists. Hotel Yak & Yeti, 27 January, 10.30AM-12.30PM. Rs 250 per head. 248999

 Nepali classical dance and folk music at Hotel Vajra. 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

Vaira, 271545 Contemporary Jazz dance classes by Meghna Thapa. At Alliance Francaise Sundays and Tuesdays 4.30PM-6.30PM, 241163. At Banu's, Kamal Pokhari, Wednesdays 6.30PM 8PM, Saturdays 1.30PM. 434024, 434830

Beetle Mania, tribute to George Harrison: Poolside party

with live band, DJ. Come in a Beetle, pay Rs 2,222 for as many as will fit in the car. Rs 450 per person head with drink and snack. Free tickets with The Himalayan Times quiz. Hotel de l'Annapurna, 25 January, 3PM onwards. 221711

1964

MILSIO Classical quitar for world neace Renowned quitarists

from Thailand, Germany, Japan and Nepal. Hotel Yak & Yeti, 26 and 27 January, 4PM, Rs 400 per day, Rs 700 whole festival, Classical Guitar Society of Nepal and Hotel Yak & Yeti, 248999

Coffee and live music with Dinesh and Tilak. Saturdays, Saturday 6.45PM- 9.15PM. Himalatte Café, Thamel, 262526

 Live music Tuesday and Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant. 414336

FATING OUT

* International Duck Festival Lunch and dinner duck recipes from around the world using imported duck. Sunrise Café, Hotel Yak & Yeti, until 31 January, 248999

Winter Specials Hot mulled wine, ratatouille-filled pancakes, Chicken hoisin. Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 250440

 Winter drinks Khukuri cocktails at the Juneli Bar, Hotel de l'Annapurna. 221711 * Mamma Mia Pizzas with special toppings, special pasta menu and complimentary Coke

with every order 15 percent discount for Standard Chartered Bank credit card holders. Complimentary shuttle from Pokhara lakeside

four times daily. Shangri-La Village, Pokhara. 061-22122 Ceremonial cuisine Six to 20 course dinners from \$19, four-course lunches \$13. Krishnarnan Restaurant Dwarika's Hotel



· Combo Meals with burgers, salads, fries, coke, pastry, all Rs 350. 3PM-6PM, The Fun Café, Radisson Hotel. 411818

* Children's Saturday Games, prizes and food every Saturday, 12 noon onwards. Bakery Café Baneswor and Teku.

 Rox Restaurant and Bar Traditional European cuisine from woodfired oven in show kitchen. Live music, cocktails and snacks at the Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234 Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510

 Tukche Thakali Kitchen Buckwheat harley hean and dried meat specialties Also brunch with porridge and pancakes, all raw material from Tukche village. Darbar Marg. 225890

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

GETAWAYS

479488

 Escape to Nagarkot Special packages for Nepalis and expats at the The Tea House Inn. Singles Rs 800 B&B, couples Rs 1,200 B&B. 410432, 680048

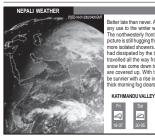
* Fresh air and tranquillity in Kathmandu Valley Stay at Triple A Organic Farm Guesthouse in Gamcha, south of Thimi. Rs. 1,500 per person per night, all-inclusive. Email aaa@wlink.com.np. 631766

Thank Goodness it's Friday! Dwarika's TGIF overnight package including Friday checkin, sekuwa dinner, Saturday brunch, massage. \$125 net per couple. 479488

 Pokhara Retreat Through January 2002 stay two nights, get one night free. Package with or without airfare to Pokhara and return. Complementary shuttle to Lakeside, free use of pool table and fitness centre. Shangri-La Village, Pokhara, 435741/42

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

4



Better late than never. Although it came too late to be of any use to the winter wheat, the rains were welcome. The northwesterly front as we see in this satellite picture is still hugging the Himalava and may bring some more isolated showers. But most of the precipitation

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

had dissipated by the time this cloud formation travelled all the way from the Mediterranean. The snow has come down to 3,500 m and all high passes are covered up. With the haze cleared, the days will be sunnier with a rise in davtime temperature after the thick morning fog clears.

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Yak Yeti Yak is on holiday and will return next week

Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical history, Contested Meaning, and the Globalisation of South Asia David Ludden, ed Permanent Black, Delhi, 2001

Rs 1.112 The most important and influential change in South Asian, especially Indian historiography in recent years has been brought about by the Subaltern Studies project. This volume of critiques ind "readings" of that project is the first comprehensive historical introduction to the movement and the worldwide debates it has generated among historians, political scientists and sociologists.

> Civilizations Felipe Fernández-Armesto Pan Macmillan, London, 2001

Rs 700 This volume examines societies from the maritime civilisations of the Polynesians to the Dawada people of the Sahara and, in focusing on cultures other than those of Imperial Rome, Enlightenment Paris or Renaissance France, gives new insights into how humanity survives. It concludes that societies can be judged on how civilised they are, but only by investigating their interaction with their own environment.

People, Policies, and Plans: Foreign Aid and Health Development Judith Justice Mandala Publications/ University of California Press, Kathmandu/ Berkeley, 1986

A new low-priced edition of a classic work of medical anthropology. Through a rich ethnographic account, Justice shows how understanding local cultural information can improve health care in Nepal, and also the barriers to the use of this information at the planning level. She shows how anthropologists and planners can work together to provide health care to match the cultural systems of its target population.

Tanika Sarkar Permanent Black Delhi 2001 Rc920 Sarkar explores the Hindu ideas and conventions, as expressed in literary and social traditions.

earlier Indian religious traditions of saintliness, heroism and sacrifice are being subverted/ transformed by militant, fundamentalist forms of Hinduism

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CULTURE AND SOCIETY

ntipodean avant-garde



ollywood has got a fresh reative wind in recent vears. Acclaimed directors

such as Baz Luhrman (Moulin Rouge, Romeo and Juliet), Jane Campion (The Piano), George there are no film majors, the Miller (Babe, Mad Max), Peter Australian Film Commission has Weir (Picnic at Hanging Rock), provided vital assistance to the film industry by the way of Bruce Beresford (Witness, The Untouchables) and internationfinancial help and the establishally renowned actors such as ment of the prestigious Australian Russell Crowe, Nicole Kidman, Film and Television School The festival kicks off with Cate Blanchett, Toni Collete, Heath Ledger, Geoffrey Rush and Children of the Revolution, an Mel Gibson have shaken up avant-garde film about the Hollywood's standard fare of sex, communist movement in Australia. Communism was widely violence and glitterati. What many movie goers do popular in the 1950s when many not know is that these directors Australians believed it was the and stars are either born and bred political path to combating social Australians or, like Russell Crowe ills. The film follows the fictiand Jane Campion, New Zealandtious life of Ioan Fraser, a young

ers drawn to Australia's fine spirited woman, who dreamt of acting and film schools. Every one nothing but a worker's revoluof them launched their careers in tion. Her stream of letters to her Australia's flourishing independidol, Joseph Stalin, do not go unnoticed and after a brief affair, ent film industry. In celebration of Australia Ioan returns to Australia carrying Day, the Australian Embassy in his child.

Kathmandu is hosting a festival of "Young Joe", as the child is contemporary Australian films called, is Joan's hope for the from 25-28 January 2002 at the future of Australia and worker's Russian Cultural Centre. The liberation. Ever the domineering features and short films were and controlling mother, Joan selected from a package prepared stage crafts young Joe's life, by the Australian Film Commistaking him along to the political sion called The Embassy demonstrations of the day and Roadshow. The Roadshow aims riding high on his arrests and to provide an insight into periodic imprisonment. But Australia, its landscapes and children have wills of their own multi-cultural lifestyle, its and when Young Joe takes politics society and culture another nath Joan can do Films have been a success nothing. Parallel with the story for Australia in recent years. disappointments in Joan's After all, this country of only 21 personal life, the communist million people has managed to . movement unravels. The crime: provide the acting and directorial against humanity perpetrated by space for so many original talents who went on to international success. This did not come out of the blue. A little known fact is

Stalin become known. But Ioar believes blindly in her hero and denies any wrongdoing by him. The Berlin Wall crumbles and that in the first decade of the 21" communism slowly collapses in Europe, Young loe has gone over century Australia was the world's most prodigious film producing to the establishment and evolves country. The advent of more eerily into a replica of his father. expensive sound technology in Ioan becomes more volatile and 1927 and the Depression years of more desperate as her world of the 1930s killed the Australian ideals disintegrates.

Australian cinema is offbeat and exciting, among the best in the world. This Australia Day, Kathmanduites can get more than a taste of it.



Children of the Revolution Centre, 25-28 January, Tickets stars Judy Davis, who Woody Rs 50 per screening, are available Allen calls "probably the greatest at the Australian Embassy in movie actress of her generation" Bansbari (371678) and the Radisson Hotel (411818), All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to a local charity. Children under the age of 18 will not be admitted. ♦

The Sum of Us which is to be screened on 26 January, is the poignant tale of a father and his son. Harry is a widower and lives with his 20-something son, Jeff. Both have something in common-they are looking for love Harry searches for a life partner through a computer-dating ency. Jeff searches for the love of his life in the gay pubs of Sydney. In an endearing display of fatherly love and understanding Harry accepts his son's sexualto the point of being neddlesome in his son's love affairs. With the backdrop of the famous Gay Mardi Gras in Sydney, Jeff falls in love. Harry too, but with a woman who does not share his qualities of tolerance and understanding. In one of his first movies. Russell Crowe displays an impressive thespian range in his portrayal of the easy going, warmhearted Jeff who faces tragedy with a strength and selflessness that is the core of his being. Veteran Australian actor, Jack Thompson, conveys the loneli ness that lies beneath the surface of Harry's energy and optimism. This fine Australian film depicts the gay culture of Sydney with sensitivity and clarity, and shows us that the acceptance of homosexuality is simply an act of Other films to be screened include comedy shorts Oops,

Hoppin' Mad and Mozzie. Other features include Yolngu Boy. Looking for Alibrandi and My Mother Frank. Nepali Times #78 will carry

the full screening schedule and synopses of all films. Screenings will be at the Russian Cultural

uja at Swoyambhu on Monday, 14 January.



SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW: The rains on Wednesday, 16 January, brought an unusual rainbow over a happily drenched city

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LAND ROVER BURNING: Unidentified arsonists torched a Land Rover being used by the CDO of Ramechhap in Kupondole on Tuesday, 15 January





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Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism elite voices and popular culture, that gave shape to dominant-north Indian-conceptions of

'domesticity', 'wifeliness', 'mothering' and India as a 'Hindu nation'. She also examines how Courtesy Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 227711, mandala@ccsl.com.np

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film industry. It lay slumbering until the 1970's, when the government established the Australian Film Commission and provided tax incentives for film nvestors. In a country where

and who recently received an AFI award for best actress for her portraval of Judy Garland, Sam Neill (Jurassic Park) and Academy Award winning actor, Geoffrey Rush (Shine, Elizabeth)

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Kleptos Anonymous



16

o whosoever stole my mountain bike (eight-speed Hero with Keylar handlebar and Shimano XTR M910 shifters) last week, I would like through this regular weekly column to make it clear in no uncertain terms that stealing is wrong. It is a sin. If you steal, you go to hell. You go straight to hell, and you can't collect a hundred dollars if you pass "Go". To steal is to break the Seventh Commandment (or is it the sixth?) which says: "Thou Shalt Not Steal Thy Neighbour's Wife." Give her back at once.

Considering the ongoing epidemic of theft and plunder throughout the land, the bicycle thief who perpetrated the lift-and-run crime may have thoughteveryone is doing it, so why can't I? Good point. Hard to argue against such absolutely convincing logic: they are all eating horse manure, so I'll also eat horse manure. Makes perfect sense. I can understand his predicament. Some of us just

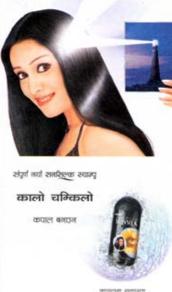
can't help it, so let he who is without sin cast the first stone. For example, a certain close relative who lives in Teku between Ghanashyam Ghee Bhandar and the Veterinarian Hospital who shall remain nameless for the duration of this column, is an avid shower cap collector. He cannot stop himself when he sees a hotel

shower cap, he just must have it. They are useful: he wears them under his motorcycle helmet when it rains, and to protect himself from draft on cold nights. Till the time of going to press he had several hundred

shower caps from various hotels around the world. Since we are all in confessional mood here, let me also say that I, too, have had these urges from time to time when at the end of a hearty meal in a restaurant I can seldom suppress the urge to pocket five toothpicks-one to excavate the nooks and crannies in the molars right there and then, and four others for future reference And O-tips Just can't resist O-tips-never know when one may find oneself in a traffic jam at the Bagmati Bridge on one's way to one's orifice when one can use idle moments to stir lazily inside one's own

inner ear. Such bliss. At a recent meeting of the Kathmandu chapter of Kleptomaniacs Anonymous, some colleagues made the astounding confession that they have a soft spot for shower and body gels, conditioners and body lotions from hotel bathrooms. That is when I, too, was forced to admit that I have on more than one occassion been tempted to cart off a cable-ready Sony 27" Flatron from the Hat Yai Hyatt. Nice machine. Only the feat of having to pay excess baggage and slip a couple of big ones to the customary officials at Tribhuvan Interna-

tional Airport stopped me from lifting it. But only barely. The real reason I did not steal said Sony was because it didn't fit in my pocket. Some of the other participants at the klepto meeting were high government officials. One admitted that he had not returned his office Pajero even after he was sacked for faking his MA certificate from Darbhanga University, but that he might keep the car for a few weeks more because he had to go down to Hetauda for his brother-in-law's wedding. I wanted to tell him he should take a bicycle, but that would mean stealing it from someone. ♦



AREAS OF A COLUMN

Kalu Ram's frogs and geckos

t first glance, it is hard to A imagine Kalu Ram Rai getting cosy with cold-blooded frogs and geckos. But this Tribhuvan University lecturer of zoology has spent 17 years teaching and adding to Nepal's herpetofauna by introducing new species of frogs lizards and even a turtle And soon, he is going to realise his life long dream of receiving the first-ever PhD on the subject from TU.

For the last two years Rai has spent a lot of time in different parts of east Nepal a flying frog-Rhacophorus collecting samples for his dissertation, the impressive sounding "Environmental Impact Cyclemys oldhami Systematics and Distribution of Herpetofauna in East Nepal". Development Committee of For this soft-spoken man with Khotang district, Rai was repitilian tastes, it is something educated in a simple village

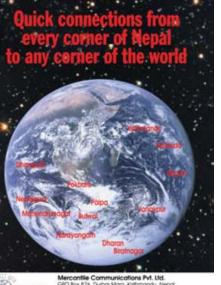
of a race against time. "Identify-

ing and recording these species

is important, because their fate had something slimier in natural habitat is being destore for him. Rai, who is soon stroyed on such a massive off the Munich University in scale, that they might just Germany to do more work on his findings, doesn't mind. He disappear even before we know they exist," he says. because the more such profes-In the course of his resionals Nepal has, the better. search. Rai recorded three new We profiled another species of amphibians and two herpetologist, Karan B Shah in new reptile species-the foot-October ("Karan's wild side," long Gekko gecko, a rare #57) It turns out Shah and Rai species of lizard locally known

though competing with each as Tok Tokeh. The earthwormother to become to the first PhD like Ichthyophis, a limbless in herpetology from TU, are fast amphibian, was also recorded friends, "We share our informafor the first time in Nepal by Rai, tion whenever we need it, but along with several others this time I might end up first, as species of frogs, such as the Shah registered for the PhD Sphaerotheca rolandae, the later than I did." Kaloula tanrohanica and even Rai's discoveries are not all

purely zoological either. Travelmaximus (see pic). Rai's turtle ling around, he discovered that goes by the zoological name of many communities in the high hills of eastern Nepal eat some Born in Chumlung Village species of frogs, like the Man Paha. "People in the hills use it as food because they have limited access to a nutritious diet school. As a child, he dreamt of It tastes a bit like chicken." A new becoming a medical doctor, but Nenali export?





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