The Nepal Netherlands Society congratulates

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS WILLEM-ALEXANDER CLAUS GEORGE FERDINAND, PRINCE OF ORANGE

MAXIMA ZORREGUIETA

terrain and the lack of informa-

Is a military solution possible?

tion. Things are improving.

I have always been for

negotiations. Lam a simple

On the Happy Occasion of their wedding.

Sangeeta Thapa - President, Gyani Bade - Secretary, Yogendra Shakya, Subodh Rana - Executive Committee Members



But they betrayed me. In hindsight, it appears they were

playing for time to regroup. But if

Go to □>p3

they surrender their arms, I have no

problems talking again.

Cross) to visit jails. But what can we do, the jails are

and detention camps

agriculture.

want to show results.

Forum meeting next week?

crowded and we don't have money to build bigger jails

Money seems to be a major issue. What do you

Our main agenda at the meeting is poverty alleviation. We

hope donors will make some pledges. The meeting is taking place in Nepal for the first time, and we are doing

tackling poverty head-on. Nepal is in deep crisis, and that

is a fact. We have to control terrorists, and at the same time

we have to eliminate poverty and unemployment, which

are breeding grounds for terrorists. We need education,

health care, drinking water, roads, we need to modernise

The donors probably agree with you on all

these, but their main concern is implementation.

I agree that the implementation side is very poor. I am

I have already started looking into progress reports of

monthly, and am willing to do that every 15 days if that

will help. I am willing to leave other work, and prioritise

development monitoring. That is our main concern, we

I am also working on forming a Commission on

Women and getting the women's bill through the Upper

House There will be a foundation to handle the issues

facing ianaiatis, we are ready to implement programs for

uplifting the situation of dalits. On land reform, I had

prepared an eight-point program but was not able to

convince the party. But even with the 11 bioh:

socio-economic programs, I am telling

nsensus on what can be done and

I am ready to do anything to make

ork. Even if that needs putting

mechanism under the United

ould help coordinate it, or

licated professionals in

Venal, I don't want more

hureaucratic hurdles in Singha Darbar, but a

development directly to

Nations system, UNDP

we can find 10 or 20

e poverty alleviation mechanism

the entire implemen

limit, there will be some results. On

opposition parties let us have a

donor-supported projects. I am monitoring them

willing to take special measures to ensure that things work

all we can to assure donors that we are serious about

plan to tell donors at the Nepal Development

"I am determined to devolve power to the grassroots"

We know what has worked. We know decen-

tralisation is the most direct way of doing that.

I believe fully in decentralisation, and I had in the past

tried to give as much power as possible to local units, but

my government was toppled. This time, I am determined

But you have just slashed the VDC and DDC

We had no choice. Besides, very little development activity

is possible in the villages now because of Maoist activities

But couldn't you have saved money trimming

your cabinet instead of taking money meant for

Yes. That is also a possibility, I am holding consultations.

What if the party instructs you to downsize the

Look, I cannot tell anything to the press now because there

is a chance that I may be misquoted as has happened some

You have to keep them in the cabinet so they

I don't want to comment on that now. But I am ready to

But you also raised taxes to pay for security

There is reluctance among donors to bankroll

We have been discussing support and I have been assured

ofhelp. Donors cannot directly give money to the army

but they can help in other ways. Our cause is also being

promised non-lethal support, training, and communica-

But Colin Powell's main concerns were govern

We are working with our partners to improve governance

parliament. You know what happened the last time we were

ance, corruption control and human rights...

I am bringing a strong anti-corruption control bill in

discussing the anti-corruption act, there was a tussle

between parliament and the judiciary. Democracy is

I have allowed the ICRC to visit jails, I have told

human rights organisations they can also visit conflict

areas. We are implementing humanitarian law accord-

ing to the Geneva Convention. We say there should be

no extra-judicial killings. We are ready to correct our

messy, it takes time to get things done.

presented to the US Congress. The United States has

security. How are you going to pay for it?

I didn't have a choice. It was either fight them, or

time back. The cabinet size is a political compulsion.

cannot say for sure Let me first consult the party

to devolve powers to local government units

allocations by a quarter

So you're cutting cabinet size?

the grassroots?

won't rebel?

tion equipment.

cut costs of government.



CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE IN MADHYAGAUN

1-7 FEBRUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

adhyagaun is not this town's real name. But it is a sign of the times that we can't even identify the town here. It is situated in Nepal's mid-hills, and it is caught in the crossfire between the security forces and the Maoists. It is like a lot of other settlements across the hills: divided into an upper and lower town, with a river running below.

In more peaceful times, it used to be a bucolic place. Pretty and poor, like the rest of Nepal. Even today, its white-and-red houses with thatched roofs, community forests and the himals beyond look idyllic. Nobody is well-off in Madhyagaun, but people look after each other, and everyone gets by.

It used to take two days to walk here, but the road from the district headquarters is inching closer each year. People wonder what changes the road will bring, and land prices have already started to rise in the lower town, near the planned path of the road Madhyagaun's biggest concern, though, isn't land prices or

the rains or the government, or even the gods, Madhyagaun is in the war zone, and is a contested village in the Magist insurgency. For five years the people of this town have been caught

between the police and the Maoists, who alternately visited with demands for information and cooperation, and threats for anvone offering the same to the other side. The people are caught in the middle, and they are scared.

Maoists scrawled anti-monarchy graffiti on the village school in Madhyagaun two weeks ago, they threatened the school teacher and students with dire consequences if they revealed their whereabouts. The soldiers came the next day, forced the villagers to erase the slogans and took away the teacher because he was too afraid to disclose who wrote them.

A UML activist from Madhyagaun who for the past three years had single-handedly resisted the Maoists, opposed their extortion racket, and survived two assassination attempts, recently fled for the safety of a town on the highway. Earlier this month, the soldiers took him in for questioning as a Maoist suspect.

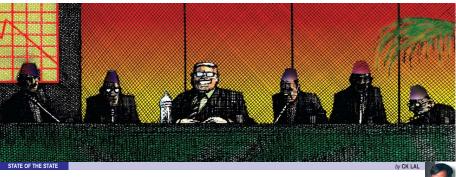
When 18 armed and uniformed Manists walked through town on a quiet afternoon several weeks into the emergency everyone knew what to expect. The Maoists explained calmly that they had called a meeting and attendance was mandatory. The band moved slowly through the upper and lower towns and outlying hamlets, stopping at every house.

The Maoists' message to the gathered town was simple: "The people's war is progressing nicely. The news from the government is mostly lies. The People's Liberation Army has killed and captured a great many soldiers. We will win and we will remember who our friends and enemies were. Think about that "

Then the commander told the silent crowd: "If anyone tells the army or police we were here, we will return and kill everyone



in this village." With that, they walked over the hill and vanished. The fight against the Maoists clearly has far to go, at least in Madhyagaun. But this incident should also gladden the hearts of the Maoists' opponents. Mao described a people's army as moving through the people and countryside like a fish through water. Nepal's "fish" seem reduced to threatening their "water with death. The Great Helmsman might have reminded them what happens to a fish out of water.



Guns and roses in Delhi

Nepal is not land-locked, it is India-locked. And our challenges are too big for just our limited means.

minister Jawaharlal Nehru designed the Republic Day parade to be a national festival when citizens would come out on streets and join spontaneously to celebrate the dreams of the young nation. Under his daughter Indira Gandhi, the parade became an imperial display of military prowess modelled after the grand narch of Roman cavalry.

Ever since, the decline of Republic Day parades has been steady, and festivities have become a crude caricature of the "bread and circus" theory of absolute rulers. Billions of dollars of military hardware are paraded in a country where half the population lives below the poverty line.

This year's parade was even more incongruous. Media reports said New Delhi resembled a cantonment. For once. India's cable channels were using the language of restraint and unde statement. The city was virtually under siege with barricades every

point, and sharp-shooters looking menacing from every balcony in the neighbourhood

When I called a Dilliwala for an appointment in the afternoon after the parade, her answer was that she was not going to step out of her home as long as the Republic Day tamasha wasn't over. That is what it has come down to: a tamasha.

After the suicide attacks on the Indian parliament on 13 December, the security threat is indeed real. But there never is a foolproof security system, and going to the extremes creates unnecessary inconvenience for the general population. The air space over New Delhi was closed for nearly four hours, public transport in the city came to a halt, and life had come to a complete standstill. If this was Republic Day, what kind of a republic was the government celebrating-a

Republic of Paranoia? Security personnel were so pens from us as we entered the viewing stands. At the second check-point, they looked at my Nepali topi-my attempt at jest that the space inside was empty earned me the kind of nasty look that only Hariyanvis seem capable of giving. Then they waved me in.

The viewing stands for guests were half-empty. Space especially reserved for children remained unoccupied. The only children to he seen were the ones in the cultural troupes that performed for the president of India and his guest this year, the president of Mauritius. Two years ago, the

guest was the late King Birendra Despite the militarisation of the parade, one has to admit that this is a spectacular pageant. But you have to wonder what kind of people get turned on by such a

glaring display of military might The so-called cultural troupes that traipsed past the viewstand were troubling. Invariably, they were centred around jingoistic

speech that rang with truth. and sacrifice". There were no president KR Naravanan agonised calls for peace, tolerance and that women were not safe "even harmony. Fifty-three years after in their mothers wombs", that its independence, how does such dalits continued to be discrimia martial spectacle sit with a nated against But the official nation that still regards Mahatma Gandhi as a national icon? Had publication of the Government of India continued to claim that he been alive, the Mahatma victory, the symbol of suwould have gone on a satyagraha premacy, is synonymous with to stop this public glorification of India's history "Victory over violence on a day that celebrates whom, for whom? Isn't the real the creation of a new republic. threat to India's security its Even Nehru would have been uneasy. His vision of India was of

dams, highways and railroads-

But then the ruling Bhartiya

Janata Party had nothing to do

with either the Independence

struggle or with the framing of

India's republican constitution.

sympathies for Gandhi's assassin.

and the most hizarre was India's

mongering on a grand scale: all

designed to play to the voters in

The swagger hides a deep-

the Uttar Pradesh and Punjab

seated insecurity. It does not

its own stature. In a rousing

show a country that is confiden

generous and magnanimous about

Agni missile. This was war-

In fact it is a party that is

rumoured to have certain

Nathu Ram Godse. The tableaux were kitschy.

assembly elections

monuments to development.

As a Nepali, these shouldn't have been my concerns. Besides, many of India's development challenges are also ours-on a smaller scale. But I couldn't fail to notice that even though there was no contingent of Gurkhas parading down Rajpath this year, there were three Nepali surnames—a Thana, a Ghale and a Pun-leading paramilitary

battalions. The Gurkhas were probably at the Line of Control, facing Pakistani guns Louddn't help reflecting that they are protecting our neighbour from another neighbour, while our own

country is battling an insurgency Like it or not, our fate is intertwined with the fate of our neighbours down south. If India moves ahead, we will be pulled along. If India stagnates, we stagnate. India-locked, Nepal's challenges are too big for our own limited resources. So, as the helicopters showered rose petals on military armour, I made a silent prayer that India gets on with it. •



Can the insurgency be solved without taking

Development is needed, but without peace you can't begin

It seems to be a Catch-22. Without development

there won't be peace, and there will be no peace

I cannot say there will be peace if we have development, but

what I can say now is that without peace we cannot have

development. We are looking at a security shield so we can

introduce poverty alleviation and employment generation,

The leader of the opposition tells us you're not

keeping him informed about the security situa-

I have asked the secretaries of Defence and Home to brief

opposition members at an all-party meeting. If they want the

There is nothing to hide, and we are not hiding anything. If

we made mistakes we are willing to correct them. We have

army chief to brief them. I am also ready to have him do it.

development to the people?

development programs

without development

something like the ISDP.

DIASPORA

Rajendra Khadka's "Diaspora in

dilemma" (#77) seems to be an

outburst stemming from his

article is an act of frustration.

He pinpoints only the negative

aspects of life in the US,

forgetting what a great and

free country this is. Khadka's

sentiments seem to be similar

to those of Tara Nath Sharma

Prabas after he couldn't settle

down here. Khadka shows the

same jealousy, frustration and

desperation by writing about

how bad the life of the Nepali

I wish I could and come

Suman Pokhrel

serve my country, but been

community is.

who wrote the hook Patal

do not completely disagree with GURKHAS

Raiendra Khadka, but he has forgotten the Nepalis living in the west and still serving their motherland as best they can. The are giving a good impression of Nepal and Nepalis as hardworking and honest people. hy email

Congratulations to Rajendra Khadka for his provocative and thought-provoking piece on the diaspora. One thing that distin auishes the FoReN is their complete cynicism and negativity about their homeland. Things are bad in Nepal, yes, but what are they doing about it besides complaining? I wonder if this is because they need to justify their

unwillingness to return Nanda Bahadur Rai



the people

Raiendra Rai in his letter (#78) says the Gurkhas fought the two world wars for "freedom". This is laughable, what utter nonsense. he Gurkhas have been exploited nternally as well as externally for their valour lovalty kindness and simplicity-from the time of Prithivi aravan Shah's unifving venture. as Ram Limbu in the other letter

TM Ghising (Tamang)

SISTERS

Thanks to Daniel Lak for his column "Sisters are doing it for themselves" Women in sav America are economically advantaged over, say, most women in Nepal. I am fairly sure that the women of Nepal who are fighting for women's rights are relatively wealthy. Wealth does mean advantage in this case. Poo women in Nepal (or anywhere else, for that matter) won't have a snowhall's chance in hell of changing their lives till they have an option to marriage. One thing I have realised on my visits to rura Nepal is that women all have to leave their homes when they get married, men stay in their homes

Thus men have a lifelong netwo of support in place from birth. while women, when they get married, are surrounded by strangers and live in a strange environment... completely depend ant on three people (husband, mother-in-law father-in-law) It's the luck of the draw for them.

If you insist on having a bideshi

writer on your staff, why must it

be Daniel Lak? I am embarrassed

by his shallow insights, his rather old school thinking, and his false modesty. It was "Sisters are doing it for themselves" (#77) that broke this camel's back. His attack on th men of Nenal does not acknowledge contributions made by many wonderful, supportive Nepali mer Women work hard, men work hard children work hard, this is the reality of food deficits and agrar conomics that dominate the routine in Nenal's remote hill communities. If men were to spend more time with their children, would this improve the situation? That is a difficult question, but I believe Mr Lak's response would be: no

J Watson Potter #77). One of the most authoritative by email voices in the nation's beleagured

for the other side.

What about investor confidence and efforts to check capital flight?

I have told the business community I am willing to do anything to help. For investment, I will bring a law that will enable us to give infrastructure projects to the private sector under BOT (build-operate-transfer) contracts. This time we will introduce some good, new laws. It is painful. but we are also trying to sell off sick public enterprises.

How will you tackle the unemployment that will result from that?

We will give employees a golden handshake, we don't have a choice. We have been suffering huge annual losses. Two major banks are in trouble and have been unable to recove billions from defaulters. We are handing them over on management contracts. Royal Nepal Airlines is in the red. I have asked the RNAC to come with a viable proposal if they need government support. Otherwise there is no point putting good money after bad

Couldn't you have waited for parliament to raise taxes, why use an ordinance? We needed spending money, under the law we cannot divert expenses from other budget lines. We needed

money immediately and had no choice. You invited King Gyanendra to dinner in Baluwatar last week. How is your rapport with His Maiesty?

We have a good rapport. We had a very frank, heart-to heart talk. He spoke about corruption control, good nvernance and economic social and political reforms His Majesty wants things to improve, he wants to see the country moving forward. I am trying to take some decisions to make sure that things move faster, you'll see some decisions soon. If only we could ensure greater efficiency, but in every government office there is dilly

Why not start with senior ministers who are said to be comint?

Anything can be said about ministers, I hear some of them have taken money on civil service transfers. But we have not had any big contracts, so there has not been an opportunity for major corruption. But when the project contracts come, I will be watching closely. I will not let anyone take money on large contracts.

Does that mean small-time pickings are okay? I cannot believe that my ministers have taken money of transfers. It could just be allegations. It is difficult to believe whatever appears in the papers. What I am saying is that if there have been payoffs on transfers then it's not major. I am strengthening the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority, I am also watching you in the media should also keen a close watch. I won't le anyone get away with corruption.

LETTERS

financial sector just sounded the alarm and left it at that. If From your recent stories on the emergency, there seems to be no entimism is too much to ask at end in sight to the so-called least a straight-faced "I got the People's War. But does that mear ing" type of statement might Nepal must continue to suffer fron the economic disaster of the state have given something to renew the herd's faith in money of national emergency? This time ast year, even with the Maobaad activities tourists were arriving for the beginning of the trekking eason. This year, streets, shops am tired of hearing that poverty by email hotels, and other businesses are near collapse. The Maobaadi seen is the root cause of the social no more ready to lay down their disturbances in Nepal. Nepal has veapons and negotiate than the always had a mostly impover government. My question is: if this ished population, yet the state of affairs continue, who are violence is relatively recent and

> will be no winners D Michael Van De Veel Hanalei Hawaii

CAPITAL FLIGHT Capital flight is a serious economic ill that chokes potential domestic westment and growth. Given the climate of uncertainty in Nepal tha has progressively worsened capital flight seems inevitable. That is why I was a little disappointed to read Himalaya Sumshere Rana ("Capital adequacy is going to be a problem,"

the winners and who are the

losers? My oninion is that there

in political circles from top to Danny Birch

Sailesh Tiwar

Connecticut, USA

getting worse-even after

decades of "development"

efforts. Some sociologists and

political scientists should try to

and why without resorting to

simplistic excuses such as

understand what has happened

poverty. Some points to conside

environmental degradation, very

poor education (a little education

is a dangerous thing?) and last.

extraordinary level of corruption

greed and dishonesty prevalent

might include: overpopulation.

New York, USA

For victims of trafficking, hope may



To prevent her from going

HEMLATA RAI hen she was a ten-yearold in New Delhi, Jamuna was married off to a 60-year-old man as repayment for a Rs 600 loan her fathe had taken from him. She still vividly remembers her midnight "marriage"—her hands were tied behind her and she was gagged to stop her from raising an alarm. Her mother was pushed down the stairs where she lay unconscious throughout the "marriage Jamuna's groom and his friends forcefully conducted. Jamuna's drunken father slept through

back to her parents, Jamuna's husband brought her to Nawalparasi in Nepal three days later. Once in Nepal, she was sexually by her husband. "He wanted to have children. How could I produce one, I hadn't even started menstruating. I didn't even realise what the old man was doing to me," she says. If this weren't enough, she was raped

everal times by her own uncle. And then it seemed as if Jamuna had a way out. A village 'uncle" said he could help her find a job in Mumbai that paid enough for Jamuna to support nerself and her parents. "That man ooked like a saviour to me, and I was happy to go back to India with nim," she told us. The "uncle" sold her to a brothel, for how much, she never found out. She worked there or a year, until Indian police escued her in a routine raid.

Women like Jamuna were the

entre of concern when the 11th SAARC summit adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Wome and Children for Prostitution. Non-governmental bodies stimate that approximately 200,000 Nepali women are

on trafficking of women and children. What exactly does it mean for Nepal? found were prone to trafficking.

SAARC has a tough new convention

Activists here see the SAARC onvention as a "great step to curb trafficking in persons the adoption of the convention. they say, means political commitment and state-level initiations to combat crime, and this is the first time South Asian governments have said combating transnational crime is a priority.

"This is a realisation among the outh Asian countries that blaming each other is leading us nowhere, and that regional co-ordination is needed," said Bimal Rawal, the national project co-ordinator for the ILO's South Asian Sub-Regional Programme to Combat Trafficking in Children.

For Nepal, the immediate benefit of this convention is the automatic activation of its extradition treaty with India, the country identified as the biggest recipient of Nepali women in the commercial sex industry. The extradition treaty signed between the two countries enlists 16 offences for which criminals can be extradited. The new conven-tion means that trafficking in persons is automatically added to the treaty. The new regulation makes it more likely that justice is done, because the countries of both origin and destination, for instance Nepal and India, will now both have extra-territorial jurisdiction, and be responsible for providing legal assistance to the victim. States are now required to grant the widest possible measures for legal

assistance to prevent human trafficking, whether to conduct vestigations, inquiries or trials.

For someone like Jamuna, vho was first trafficked from India to Nepal and then back to India, the violators might find that it is now harder to get away just by simply hiding in a neighbouring country. This is a gain that will be difficult to reverse Article VII of the convention requires that in addition to existing treaties, all future extradition treaties signed etween any SAARC countries must automatically include trafficking in persons as an extraditable crime.

The convention also tries to ddress the common charge that political and bureaucratic patronage helps offenders and akes any real crackdown difficult, if not impossible. It clearly identifies as an "aggravating circumstance" the direct and ndirect involvement of public office holders, and the abuse of authority to protect or assist traffickers. They also identify other aggravating circumstances—the involvement of an organised group, the use of iolence or arms and victimisation of underage children.

All that is well and good, but there are already rumbles of discontent. "The convention overlooks recent international developments in approaching and addressing the problem of trafficking in persons," says advocate Sapana Malla-Pradhan. She and other legal experts point

Inspiration on ice

working in Indian brothels. But

nobody knows for sure whether

this number is increasing annu-

ally, or decreasing. The Interna-

tional Labour Organisation in Nepal says that 12,000 girls are

But this is an estimate, not a

fact—the II.O's recent rapid

trafficked out of Nepal every year

assessment report on Trafficking

in Girls with Special Reference to

Prostitution came up with this

figure assuming that every month

the 26 most trafficking-prone

districts the assessment team

districts identified by the govern

ment, and 2.5 from 11 additional

e girls each are trafficked from



and elsewhere enliven the culinary experience with imports from the rest of the country. And then there's ice hockey. That's right, ice hockey. The Canadians amongst you will nod knowingly at the allure of this antidote for freezing boredom, but the rest will need some explanation. Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is also the centre of Indian ice hockey. What better place for the beautiful game played on skates and frozen water than a high altitude desert region where the temperature rarely rises above 0 degrees Celsius between November and March. Invented in Canada—probably by British soldiers driven mad by the cold months—the game has spread to the chilly bits of Europe, Russia Japan and even to warm places like Kuala Lumpur. And now India. The third annual National Ice Hockey Championships of India have just ended

and it doesn't matter who won. In Leh, a good time was had by all.

staple. Countless potato dishes grace the groaning boards of Ladakhi kitchens. For those who can afford it, theoretically daily flights from Delhi

LEH, Ladakh—Once long ago, starvation and boredom were the

India's Third Annual National Ice Hockey Championships have just ended and it doesn't matter who won.



I travelled on one of those theoretical flights (cancelled twice, made it ust in time for the first game last Saturday) with a team of Canadians from Delhi. Two token Americans were also grudgingly allowed to join the equad, so long as they could endure the communal abuse and frequent joke bout George W hurled their way. They bore the burden well, perhaps because neither thought highly of President Bush and both were hockey

players for America's northern reaches along the Canadian border Almost Canadian, they were assured more than once. Ladakh pulled out all the stops to welcome the men from where the game began. Ladakhi hospitality and warmth were already legendary, but the shock of stepping off a flight from Delhi into minus 16 degrees—the spectacular scener

withstanding—took a lot of overcoming. The Ladakhis succeeded They also exacted their price. After tea and biscuits, the Canadians took to the ice of a frozen pond in the centre of Leh to play their first friendly game against a local squad. With an average age of around 40, and newly arrived from 250 metres above sea level to around 3,500, the North Americans were at somewhat of a disadvantage. But Ladakhis have played this game for just two years, whereas it's in the visitors' blood. Despite some huffing and puffing, the Canadians won. And each game brought roars of approval from a crowd that slowly built to 6,000 by the final day of the tournament. There were serious matches between local teams, and in the intervals everyone cheered on the Canadians, laughing if they fell and exclaiming at the innate prowess of unfit, ageing bockey players who'd known the game since childhood. "An inspiration," one man told me. "Great fun to watch and next year, we'll beat them," said the coach of the eventual champions, the Ladakh Scouts regiment of the Indian Army. But all that really mattered was the naraderie, the fun and the constructive whiling away of wintry days that might otherwise be spent in boredom and bars. Between festivals, wintry Ladakh still has time on its hands.

It's an inspiration to see how sport-played for fun, not profit or -can inspire such warmth and humanity. Now, if only we could build ice skating rinks in Namche or Jomsom. I know a team that's ready, willing and raring to come.

be unconventional

sation, if any, and services victims

are entitled to from the destination

country. Apart from providing a

emporary "protective home" for

people rescued from traffickers, the

cipient country has no moral or

legal obligation to provide any other

tation. Under the new convention,

victims of trafficking have little say in

their future. What, for example, are

country should a woman or child

not want to return to the country

of her origin? Durga Ghimire, a

women's rights activist, believes

oluntary. "Only 5-10 percent of

the girls trafficked from Nepal to

India want to come back, mainly

problems," she says. In 1996, for

because they anticipate social

that repatriation should be

the obligations of the recipient

vices or support for their rehabili-



out that the SAARC convention totally ignores the rightsbased approach recommended by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons 2000. The UN protocol emphasises that the human rights of the victims should be upheld by the countries of origin, destination and transit. but under the SAARC convention, the liability of countries involved in trafficking is slight The second World Conference or Trafficking in Persons held in Japan last month concluded that he most basic tool to control trafficking in humans is discouraging demand for them. The SAARC convention totally

ignores this. It is also silent about compen-

mostly minors, were rescued from Bombay brothels, But less than half of them returned to Nepal, and that with the help of Nepali NGOs.

The convention does not hold states responsible for the reintegration of victims into their families and society. "Rescued victims need to be psychologically and socially prepared to reintegrate into society. Unless they are well trained in income generating skills, educated about their legal rights and assured that there is some place they can go in case of an emergency, there is high chance they will either be trafficked again or end up as comme cial sex workers," says Nirmala, who spent five years in an NGO transit home before she could star a new life with her family

The convention recognises prostitution" as the sole reason for trafficking in women and children—a definition which does not recognise that people are trafficked for cheap and forced labour, and domestic work. The definition of offenders is broader. citing "a person who keeps, maintains or manages, or knowingly finances or takes part in the financing of a place used for the purpose of trafficking, and knowingly lets or rents a building or other place". ♦

(Names of trafficked women we been changed.)

AN EXHIBITION ABOUT YOU

Nepal Bikash Bazaar

11:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BIRENDRA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER Naya Baneshwor, Kathmandu

Your concerns about income, employment, health, education, communications, environment and more. Get your answers at

Nepal Bikash Bazaar.

Live presentation of Nepal's achievement, problems and prospects in national development. Come visit and become a partner in the progress of Nepal.



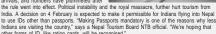


www.ndf2002.gov.

The Indians are coming

Nepal's downcast tourism industry is looking forward to a secretarial-level meet between India and Nepal next week, and an eagerlyawaited decision to roll back the passport rule for Indians visiting Nepal. The Nepali travel trade has blamed the rule, instituted after the hijacking of IC814 from Kathmandu in December 1999, as one of the main reasons for the decline in the arrival of Indiar tourists to Nepal.

Indians used to make up 30 percent of arrivals, and numbers have plummeted after



other forms of ID, like ration cards, will be recognised."

The NTB is launching a major push for tourists from South India, and hopes that the decision will be timed for the promotional campaign. It hopes to be able to announce the new ruling when the campaign kicks off in Bangalore on 13 February. Visit Nepal drives will be held in five South Indian cities: Kumarakom, Thiruvananthapuram, Bangalore, Chennai, and Cochin till 13-20 February. NTB is also trying to bring together the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) and Royal Nepal Airlines to offer attractive rates for package tours from India. Royal Nepal has biweekly direct flights from Bangalore to Kathmandu.

Bench boycott

The Nepal Bar Association, an organisation of professional lawyers, and the Judicial Council, a regulatory body of senior judges, have launched a campaign to check corruption in the courts. At a recent meeting senior officials of the NBA and the Council agreed to help one another collect information on allegations of corruption, share the information, and work jointly to build public pressure against corrupt practices—even to publicise names of corrupt judges. Says Satish Krishna Kharel, NBA Secretary, "It was decided that the NBA would chalk up a long and short-term policy, which the Council would help implement." But if Chief Justice Keshav Prasad Upadhyaya is to be taken at his word-he maintains that the Council should have the final say-we may have to wait a while before we see any tangible results of the initiative.

Another test

We'll soon know a little more about the state of our public schools. The government recently launched a school evaluation process in the public schools of Dang district under the Education Standard Enhancement and Evaluation Program (ESEEP). A survey team put together by the District Education Office will conduct studies in 64 schools and submit a report within ten days. The outcome of the studies would be used to modify and revise the ESEEP. Apart from Dang, Banke, Bardiva and Surkhet have been selected for the implementation of the program in the Mid-Western Development Region. All four districts performed very poorly in the annual School Leaving Certificate exams—last year, not a single student from Dang passed. The evaluation process is also expected to single out incompetent teachers, which will aid the government's endeavour to investigate the use of fake academic certificates for employment by teachers in these districts. The program will eventually be implemented in 33 districts altogether across the country.





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Democracy vs depravity

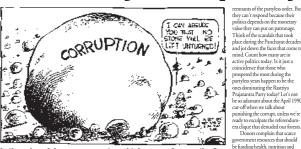
the planet's sole super wer having joined the international donor community in admonishing Nepali officials to curb corruption, we must add bite to our bark before the next watchdog comes out with its latest sleaz index. This confluence of global caution, however, must not be allowed to obscure our own politicians' contributions to raising

Even at the height of the Lauda Air allegations he was battling as prime minister last year, Giriia Prasad Koirala continued to exhor Nepalis to make a critical distinction: "People attack democracy by saving it brought along corruption But if Girija Prasad is corrupt, Girija should be blamed, not

Around the same time, in his avatar as the chief Kangresi dissident, Sher Bahadur Deuba attributed the blossoming of bribery to the people's readiness to respect the rich regardless of the source of their resources. Coming from a politician, such candour could be considered the equivalent of biting the hand that feeds you. However, Deuba offered a forthright descrip tion of what many experts have been telling us through turgid theses: corruption is rooted in the continuing feudal nature of Nepali

The democracy-corruption correlation is something many Nepalis wished they wouldn't have to explore. Now that the task has been forced upon us, it is clear tha neither Koirala's nor Deuba's

FOLLOW-UP



Is the price of democracy an eternal tolerance of corruption?

rationalisation creates room for confidence. It's been six months since Koirala vacated Baluwatar darbar, but corruption continues t coarsen the political discourse as abrasively as ever

Extending Deuba's expostulation, each change in the political stem has spawned a new pedigre of parvenus. They may not be feudals in the strict sense of the term, but they do share most of the characteristics. The more transparent society is trying to be, the more conspicuous tainted money has become To be sure the networks of resource collection and distribu tion that drive organised politics have played a significant part in the inflation of corruption. While votepilfer from the public purse and

ank politics has had an economic rickle-down effect, seeping all the vay down to the village developnent committees, it reeks more of

ourt convictions are rare. You can

Évery prime minister since Mohan Shumsher the Commoner nas spoken of the need for a clean, air and impartial administration. The restoration of multiparty politics has widened the vista of uch vigilance bodies as the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority, parliament's Public Accounts Committee and he Special Police Department Even in the midst of an increasing ssertive civil society, however,

have a good chance of getting away

Nepalis aren't alone in lamentin ow rising costs of election campaigns have allowed commercial and riminal elements to influence the political process. The scale and ubtlety may vary, but a coherent pattern of political fund-raising flav is perceptible in instances from former German chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union to the soft money/hard money filibusters on Capitol Hill. It seems the price of democracy is eternal tolerance of corruption.

Today's politicians must find it tolerable having to listen to arangues against financial malfeasance and moral turpitude from

understand that, adjusted for they can't respond because their inflation, a politician's net gain politics depends on the monetary today is nowhere near what a pancha took home. But Nepalis value they can put on patronage Think of the scandals that took still want the anti-corruption place during the Panchayat decades campaign to start with the people and iot down the faces that come t mind. Count how many are in One Nepali Congress youth

coincidence that those who

prospered the most during the

partyless years happen to be the

ones dominating the Rastriya

Praiatantra Party today? Let's not

punishing the corrupt, unless we're

ready to exculpate the referendum-

Donors complain that scarce

vernment resources that should

be funding health, nutrition and

squandered. But do they realise

reign aid is still influenced by

solitical and strategic considera

be? Sometimes you're forced to

onder whether less corrupt

reign assistance

ions, how principled can the policy

performance of the recipient nation

ernments actually receive more

A prime minister who is forced

begin his day by counting his

lock in parliament regardless of the

size of his party's majority cannot

be expected to probe subordinates

with questionable integrity.

rofessional solidarity would

other areas of life. Many people

demand that the chief point to

corruption in the bureaucracy and

how expensive it is to acquire

attributes like openness and

to begin with the imprisonment of half a dozen leaders of his party. In a season of conciliation, we need to devise an anti-corruption campaign that would satisfy everyone. Many politicians under clouds of uspicion today languished in dark panchayati prisons for the cause of democracy. But, remember, they opposed the system knowing that i was illegal to do so. Perhaps the state could order politicians accused of financial misconduct to post bonds equivalent to what they eceived in prison allowances,

activist wants the healing process

nending a full investigation. This dragnet would also catch politicians who found themselve n the gaol in the 1960s until they ecognised the value of becoming panchas. As for those who thrived n the partyless decades without having gone to prison, well, you ways could shame them as sinner of an abominable epoch.

The funds raised from this nandatory reimbursement scheme would be modest, but it could help break the culture of impunity in which corruption thrives. Of course, the alternative would be to wait for Koirala to start blaming democracy for depravity. But where would that leave the people, especially those who have tried five systems in 50 years?

"Tax evasion is a part of Nepali culture"

Nepali Times: How does revenue collection

look this fiscal year?

Bhoi Rai Ghimire: Despite a healthy growth rate of over 19 percent at end of the first three months (mid-July through mid-October), if the trend of the first six months (until January) continues, overall revenue performance will be well below the projections made at the beginning of this fiscal year. This unsatisfactory performance has been attributed to many factors-the global recession after 11 September, the deteriorating law and order situation in the country, and the subsequent slowdown in the economy

How about after collections from the Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme?

We have not fixed any separate collection target under the VDIS. But collection has been about Rs 440 million-that is the income tax collected on previ ously undeclared wealth or income amounting to about Rs 44 billion. This has brought 2,200 more taxpayers in the tax net and created increased awareness among taxpayers. The scheme was primarily put in place to supplement normal revenue collection efforts, so no substantial changes are expected in overall revenue performance, even after the sizeable collection of revenue under the VDIS.

However, upon the request of the business community, civil society and others, His Maiesty's Government has extended the due date for navment of taxes on undeclared wealth under this scheme by one month. From the beginning of Falgun [mid-February] the Department of Inland Revenue, based on informa tion it has, will initiate the necessary legal action against those who, despite accumulating wealth or income, have not paid taxes.

The VDIS has been criticised on the grounds that the same 20,000 taxpayers are harassed every year. Why did that happen? I would like to make it clear that this scheme does not target any individual, group or community and is ically intended to provide a one-time amnesty to all those who have accumulated wealth or income without paying tax on it, either fully or partially. This

scheme shall not affect regular and honest taxpayers,

but it will not spare the dishonest. The information

booklets put out by the Inland Revenue Department

no room for doubt as to the scope of the VDIS.

who are said to be the richest people in this country?

mobile phones-all this gives some indication about notential taxpayers who are not yet in the net

Individual taxpayers still fear harassment at the tax offices. What is the government doing to allay that fear and encourage neonle to file income tay returns? Substantial reforms have been made in tax administra

tion in the past decade, which have resulted in the procedures being simplified and also ensured a high vel of transparency in tax administration. The introduction of an account-based self-assessment system for income tax has further guaranteed that the process of filing returns is simplified. The tax administration has clearly defined the taxpayers' rights and educated taxpayers about them, and shown its commitments to fully honour them. The nine-poin code of conduct directing the behaviour of tax officials has also been implemented. The Central Monitoring Unit at the Ministry of Finance responds quickly to protect taxpayers from any instance of harassment. All hese measures have positively contributed to reducing the harassment faced by taxpayers at tax offices. But more reforms are needed in the tax system, and equally important are changes in the attitude of both tax officials and taxpayers. Only that can help to develop a foolproof system.

There have been a number of positive experiences from around the world with regard to contracting revenue collection to entities outside the civil service Would this be a consideration in Nepal-There are some instances where revenue estima tion- and collection-related functions have been contractd out from the designated revenue authorities. One of the success stories is Singapore where the government sets annual revenue collection targets in consultation with the revenue authority headed by the Finance Ministry and the latter is responsible for collections. Despite significant reforms in the past, our tax system has t given high yields. Our present priority should be to build up our existing system with reformsquick changes don't always pay off. So, it may be too early to think about contracting out tax



In light of the recent Voluntary Declaration of Income Scheme and the cash crunch the government is facing, we spoke with BHOJ RAJ GHIMIRE, Joint Secretary of the Revenue Division of the Finance Ministry, about tax evasion and reforms to the collection system.

How bad is tax evasion in Nepal?

Frankly speaking, there is no tax culture in Nepal, in

fact, it is almost cultural to avoid taxes, wherever and

whenever possible. If one talks of income tax alone, no

volume of business in the country vis-à-vis the revenue

generated through VAT, one can easily assess the exten

lifestyles of people, the high rise buildings and expensive

vehicles we see in the capital, how some children go to

the most expensive schools, the widespread use of

of tax evasion in the country. In addition, the lavish

one willingly wants to pay tax on whatever they have earned and pocketed. Similarly, if one analyses the

and the advertisement campaigns launched by us leave time using the opportunity they have been offered.

Does your list of suspects include politicians,

The list prepared by the tax administration includes all kinds of people, and we have no intention of sparing any group of people or community. Tax administration, on the basis of information gathered from various sources, has identified potential tax evaders of all kinds and is fully committed to initiating necessary legal action if the identified evaders don't pay their taxes within the stipulated

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Wanted: mountain memorabilia

Nepal's mountain museum is finally taking shape. But what will it display?

's taken nearly a decade, but Nepal's untain museum is taking final shape. At least the first phase is, a cavernous structure lesigned to house the Hall of Himalawas the Hall of International Mountains and the Hall of Expeditions. Flying into Pokhara, the museum is

impossible to miss from the air. A massive frame of steel, concrete beams, its unique shape eems to mimic the Annapurna in the backdrop. A complex structure, the roof fans out to resemble the mountains.

While the architecture is impressive museum experts are concerned that the collection might fall short. "The concept of the mountain museum is great but there's no collection." says Ial Krishna Shrestha, director of the Patan Museum. A long time-member of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, which has been the driving force behind the musuem, Shrestha is working hard to put together a emporary collection for the initial launch on 29 May this year, the International Year of Mountains and the first part of the Destination

piece" #7) Although this is only a soft opening, only fill a corner of the hall, which is massive. NMA officials are expecting some big names to attend, including French climber Maurice Herzog, the first person on Annapurna, and former Japanese prime minister Ryutaro

And while alpine clubs from around the vorld have offered to loan this museum their exhibits, to offset Nepal's own deficient collection and lack of funds to buy or collect nemorabilia, this may not be the perfect solution. The mountain exposition in Salzburg Austria preferred Nepal as a first choice to have their expo but the cost of the exhibition. ration till Pokhara and the installmen

The museum is an ambitious project, and that is why we plan to open it in phases." For the soft opening, an exhibition of

various ethnic groups, exhibits from local climbers, and photographs will be on display. The NMA also hopes to have a festival of mountain films in the audio-visual hall But even though the exhibits come May

will be fairly bare bones, there are some impressive names assisting in their preparation "Various experts will be preparing scripts on different topics so we can put up a temporary exhibition in May," says Shrestha, who is also script for mountain history. Tashi Jangbu

prepare exhibits of mountaineering equipment, Dr TB Shrestha will prepare the script for the botany collection, and Dr Ganesh Gurung will be working out how to display the wealth of anthropological detail in the mountains. After the formal opening, which is slated for May 2003, the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Mt Everest and the second part of the Destination Nepal campaign, the museum's permanent exhibits will include selections from past exhibitions, geological specimens, archival photographs, satellite maps and other para-

have been waiting in anticipation since 1993. The project has been plagued with setbacks, financial troubles and bickering. "Sometimes you have the money, the equipment, the support, everything, but owing to technical hitches, there's always some delay. This is Nepal—things still take forever," says an NMA official. The dream of former NMA president, the late Dawa Norbu Sherpa, work on the

Although the museum, designed by a consor tium of architects from Kathmandu-based Sanday Kentro Associates and Narendra Pradhan and Associates, is visually stunning, observers say it has its shortcomings. "Access to the museum's location and access to the main entrance is difficult " says an observer who recently visited it. There is also concern that arbanisation in the area will block the view of the Annapuma, now clearly visible from the building NMA officials admir that some " will be required in the future, and have roped in architect Shankar Rimal to help with

Norbu's death. Suddenly missing Norbu's vision and fundraising skills—he managed to collect funds from well-wishing alpine clubs around the world, particularly from Japan, to get the museum off the ground—the NMA was forced to postpone the museum's scheduled opening during Visit Nepal Year 1998 and aim for a soft opening in 2002. The Rs 300 million museum is the pet

museum came to a standstill in 1997 after

project of the NMA, which has already spent Rs million on the building, with funds mostly derived from income by levying fees on medium sized trekking peaks (between 5,555 m and 6,654 m) in the country. Phase II and III of the museum, are still at the blueprint stage, and a new architect will be replacing the initial consortium to cut down on costs. For museum expertise, the NMA has also managed to rope in a Japanese museologist, a volunteer from JICA, to help with the museum come April. The museum is expected to get visito but is designed primarily to make Nepalis more aware of their mountain environmen

But now that the museum building is nearing completion, there are other concerns

rules if they are impractical German glass

Easier credit

Yantoriya Company has begun marketing the entire range of Schott's
Jenaer Glas kitchenware in Kathmandu. The range, which includes accessories for measuring, cooking and baking and serving, will be retailed through departmental stores and kitchenware outlets. Jenaer products are heat-resistant, microwave safe and dishwater proof, savs Yantoriva.

Another German brand, Florena, has also hit the stores. Mayur Overseas Traders is now marketing Florena cream with chamomile, vitamin E and extra UV protection, in addition to its range of body and baby care products, including soaps, shaving creams and soaps.

Interkraft Nepal has outbid the Independent Power Company (IPC) and the Chaudhary Group in the bid to take over the Butwal Power Company, which the government has been trying to privatise for the last three

years. The Interkraft bid was Rs 950 million-up from its third round offer of Rs 730 million-against the

Chaudhary Group's Rs 866 million. The Interkraft bid comes in the form of Rs 874 20 million in Nepali money

and Rs 1 million in US dollars, while the IPC-Chaudhary Group quoted its entire bid amount in Nepali rupees.

The government has had four rounds of tenders in its attempt to sell its 75 percent holding in the BPC, but

The IPC-CG combine was disqualified from the hidding in the last round and the government rejected

The central bank has eased the rule requiring banks to obtain Business Credibility Information (BCI) on

importers seeking to open Letters of Credit (LC). The Nepal Rastra Bank had decided last week that the

BCI should be mandatory for imports over \$15,000, but has now raised that limit to \$50,000. The bank has

also decided that the BCI will be valid for a year, against its own earlier requirement that it be verified and

critical, citing this flip-flop as yet another example of the central bank's poor ability to assess the market it

is trying to serve. They say this is a blow to the bank's credibility as an institution that frames rules and

sticks by them. Rastra Bank governor Tilak Rawal says the recent decision shows his "flexibility" to adjust

updated every three months. While businesses are generally happy to have not their way, donors are

the lone bid from Interkraft on a "technicality," essentially a typographical slip relating to the bid amount.

Government sources later told us the single bid had been rejected because the offer was too small in dollar terms. How the privatisation of the BPC proceeds will be closely watched by other investors and

the process has been caught up in one tangle or another. (See "BPC on the block again," #60)





was decided that all the other humans would give a small share of their meal to the Gandharbas

MUSIC

of affairs continued until the powers that be decided that humans had outlived their usefulness in the higher realms and so would be divided into castes and sent down to earth. The banishing of the unsuspecting humans from the heavens was obviously an occasion for great celebration and all were invited to a grand feast. Each caste was seated in its assigned place and served food and wine by comely apsaras. Everyone arrived on time, except the Gandharbas. They came after all the food had been apportioned to all the castes. They could not

be turned away, hungry, and so it

Gandharba," laments Sanu Kancha Gandharba president of the Gandharba Art and Culture Organisation. At a recent meeting, the intellectuals of the capital talked about the role of the sarangi but not the man behind the instrument, he tells us. At another human rights



House to house, door to doo They came to recruit Asking whether we would like to have a job Our hearts concurred The major saab in the corner, he checked The squint-eyed and the deaf, they went out The healthy went to the hospital and were taken in Six months from that day We paraded barefoot

Many are wounded in the chest, and many more in the head. When I remember the wound in the head, my heart shakes

Younger brother might ask where his brother is Tell him the family has decreased Tell her to return the gift she brought from her house Younger sister might ask where her brother is Tell her there is no gift for her this time Sister-in-law might ask where her brother-in-law is Tell her to cut a goat and have a feast My son might ask where his father is Tell him to remove his cap My daughter might ask where her father is Tell her to save her honour

Brothers will talk of me at the family meetings Father will talk of me for six months, a year Mother will talk of me forever

My beloved wife might ask where I am Tell her to break her bangles and her necklace Wipe her sindoor, and that her path is now open

Childhood was spent in play My youth in the service of the government

I wanted to come, the enemy stopped me

meeting, virtually every other houses of other Nepalis. And dalit community was mentioned though singing is how they would but not a word about the like to continue making their Gandbarba And that was why living they are forced to take on Sanu Kancha didn't attend the odd jobs simply to survive. Few second meeting. "I was heart broken. Why should we go there have land they can call their own, and many are heavily in debt. again? We will survive on our Sanu Kancha himself has had own," he says. The name Gandharba is found in numerous

mention in holy books is no

Clackwise from far left: A special edition canced sarangi worth Rs 5000:

Gandharba, the only surviving Gandharba who can play the arbaz, the

original version of the sarangi; and Sanu Kancha Gandharba, president

the cover of the soon-to-be-released Gandharba ko Mutu: Mohan

arantor of a good

Gandharbas are

often offered

food, clothes

their caste bars

and money,

them from

life-although

a difficult, not untypical life. Nearly two decades ago, at the age of 13, he started "running" the streets, first of Basantapur and then Thamel. "During the early days I just sang and walked the streets, hoping for a kind ear to listen to us and maybe praise us and give us a few rupees. But one day I found that there were some real admirers, especially tourists who wanted to buy the sarangi And that was how everything started for us." The Gandharba Art and Culture Organisation was established in 1995 on the advice of a kindhearted American. It is the only organisation of its kind in Nepal and has 110 members and a branch in Pokhara. The organisa tion is entirely self-sustaining— members make the four-stringed sarangi and sell them to tourists, and donate a quarter of the proceeds to the organisation "It isn't a very dependable or

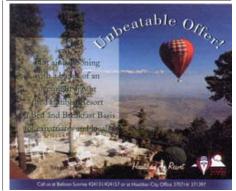
constant source of income, given the current trends in tourism. but even at times when there are olenty of tourists on the streets it is difficult to earn more than Rs 2,000 -Rs 3,000 per week," says Sanu Kancha. Other than singing and selling sarangi, madal (Nepal double sided drum), and basuri (flute), some Gandharbas have started teaching folk dance class: to curious tourists, or music to the odd Nepali music lover. Bika Yogi, a musician, pays Rs 2,000 a

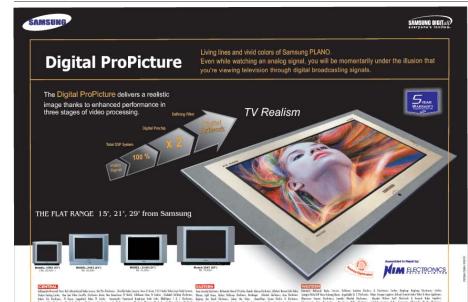
month for a daily hour-long most talented of the community o cut an album called Gandharba course in playing sarangi. Yogi i enthusiastic about the fourko mutu (The Heart of the stringed Nepali violin, "I have Gandbarba) which will have 15 always loved the music of the original Gandharba songs. It is Gandharbas, but never had time expensive, says Sanu Kancha, but to learn it. I finally took time out the community is doing its best to and it has been worth it." make sure that it works out.

People like Yogi fulfil an Many younger members of the important role. As the GACO community say that preservation of culture alone is not enough. works to preserve the communi ty's heritage, its members find it Education is their long-term goal, heartening when others, especially and 23-year-old Raj Kumar other Nepalis, take an active Gandharha says he acutely feels interest in it. Right now the the lack of a basic education. organisation is working to save as "People call us gaine, it hurts. many old lyrics and songs and We cannot answer back because record them for posterity. GACO we are simple people. If we were has got together the oldest and educated, things might have been

different," he says. The commuabout ensuring its future genera tions do not labour under this handican Sanu Kancha, for instance, is sending his two sons to an English school, even if it means having to get by on only one meal a day

GACO, for its part, is sponsor ing two children in Tanahun district and is planning to institute more such scholarships in the future. Says Sanu Kancha: "I hope education will help them become better human beings, and we hope they never forget that they are Gandharbas even if they become doctors or engineers." +







1 - 7 FERRUARY 2002 NEPAULTIMES

write application software for

o go. What it needs, say profes-

sionals, is the all-important push

that only government can provide.

"We need to create work. If we

cannot get business from abroad

nothing should stop the govern-

ment from creating it right here.

says Regmi. "Such jobs not only

provide employment opportunities

for fresh graduates, they will also

Nepali engineers are already

roducing world-class software

government offices. Mercantile has

fingerprint authentication, and the

next step is moving into authenti-

cating retinas. Others are specialis

ing in airline booking applications

carpet design tools and web-based

Many of these individuals and

nstitutions have earned certifica-

tion from large computer compa

Novel and Cisco, others are top-

rated by university run standard

like Camezie-Mellon's CMM-

Regmi's PSC rates a perfect five on this scale. Industry insiders say

nies such as Microsoft, Oracle.

search engines, or designing software for use in income tax

administration.

solutions used by banks, share

recently introduced banking

software that uses biometrics fo

market managers and some

help make government more

The industry is ready and raring

lients around the world

Can Nepal do IT?



gine a scenario in which all l ownership records are on a nationally networked computer database. And just picture all applications for passports being processed online. Now think of the IT park being built in Banepa, and the government IT policy that will, in principle, result in thousands more computer professionals in Nepal, growing by over 2,000 every year.

For most of us, the former seems fantastic-the government owns these records and seems unwilling to make them more systematic and accessible—and the latter, pointless Nepal lacks an IT success story that people on the ground can relate to, which is perhaps why people outside the industry can't understand the hoopla surrounding the government's new IT policy and the repeated pleas from the sector to please implement it, fast,

But a little-known fact about Information Technology in Nepal is that it had enthusiasts—even in government-as long as two decades ago. But it was the private eers who have managed to make the industry a viable one Today, though the government has a ministry to oversee IT and is even planning an IT park in Banepa, the ndustry remains driven largely by

When and how did IT become so central to the business and private lives of Nepalis? And where is it going?

the private sector. In fact, many IT professionals feel they were better off without the additional baggage of under-performing bureaucracy that they are now saddled with.

The first computation machine arrived in Nepal during the 1971 census, a second generation IBM-1401 that used tape drives for storage and punch cards for data entry. After the census was done with, the government realised the gargantuan machine needed a permanent home and thus was born the National Computer Centre, whose mandate was to provide data processing services to government agencies.

Another census, another new machine, this one a British-made ICL 2950. It was state-of-the-art back then: one megabyte of RAM and a 640 MR hand drive in addition to 800 gigabytes of storage drives, which came in four units. People who know their computer are probably smirking at the admittedly limited capabilities of the ICL. But it did what it was supposed to do in its day, and helped the NCC stay in business for another decade or so.

"That was the pace at which the industry was developing at the time," says Suresh Regmi, an electrical engineer, who was one of about 12 engineering graduates who joined the NCC in 1982. Regmi now nine his own software house Professional Computer Services. which has written and administered some large national programs-VAT

maintaining electoral rolls and administering election results at the Election Commission and software for share market record keeping.

At about the time Regmi was learning the basics of COBOL on the ICL, Sanjib Rajbhandari (CHK) of Mercantile Communicaions had purchased his first omputer, an Apple–II plus. Rajbhandari took some programmin classes at a local training centre, which as he tells it today, did not ever have one machine to actually work on—in those days, TV screens served as monitors and cassette tapes were used to record programs.

systems, took over the leadership o In 1983 Saniib started a the Computer Association of Nepa omputer division as part of his (CAN) in 1995. His job was amily's office automation busines lobbying to put IT on the national For me computers were a hobby agenda—CAN was alrady talking that turned into a business " save about having 100 000 Nepalicusing Raibhandari. "In those early years email and the Internet by 2000, at we were a handful of people a time when government was shutting down the NCC and there groping in the dark, not knowing oo well what we were getting was no ministry or department to into." Today Mercantile is the arry the torch. Says Shrestha. largest Internet Service Provider in That goal has become reality Nepal and also the largest employ today." At CAN Shrestha spent a n the country's IT sector. Its good deal of time running between software division alone employs wernment departments either 100 engineers and many of its oushing policy or doing background former employees now work with policy work for the government, which had no institution that could industry giants such as Microsoft and Cisco Systems. In the meantake charge of the fledgling time, Rajbhandari has decided to industry. "CAN became the IT play up Nepal's own strengths in NGO, doing all the promotion and ervice industries and is moving lobbying needed," says Shrestha. Ironically, Shrestha's own firm into high-value software and IT

assisted service exports, such as its Beltronix, does not have a major computer division or any related businesses even today, despite the

grew, so did the general public's appetite for new gadgets. About a decade ago, everyone started assembling PCs—this was, after all, time when you did not need authorised distributors of branded names to sell you machines that worked, even a high-school graduate in the neighbourhood could cannibal ise old machines to build new ones had become fair game. four years he spent marketing IT in

At about this time, an initially

disinterested electronics engineer

arrived on the IT scene. Bijaya

Krishna Shrestha, who had been

selling power back-ups and storage

Nepal. "I was busy at CAN all the time, my own businesses suffered. and I could not start the same IT businesses I was promoting," he says. Even though he personally missed the boom he was in part responsible for, Shrestha remains a passionate believer in the potential of IT in Nepal. He has moved on to different new businesses—from SAFA Tempos to banking-after his stint with CAN. And yet he remains convinced about the importance of the computing industry. "One job in IT is worth 10 in traditional businesses," says Shrestha "With one computer you can add value from Rs 5,000-Rs 15,000 per person, with little or no

Nepal's IT and IT-related industry already has over 500 companies-from small neighbourhood computer assembly operations to larger companies that employ over 500 people. There are over 100 training institutes, from the small, oneclassroom set-ups to those providing internationally recogised courses. Nepal has more than 10 companies that specialise only in software development. not to mention the freelance

workers who sit at home and

On average about 2,000 Information Technology graduates enter the job market every year, some find jobs locally, others head abroad "If we don't create work we'll have high-level trained graduates heading abroad soon, adds Regmi. "If nothing, the vernment can help market the ndustry abroad, because individual companies are just too small to think about penetrating the markets that we actually have the potential to serve." •



ELD WORKSHOPS

5 has Wilcoming Visitors, Dealing with Enquates & Handling Complement Leb Telephone Skills

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> Charles and Registered - the UK as a character of the set

The old New World Order 🔊

are likely to return with normalcy. When they do, our understanding of the process will be greater if we look back at history. Among historians, globalisation provokes a keen sense of déjà vu: we were here a century ago. progress, dizzving new technologies like the automobile, the telephone, the typewriter-existed then, but so did rotests against a world that seemed out of the control of traditional

political institutions. Then, as now, the backlash came chiefly from rich industrial countries, rather than poor peripheral countries often seen as the objects of capitalist exploitation. Advanced countries imposed tariffs against "unfair competition from abroad, central hanks were instituted to manage disorderly capital flows, migration policy became more restrictive, as ome big recipients of immigration began to debate selectivity in choosing immigrants. The process of integration was reversed after WWI and destroyed in the Great Depression, in a series of

tagious financial panics that spread from the periphery to the heart of the world's financial system, and a turn to nomic nationalism and autarky What had before 1914 been safety nets against excessive globalisation became, after the war, gigantic snares that strangled the world economy. The most remarkable characteristic of globalisation backlashes is how they reate an odd alliance of Right and Left. In the late 19th century, Europe's land

sased aristocracy was weakened by the ompetition of cheap grain and other foods shipped across the oceans. As farm prices and rents fell, aristocracy faced decline. So the landed elite mobilised small-scale farmers, artisan and producers who shared its belief that unfettered competition was harmful. For these groups, elobalisation amounted to redistribu tion. On the Left, the growing working class sought to use political power to change economic relations—to advance progressive tax policies, or stop the use tariffs to protect the old order Progressives also decried international capitalism's undermining of labour

commercial elite saw the products of economic opening or globalisation as wholly beneficial. Instead of a two-par split between Left and Right, there was a triple division between antilobalisation conservatives, prolobalisation liberals, and re distribution ist Leftists When the extremes of the political spectrum became radicalised between the wars. the anti-international Right moved to ascism, the Left to communism. Democratic politics became paralysed

For much of the post-1945 perio hese divisions disappeared as Right and Left fought battles for redistribution within national economies. The old triple polarisation only returned with he new wave of globalisation. Again, there is an anti-international Right tha plays some role in all major industrial ountries and tries to defend existing rosperity and property rights from agaries of international markets. The left's protectionist anti-globalisation impetuses are less visible in political varties than in labour movements, but these can shape political programs. For

peral Free Democrats attracts. This new politics incites feelings malaise and helplessness, and 20th century movements are largely exhausted: classic conservatis the world changes too rapidly for conservatism as stasis to be coherent o appealing, classic socialism because the apidity of change erodes traditional labour positions in the same way. The bankruptcy of these respectable but now utmoded positions opens the door for a new populism based on an antiglobalisation groundswell. The new/old politics is inward-looking and likes the idea of the revival of the nation as a protective bulwark against foreign goods, migrants, foreign ownership. l is also dangerous and destructive, and was largely responsible for Europe's hideous politics in the first half of the 20th century. ♦ (Project Syndicate)

challenge for support. For their

nembers, international competition is

najor threat as imports or immigrant

nay cut the wages of less skilled

ompetition" is transmitted to

Democrate

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nainstream centre-Left parties, such as

In the modern centre is something

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ndangered liberal order: an elite that

spouses globalisation because it senefits from it, what cynics call the

"Davos man." It is unlikely that such:

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rely moves beyond the five to te

ercent of the vote that Germany's

nd the resentments it generates, are to

ver command massive electoral

e French Socialists or America's

(Harold James is professor of author of The End of Globalization

The middle path

UNITED NATIONS - Rich and poor countries remain polarised on key issues including debt relief, aid and the role of international financial institutions in the run-up to a development finance conference. Two-week preparatory talks for the International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) concluded two days behind schedule, with a consensus declaration to be adopted at the conference, slated for March in Monterrey, Mexico. The talks were fractious and diplomats considered consensus an accomplishment in itself, but many were unhappy with the 14page document. Developing country delegates said the FfD process has yet to reach its goal of giving them a bigger say in managing the global economy. The preparatory committee again highlighted the obvious, they said privately-that beggars can't be choosers. Swedish Ambassador Ruth Jacoby, co-chair of the preparatory committee, said negotiations on development assistance had been the most time consuming. Only five countries-Denmark, Luxembourg the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden-kept their promises to set aside 0.7 percent of GNP to aid developing countries, she said, and Ireland set a time frame to meet the target. "One major donor has never accepted the target," she said, taking an obvious swipe at the United States, which refused to commit to an increase from its current 0.22 percent of GNP and argued against firm targets and deadlines in the Monterrey document—prescriptions that found their way into the draft. NGOs say other developing country concerns played down or sidestepped included the need to rein in hedge funds, the destabilising effects of which were a prime culorit in the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis, (IPS)

Burning bras in Burma

Triumph International, a leading European luxury lingerie firm, is pulling out of Burma after coming under sustained pressure from labour organisations and exiled Burmese groups over working conditions. It says it will close its factory there within the next four months and lay off about 1,000 workers. Campaigners accused Triumph of using forced labour and said they had proof that child workers were used to upgrade the facilities on the site. They also accused the company of supporting the military government. Burma has one of the

worst human rights records in the world and its working practices have been condemned by the International Labour Organisation, In November 2000, the ILO called on its members-governments, unions and employers-to reconside their ties to Burma because of the persistence of forced labour. Triumph, which has been operating in Burma since 1996, has denied that any of its facilities make use of forced labour, insisting that conditions for its employees there are much better than the norm. Activists stepped up their activities two months ago with the launch of a high-profile campaign in Great Britain, with the catchphrase "Support Breasts, Not Dictators". A statement from the company blamed the increasingly emotional tenor of the debate. But a spokesman added that a further reason for the pullout was that the company saw no prospect of democratic change within Burma in the near future. He said Triumph was working on a social plan to help employees

Balancing rights with might

id September 11 mark the end of a period of the expansion of the human rights idea and the beginning of a process of retrenchment? Leading human rights organisations - Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists - fear that this might indeed be the case, and they have been steeling themselves to oppose any attempt to push

back their hard-won conquests.

Ever since its inception in the early sixties, the international human right movement had been steadily gaining ground. It campaigned with increasing effectiveness against political killings, torture and arbitrary imprisonment. It mobilized public opinion against the abuse of State power; in the process, it got the sympathetic attention of the international media and enlisted the support of democratic governments. In the years since the end of the Cold War, the movement gathered further impetus. The global agenda began to be dominated by novel initiatives for the advancement of international justice and for the protection of human rights: international criminal courts, new forms of universal iurisdiction, humanitarian intervention

Yet in the wake of September 11, the focus of the debate has suddenly shifted, and it now revolves around the extent to which it may be justified to suspend or restrict certain rights-starting with immigration rights and the rights to due process, freedom of expression and privacy-so as to fight the so-called "War on Terror" more effectively. Many opinion makers, especially in the United States have begun to argue openly that unorthodox wars like the battle against Al Qaeda cannot be won by adhering to the fine print of human rights law or the laws of armed conflict.

In the face of this trend, human rights veterans can hardly be blamed for going on the alert. They sense that they have been though this before. They can well imagine how somewhere in distant Chile, for example, a bunch of retired Pinochet associates are muttering to themselves that finally they are being vindicated by history. ("Didn't we always say that you cannot fight a dirty war without dirtying your hands?").

Yes, human rights activists have seen enough of that. Invoking a supremo emergency- the need to fight a communist threat, the defense of a socialist revolution, the protection of vital national or ethnic interests, or the upholding of God's will—is the time-honored excuse for the indefinite imposition of tyrannical

Human rights watchdogs must never lower their guard, permissiveness is a slippery slope.

rule. Granted, few people expect the U.S. government to try and emulate such crude dictatorships—or American citizens to countenance any such emulation. But one can never be too careful. After all, human rights were born from the need to check the power of governments. Watchdogs must never lower their

guard, and any permissiveness is a slippery slope. The expectation that governments will tend to abuse emergency powers is enshrined in the very text of international human rights norms. Human rights treaties allow for the suspension of some rights only if: (a) there is an officially proclaimed emergency which vitally threatens the life or security of the nation: b) the measures adopted are required by the exigencies of the situation; and (c) the measures are applied only to the extent and for the time that are strictly demanded by the situation. These last two criteria - called the principles of necessity and proportionality - also underlie the Geneva Conventions and other international norms for the conduct of warfare. All these principles are reinforced by a well-established international jurisprudence which holds that in the gray areas of the balance between rights and restrictions, judges should lean in

The fight against ubiquitous terrorist networks capable of devastating attacks against civilians may well demand a refinement of traditional concepts such as nilitary necessity, combatant, territory and legitimate targets. What is called fo is a thoughtful adaptation - rather than a weakening - of well-established legal principles. This is a task that quebt to be conducted in the old spirit of healthy suspicion, building in all reasonable safeguards against the possibility of rnmental abuse. But if the human rights movement refuses to enter this line of debate and inquiry with an open mind, it may begin to lose the support of honest public opinion, the very source from which it has drawn the moral and political energy to get as far as it has. • (Project Syndicate)

Iose Zalaquett is a human rights activist and Professor of International Law at the University of Chile

40,0001/ft.BAR

in Burma who would lose their jobs, and this would consist of

some form of compensation



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Succulent steaks and burgers bountiful, with a vegetarian variety. The friendliest bar around the most convivial fireplace between Tibet and Timbuctoo. Live band on Tuesdays and fridays!



new call centre in Thamel. collection by Inland Revenue Office, As the computing business

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> Executive Officer USAID/Nepail Bab Brawar

But Deuba may face a mutiny

Individuals [Maoists] who want to surrender must fill in this form before they can do so.

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The Chief District Officer District Administration Office.

Subject: Surrendering

I am no longer a member of the Maoist Terrorist Organisation, nor am I affiliated with any of its sister organisations. I am not a supporter or a well-wisher. By providing my personal details, and by pledging my allegiance to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 from today, I surrender before you. Attached is a Rs 5 revenue stamp.

Personal details about individuals who have surrendered

Ward No:

Ward No.

House No:

Colour of Hair

House No:

1. Name. Surname 2. Middle name:

3. Address: Temporary

Municipality/VDC Permanent - Zone Municipality/VDC

4 Father/Hushand

5. Grandfather: Appearance:

Weight

Colour of Eyes:

7. Age or date of birth:

8. Educational Qualification

9 Profession: 10. Citizenship/Passport No:

11. Contact Place, Tel No., Person:

12. Position held during involvement in terrorist activities:

Date of surrender.

14. Contact office while surrendering:

15. Oath taken while surrendering:

16. Surrender mediated by: 17. Individual or group handed over to after surrender:

18. Name of school, university attended:

19. Name of office, corporation, private company served in:

20. Background:

Applican

(Recommended by)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If I were not a Bahun, I would also have been offered a garland every year."

-Senior politician Ram Hari Sharma, President, Nepal Praja Parishad. Sharma was spared a death penalty by the Rana rulers on the virtue of his "superior" Bahun caste. Budhabar Saptahik, 30 January



This government always talks about begging. We might have to leave this place

Prakash Weekly, 28 January

Maoist torture

warned not to remove the body, or

they would also be killed. It was

only removed and cremated when

MP Haribbakta Adhikari and Ram

Bahadur Gurung flew in on a police

helicopter the next day. Maoists say

Adhikari was killed because he was

an informant, had not given 25

Himal Khabarpatrika, 29 January om his ministers if he presses aheac Duradanda, in Lamjung District, is and fanning the flames will be Deuba's rival Girija Koirala, who is three hours walk from the road at waiting in the wings to stage a Besisahar. Muktinath Adhikari, principal of the Padmini Sanskrit omeback. This is the moment of truth for Deuba. Does he have the Higher Secondary School, was taking an arithmetic class in grade 10 at political will and the confidence to noon on 16 January when armed Maoists arrived and took him away On a hillside overlooking the town they tied 45-year-old Adhikari to a tree with his muffler, thrust a skewe through his shoulder and chest and then shot him in the right temple with a pistol. The villagers had been

oush through with the commission: The CIAA has complained that t has not been able to prosecute the corrupt because of the lack of relevant laws. But that is not the only problem—there are questions about how the commissioners themselves are appointed and by whom. It is pretty evident that the commissioners have been political appointees. It is this politicisation that has prevented the CIAA from taking stern action against those ruilty of corruption. Maybe this is why Deuba wants to go for a highvél anti-corruption commission. The prospect of a special commission against graft is probably what worries some senior ministers.

from relatives anymore, and

pporters fail to shore up their

elf-confidence. On 22 January

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur

Deuba did the same by visiting

Ihunihun Baba at Pachupatinath

ninister that no one would be able

to dislodge him from office in the

Prime Minister Deuba returned to

organised a dinner for his cabinet

olleagues. What this shows is that

the prime minister is unsure about

his own future in government. But

erything may endanger democrac

there is a larger fear among the

people in general, that the habit

vernment has of rushing

A helping hand

According to the Terrorism and

Disruptive Acts (Prevention and

Control) Ordinance, anyone who

has aided the Maoists in any way

becomes an accomplice and is liable

o be punished. The Royal Nepal

Army, the police and the armed

rprisingly, there is also the

chance that those who ordered the

security forces to fight the Manists

likely to be caught in the tangle. At

a parliamentary committee meeting

ast week Member of Parliament

that the country's prime minister.

ministers and MPs have given

donations to the Maoists. The

Ractriva Prajatantra Party's Log

said that they could provide

regularly given the Maoists

Meher Shrestha and Poudel both

evidence that the prime minister and four other ministers had

lonations and gifts. The issue of

discussed in a special committee of

ministers and MPs giving dona-

tions to Maoists is likely to be

parliament The committee is

expected to call in the MPs who

available. It was disclosed at the

committee meeting that the prime

minister had given Rs 9,000 and

that others, including some presen

cabinet members and 14 MPs, had

at different instances given dona-

ave offered to make the evidence

Lilamani Poudel said he has proof

using the same the law are also

police are not fighting the Maoists

essentially because of that law. But,

Deshantar, 27 January

next three months. After that,

his residence in Baluwatar and

The Baha assured the prime

ाहमाल 🖺 Star gazing Deshantar, 27 January People resort to Tantric soothsaving when they cannot get assurances

percent of the Dasain bonus of the school teachers to the Maoist cause, and continued to teach Sanskrit despite warnings not to. Adhkiari was a member of Amnesty International Group 79.

No more graft? Jana Bhawana, 28 January

Some senior ministers in Sher Bahadur Deuba's cabinet opposed to the prime minister's moves to set up a high-powered anti-corruption commission are getting together to oppose it. Fearing that they could be swept into the dragnet, the senior ministers are said to have disagreed with the idea to give the special commission the authority to fight

Among the ministers opposing the move are said to be Chrianjibi Wagle, Khum Bahadur Khadka, Bijaya Kumar Gachhedar, Bal Bahadur KC, Sarad Singh Bhandari Iava Prakash Gupta. Deuba is said to be determined to get the special commission to start with the clean up within the government itself, and set some high-profile examples. Deuba had earlier said he was willing to give the Commission for the Investigation for the Abuse of Authority more authority to persecute the guilty. He had even drafted an anti-corruption ordinance, but this was shunted to the backburner because the same senior

ministers opposed it. When the draft was presented to the cabinet two weeks ago, Wagle, Gupta and other ministers vehemently opposed it. The draft was a result of cussion between Deuba and the CIAA's chief commissioner. The ministers accused the commissioner of being "too ambitious" and said there were enough provisions in the law and a new ordinance was not required

Faced with a political dead-end, Deuba is bringing in the idea of a high-level anti-corruption commis-sion to show that he is serious about the matter. Even the Left opposition is of the opinion that corruption cannot be controlled without a "new kind of commission". Deuba started pushing ahead with his new idea tions adding up to Rs 1 million. If

wen, then it follows that those ound guilty should be punishedunder the very ordinance they themselves had recommended to His Majesty Otherwise democracy and the rule of law will lose their meaning. How can those giving donations go scot free when villages who have aided the Maoists by giving them food or donations under duress and threats have been subjected to questioning and other

CUI TURF

riginally from Bhoipur

Biratnagar, writer Parshu

district and now living in

Pradhan is the author of seven

short story collections and one

novel. In the story below, which

originally appeared in the 2050 BS (1992/93) collection Euta

Krantipurushko Janma, he gently

mocks the petit bourgeois narrator

for drifting through life, in a way

observing the youth of Nepal's

mocks, just as gently, those who

do not drift, but connive fixedly

for wealth-even if that means

Many years have passed by

aimlessly. This is how my life is:

day before, or as a few years

well, wearing good clothes and

spending their days in comfort?

That's how life was, that's how it

is, that's how life came, and that's

how it's moving along. But in the

past few months it feels like there

have been changes in me. I look

replaced, there is no blue in it. It's

like a heap of black, the black of a

demon that seems to rise to block

all my mads. For many days I hadn't

haven't, I don't even want to go out.

don't know how the cold feels.

long, and friends to meet. And in

the evening if there is a chance I

must visit the campus. What new

cinemas have come out, who are

the hero and heroine? How is their

acting? All this I have memorised

by heart. This too I know: whether

or not there's rice at home, there

will be rice on one's plate at night

Whether or not there's money to

pay the fees, on the 15th of the

month the fees will be paid. On

there'll be buffalo meat to feast

evenings there will be parties to

throw with companions. There's a

readymade answer when I reach

home late—"I've been studying all

night at Dhruba's-I'm sick of all

this trouble! What do you know

about studying?" The censure of

my aged mother gets squelched

by my father's voice-"What do

you know about studying, whore?

A son is a son. You don't have the

right to scold him like that "I sit.

always, on the back bench of the

classroom. Everything taught by

education is easily understood.

and just as easily forgotten. The

memory of any pretty girl on the

street burdens the entire brain.

Her eyes give chase when I sit

song, sometimes I compose

down to study. Sometimes I sing a

poems of youth from early in the

morning. There is a whiff of beer

in life, and a whiff of romance. At

times life rises like the sun, at

times it dies like a corpse in a

graveyard. Sometimes jokes get

upon. And sometimes in the

Saturdays, if there isn't goat meat

There is a city to roam all day

There's a winter's chill but I

been able to venture out. I still

outside-the sky has been

vesterday it was the same as the

back. Who doesn't dream of eating

comfortable classes. He also

that is familiar to anyone

selling their gods.

FI ASHRACK

Khotang's plight Deshantar, 27 January Villages in Khotang district have

been having sleepless nights after

the emergency was declared on 26 November. The Maoists who fled Solukhumbu and Okhaldhunga districts after the security forces ntensified their activities there have been creating havoc in Khotang. The villagers are caught between the rossfire from three sides—the Manists, the security forces and the activists of the Khumbuwan Mukti Morcha (Khumbuwan Liberation Movement) in the south of the district. According to a member of the District Development Committee, about nine public employees have been jailed so far, but even now security forces have been unable to go into the villages, forcing villagers to flee to the plains or Kathmandu. According to a teacher who did not want to be named even the Chief District Officer has been moving between Kathmandu and the plains and has told teachers that he is unable to provide them with any kind of security. Teachers who have tried to buy safety by giving donations to the Maoists or the KMM, are now being taken in for questioning by the security forces

Prisons of the past

Himalaya Times, 29 January

The Department of Prison Management recently admitted that prisons throughout the country are overloaded 25 percent over their canacity. One reason prisons have een overcrowded, is that more than 2,000 arrests were made following the declaration of the state of

nergency on two months ago. There are 69 functioning prisons in the country—the district risons in Syangja, Dang, Dolpa and Solukhumbu were destroyed by the Manists There are 6 200 nersons locked up in facilities mean or only about 4,000. "Prisons need restorations and reforms urgently," says Umesh Prasad Mainali, director

eneral of the Department. The government has formed nine ail reform committees in the past, but none of their recommendations have been implemented due to the cash crunch The Home Ministry requester Rs 8 8 million to restore the four prisons destroyed by the Maoists, but rhe Finance Ministry could not come up with it. Mainali says that the Home dinistry is planning to request a Rs 32.5 million budget for reforms and repairs in the 69 functioning prisons.

All the prisons in Nepal were ouilt during the Rana regime and because repairs are not a priority and the security systems are weak, it is easy for captives to escape. A Home Ministry source told us that iail management reforms long overduc were not executed because the overnment never allocated a budget for it. He also said that the Ministry jail reform under the development budget in the coming fiscal year.

traded in cups of tea and coffee and sometimes I yearn to babble unconscious. Lalso feel like

how it is some brag of having become captains, some are in line to father and mother are already and salute my father in full laugh proudly.

sleeping in an open state. That's

And then there arises a fancy for a soldier's life. Some friends have already become lieutenants. become colonels. I reach home in the dark night. I know that my asleen. I click my heels together soldier's form. Half asleep, half awake my father startles-"Since when did you become a soldier?"

"If you want to join the military I'll call on all the bosses I know. So? But you can't run away and come back home..."

Wake up to the toll of a bell and sleep to the toll of a bell. That too get sick of. One night I run away and reach home. Instead of saluting my father, I join my hands and make a humble request— Father, I can do any work, but I can't be a soldier. You can feed me only one meal a day. I'll come back home."

I nod my head, signalling

soldier. Training begins. The start

agreement. I am enrolled as a

of an extremely organised life!

I know that it's hard to leave once vou're a soldier, but my father's reach goes way up. How far up-that I don't know. Again another horizon

unfolds. One must to business. the goddess I axmi graces businesses. There is much wealth to earn. One must erect huge huildings it's fun to cruise the three cities at the steering wheel of a car. I rent a house on one side of the street and onen a shop. Crowds of customers start to form. Cash and credit are both in use. Not that I haven't hung a

kainchi ho"-credit is the scissors of love-but amid winks and whispers, credit is granted somehow. The list of items in the shop starts to dwindle. But the list of people in the credit folio urgeons. My shop is a central meeting point of sorts. Once in the morning, once in the evening, the boys of the neighbourhood gather and talk of the world. Why did Nixon lose the elections and the /ietman war and so-and-so's daughter eloped: all this is heard here. Connoisseurs capable of comparing the taste of booze with the taste of hashish gather here. Film heroes also show up. A few heroines come as well, on the excuse of buying something. I not only trade in daal, rice and oil, but also step up to exchange the love Calcutta and Darjeeling. We miss letters of friends. Sometimes I am no cinema, we skin no high quality kept up all night by thoughts of going to Bombay to star in a inema and at other times by thoughts of becoming Toyota's

THE AIMLESS LIFE: Parshu Pradhan

sign saying "Udaaro premko

imary agent. I also start to exchange looks with the lass who lives across the Then again another horizon store. Sometimes she smiles a unfolds. I return to the old city. crooked smile, and sometimes Many of my own people have she's hold enough to blind me with forgotten me, many have stopped the reflection of the sun on a recognising me. The small girls I mirror. In the store there is no left behind have become young cash for her, and no credit: women and the elderly have been lost. My father and mother too whatever she needs, she is immediately served. The daal and have taken the road that does not rice stocked for a month don't turn back. Recause of husiness even last a week. I keep on debts, the house has gone into the supplying. I am pleased to hear my hands of merchants. Now only the father and mother comment that city is my own, because I was their son's habits have improved horn there. But there is no house business is doing well. But who and no warm room. I am in the knows what is going on inside me? street. I make myself believe that I There's great loss in business, it was always in the street. Those seems. One night I pick up the lass living on the street Lleft behind across the store and take off, have erected buildings, they have without any aim. begun to ride cars and rove the As long as the money lasts. five star hotels. I hear that all the here are regular trips between gods and goddesses showered

hotel. But slowly our dream world starts falling apart. As the money runs out, our undving love story starts heading towards tragedy. Her road and mine separate. She starts working in the vast urban space of Calcutta. I measure life in streets and buses. Sometimes there is a train station, sometimes crossings and hazaars. Sometimes there are the brothels of Sanogachhi, sometimes the Kalinhat temple. The city I left behind scares me from time to time-with the thought that I am abroad. But I placate myself by meeting others who share the same fate. Sometimes I turn myself into the dirty glasses and nlates at hotels, sometimes I become a Gorkhali doorkeeper. have become capable of compromising with any situation Lam met with. There is bravado in my mind, and bravery.

ered on me. If only I'd devoted myself to god! I always doubted god. Lalways said one shouldn't succumb to blind faith. I walk in a city frozen by the cold, and compare myself to naked trees. My friends aren't willing to recognise me. They've already forgotten the past 1 remember the past but have forgotten the future. My hair is graying and lines of old age are sketched under my eyes. Only one thing is unclear now-which country am I from? Which soil will I have to rest upon? I have with me an old coat, given by some general from the Rana rule. Most of it is torn: I've stitched it in twelve places. I can wear it in any heat or cold. How many days I'll wear it. I don't know. I'm looking for an American hippy to whom I

can sell this antique. ♦

them with their love, gave them all

their wealth and headed ahroad

No such blessings were show-

THE FULBRIGHT & THE EAST-WEST CENTER

2002 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

The Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal (USEF/Nepal) announces the 2002 competition for the Fulbright and the East-West Center (EWC) Scholarships. Those selected would begin their studies in the US beginning August-September. 2003. (a) The Fulbright program provides all expenses (including travel) for a Master's degree program of up to two years at selected U.S. universities in any field except medicine, engineering or computer science. (b) the EWC scholarships of the University of Hawaii (UH) are available for Masters or doc toral-level study in any field offered at UH and cover all tuition and fees, but not travel expenses. Applicants for either program may be employees in any government or semi-government agency, private business, NGO or INGO.

General Requirements for Entering the Competition

possess Nepali citizenship;

demonstrate in all post-intermediate degrees a minimum aggregate marks of: 56% for students in non-technical fields (humanities and social sciences), and 60% for students in science and technical fields. (The minimum requirements for students under the semester system are: 65% in non-technical fields: 70% in technical fields: or a Cumulative GPA of 3.5/4.0 in either field.)

- have a high level of competence in speaking, reading and writing English. (Applicants who pass the first screening will be required to sit for an English test during the application process. The test requirement will be waived for those who have a valid TOEFL score of 213 or higher and have submitted copies of their score reports with their applications.)
- be under 40 years of age as of the application filing deadline date (March 29
- possess either a four years bachelor's degree; or, if the bachelor's degree was of fewer than four years duration, then a masters degree is also required, such that the total number of years of formal education equals at least 16:
- have at least three years (for men) or one year (for women) of post-bachelor's degree full-time professional work experience in an area directly relevant to the applicant's chosen field of study as of the application filing deadline date (March 29, 2002) and document this experience by letter(s) from employer(s) that verify applicant's position(s) and years of employment;
- be in excellent health, as evidenced by a letter from a medical doctor; and be eligible for a U.S. visa.

Note: Individuals holding master's degrees equivalent to a U.S. master's degree should not apply, nor should individuals who have previously resided in the United States for six months or more during the preceding five years.

(Applicants must submit documentary evidence for items No. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7,) Application Forms & Deadlines: Application forms and detailed information regarding the competition are available from the USEF/Nepal office at: the American Center in Gyaneshwor: the Ministry of Education: the National Planning Commission: the Rec tor's Office, Tribhuvan University; Kathmandu University Rector's Office; and with Campus Chiefs at out of the Valley degree campuses. Applications and information may also be accessed and downloaded from the Commissionis website: www.fulbrightnepal.org.np. Application forms must be taken out from the USEF office or downloaded from the website by 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 15th, 2002. No applications will be given out after this date. Duplicate, hardcopy, completed applications must reach the Fulbright Commission (USEF) no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 29th, 2002. Incomplete applications or applications received after this deadline will no he considered



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MOVIES

 Chinese film festival 7 February, 4.30PM, Zhang Yimou's The Road Home. 8 February, 4PM, Shadow Magic, 8 February, 5,30PM, The Birth of a Shooting Star, 9 February, 3PM, Postmen in the Mountains. 9 February, 5.30PM, Shower. All screenings at the Russian Cultural Centre, Kamal Pokhari, free passes at venue, Supported by the Chinese Embassy, sponsored by Nepal Himalaya Border Trans Trade Association. Organised by World Cultural Net and The

 Spring collection 2002 Watercolour paintings of flowers and botanical art by Neera J Pradhan. Until 25 February, Park Gallery, Pulchowk, 10AM-6PM, except Saturdays. 522307
 Life of Boudha Stupa... and beyond Exhibition of photographs by Susan Stebbins of the people and everyday activities that take place around Boudhnath Stupa, and highlights of Nepal. Until 5 February, 9AM-4PM, Sammelan Hall, Shangri-La Hotel. 435741

* Tantric Buddhism, Sexual Initiation and Monasticism: Are They Compatible? Talk by Isabelle Onians, Oxford University, 4 February, 3.30PM, Library Hall, Royal Nepal Academy, Kamaladi, Royal Nepal Academy and the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University,

 Mardi Gras and Latin dance lessons Andreas Lehrke teaches samba, merengue and salsa, 4,5,6 February. Carnival celebration with parade, food, music, samba and salsa, 8 February, 7PM onwards. Rs 800 per head with drink and dinner, Rs 1,200 per head with drink dinner and classes. Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999

Himalavan Enfielders Nepal Peace Rally Kathmandu-Kurintar-Pokhara-Bandipur-Kathmandu, 9 &10 February, Bikers Rs 500 per head, non-bikers Rs 1500 each, covers minor maintenance charge, consumable spares, meals and night stay in Pokhara. Bus available for family and friends. Himalayan Enfielders and Nepal Tourism Board.



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. restaurant. Hotel Vaira. 271545

MUSIC

 Live music by Catch 22, Tuesday and Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant, Thamel. 414336

EATING OUT

Saturday brunch combo Swimming, entertainment for children, use of Club Oasis with brunch and unlimited draft beer. The Café. Hyatt regency Kathmandu, 491234

 Valentine's dinner Special menu, complimentary glass of wine. Rs 650 plus taxes per head, 15 percent off for Standard Chartered credit card holders, privilege card holders and faculty and students of Manipal Teaching College and Hospital. 13, 14 February, Shangri-La Village Pokhara 061-22122

Singaporean and Malaysian food Satay, rice, soymilk dishes, curry puffs and more. Between Jawalakhel fire station and St Mary's School. Sing Ma, the Food Court, Foodcourt@wlink.com.np. 520004

Strawberries go bananas Strawberry desserts in every restaurant.

Hotel de l'Annapurna, 221711 Steam Away Winter Blues Hot soups, noodles, momos. 11AM- 6PM daily at the Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel. 411818

Traditional Sekuwa with live music from Himalayan Feelings fusion band and bonfire every Friday night. Dwarika's Hotel, Rs 555 per head. 479488

Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510

 Tukche Thakali Kitchen Buckwheat, barley, bean, 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

CETAWAYS

* Taste the difference Cosy Nepali-style house on an organic farm in Gamcha, south of Thimi. Up to Rs 1,200 per person per night including meals. aaa@wlink.com.np. 631766 * 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

 Pokhara Packags with a difference Bows and Arrows with archery contest or Pimms. Pathways and Picnics with easy guided trek to The Peace Pagoda. Extra bed complimentary for children under 12. 15 percent discount on F & B. Shangri-La Village, Pokhara. For more details, ring 435741

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

FPALL WEATHER

This week's rain was a bit unexpected, but not unwelcome. It use the first time in the nest five years that we not normal rain and snow during the winter monsoon. The second rain-bearing westerly front of the season brought heavy snowfall up to 2,700 m all along the Mahabharat and up to a metre of snow in Humla and the high passes. The satellite image (left) taken on Wednesday at noon shows fog in the tarai and the Ganges plains, and another weather front advancing across the Persian desert. But this is some distance away. The reason for his week's surprise rain was the sudden instensification of a clonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal, Expect a sunny ekend with breezy afternoons, and cold foggy mornings.







by NGAMINDRA DAHAL









Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, 1999 Rs 4.800 (two volume set) This volume presents a brief historical outline of the transformations of Indian art as well as a key to the symbolism of these forms. The text is a guide to the full volume of pictures. Two groups of plates illustrate the anthropological and comparative observations of the text through monuments, and other onstitute and independent pictorial appendix illustrating the miniature and Raiput art of the 11th to

the 19th centuries Chitra: Cities and Monuments of Eighteenth Century India from Erench Archives Jean-

> Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001 Rs 1.200

Chitra

Lafont brings together for the first time a collection of 50 drawings and maps of 18h century s and monuments, gives the historical background of these collections and links them to the French Compagnie des Indes Orientales and the French specialists who entered the service of the post-Mughal Indian states. India, as seen through its thriving cities and beautiful monuments is astonish

ingly "modern", with its own urban dynamics and a flourishing trade with the world.

Buddhist Stupas in Asia: The Shape of Perfection Joe Cummings and Bill Wassman Lonely Planet Publications, Australia, 2001 Re 2 850 Author Cummings and photographer Wassman spent eight years researching this part-philosophical, part-coffee table book. With a foreword by renowned authority on Buddhism, Robert

Thurman, this volume attempts to explain the essence of a stupa and illustrate the different ways Asian Buddhist communities have understood the teachings of the master through the difference in

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

Expatriates' Handbook Guide to day-to-day living in Nepal with pocket calendar. Available in handicrafts shops and bookstores

Special Chinese language classes for tourism entrepreneurs, Orient Centre for Learning, Dhobi Dhara. 441275

Reflexology Technique of applying pressure to the feet, reduces stress, promotes relaxation and good health. buddhasfeet@yahoo.com.

Stupa View and Restaurant & Terrace at

Baudhanath Stupa, Well-appointed restaurant and terraces with views of stupa and Himalavas. International vegetarian specialties, pizza from clav oven, ice cream, soft quitar tunes on Fridays. Saturdays, Sundays from 5PM on. Special events on full moon, Open daily 11AM-8.30PM, 480262.

Kodari Eco Resort Peace in natural surroundings, good views of Nepal/ Tibet border, jungle-covered mountains Ruddhist monasteries ancient Shiva cave. Hike to villages with various ethnic groups. vantage points to Himalayas. Comfortable accommodation, attached bath, balcony or terraces, good food, friendly service. 480262, kodari@mos.com.np

The way to Mexico is too far. Botega Restaurant and Tequila Bar is near Thamel Chowk. 266433. 15 nercent off-season discount

The Borderlands Resort For canvoning, rafting trekking at Tibet borders, Professional Developme 425836/425894. info@borderlandresorts.com www.borderlandresorts.com

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NEPAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

(Selection of comments from the pre-NDF consultations January 21-24, 2002)



although we are one of the poorest countries of the world. A large portion of our internal revenue goes in servicing debt, simply because we have paid our dues on time. We are a good borrower.

> Ram Sharan Mahat. Finance Minister



Decentralisation

Financial sector

authority for social service delivery to local hodies.

up-front, and not just be asked to plan

that the entire sector is in trouble.

banks to open private banks.

not implement the program.

Foreign aid policy

donors and recipients.

Auditor General.

the game clearer.

NGOs/ INGOs

Decentralisation should be linked to the establishment of a

decentralised civil service, their loyalty should be with the

local community, to whom they should be made accountable.

Decentralised agencies should be given control of resources

The financial sector is not doing very well, in fact it is in a

terrible state. Two large banks are not doing well and because

of their dominance in the financial sector, we can conclude

We don't do what we say, we don't say what we do. We know

why the two banks are in bad shape. It is because of non-

payment of loans. Ordinary citizens are paying their loans or

losing their collateral, but the big houses have not been asked

to pay back. Some have even borrowed from government

The present situation is due to the failure of the Nepal Rastra

Bank. It did not do what a regulator should have done. The NRB

was not given freedom, and as an institution it is the single reason for the mess we have today.

The situation of the private sector banks is also scary-their

non-performing assets may be higher than what we are told.

Besides cost, there does not seem to be opposition to reforms.

We don't have the money, but that does not mean we should

the participation here, you know who I am missing—I am missing half the population of Nepal. There a so few women here. If you want to be realistic, and if you want to be more down to earth, you should bring more

> Ingrid Ofstad Amhassador of Norway



find this (Foreign Aid Policy) still rather polite, perhaps too polite in dealing with donors. (A section) says to 'ensure compatibility and convergence of foreign aided development activity with national development priorities'... I think the less polite way of saying this is: many donor projects are missing the point...

Ken Ohashi Country Director, The World Bank

Privatisation, brivate sector

- . The privatisation process is transparent but too cumbersome, at the fastest nace under existing law it will take at least one year to privatise one enterprise. But we don't have less expensive eco-
- nomic alternatives to privatisation The state must engage only in core functions, establish rule of law, provide good governance, rather than do many uncoordinated in-
- Labour laws are inflexible, there is a mismatch of skills and needs, the government's welfare objectives must recognise the flexibility that businesses want, link pay with productivity.
- Labour is not against exit policies, but wants alternatives because even services like health care and education are privatised Development needs entrepreneurship. The private sector may not have the efficiency we talk about, and there is also a need to break
- private sector monopolies and improve competitive practices. Small and medium enterprises are the major drivers of employment. For poverty reduction SMEs need to be a greater focus, because
- their problems on tax issues and cash flow tend to get neglected. How people access credit is important, collateral-secured credit is

Imblementation

- . Do we want to cure the problems or just pass around pills when we know that a major operation is needed? The people will not be satisfied with handouts when they are demanding participation in the conduct of state. We need good transparent governance and financial discipline. We
- should have a national audit of all aid. The problems are well known, we also know what solutions are needed, so the key is implementation. We need clear policies backed
- by adequate resources. Decentralisation has not happened fully for one reason or another we need to get rid of excuses and get the process working.

Where to start?

- . Let us aim for less (providing primary education, basic health, clean drinking water), and just do it. The people will do the rest.
- There must be a program for reducing wasteful expenditure. The plan should also focus on regulating the regulators, which will be another milestone in effective implementation.
- The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is right because it tries to look at all resources, foreign grants and loans, and asks what is the best way to use the resources to achieve results.

Rural development vision

- Nepal cannot develop until the villages develop. Political parties and leaders are irrelevant while formulating plans, so they are declared irrelevant once the expected results are achieved.
- We need a minimum vision as a nation, one that does not change every time there is a new government. Policy has to build on that
- Rural people are subjects not objects, empowering them should be the starting point in any talk of rural development. Only the empowered can demand services and have the confidence to explore and harness local potential. With empowerment there will be participa-
- tion in decision making.

 Let us focus on only education, health and employment and write a rural development policy to address them. We must go for small projects which villagers can do on their own. We must increase the capability of local representatives.

Women, disadvantaged groups

- Politicians have lost touch with the common people, they are selfish and corrupt. This is the real problem of aid and development. This is why we youth have suffered, we need to be involved in mapping the development path. It is our future.
- There must be reservations for women, based on minimum qualifications, that has to come out in the government reform agenda. We have very few people from disadvantaged groups, and few women in the bureaucracy. Changing this can be a response to the different ethnicity-based separatist sentiment

Aid and development Top priority should be given to shifting of responsibility and

- The Foreign Aid Policy (FAP) tries to address the issues relating to aid effectiveness while ignoring earlier donor commitments (made at the 25th UN General Assembly) to allocate 0.7 percent of the GDP of developed countries to aid. Nepal does not have many other options like trade or Foreign Direct Investment, and foreign aid remains a major source of money. Aid has been dwindling at a time when developing countries need it most.
- When there was more aid, Nepal was not really ready and capable of using it. Now (with democratisation and the beginning of decentralisation) people are aching for development, and any reduction of aid levels would send wrong signals.
- Donors, while stressing effective use, must not completely shift the onus on the government, which means they must not forget the earlier commitments made to increase aid levels.
- Aid is a national equivalent of subsidies, and can also cause similar distortions by undermining the economic ability of a nation to allocate resources accordingly. Thus there is need to move away from donor dependence.

 Neoal has a poor record of development and there is much for
- which the government is to be blamed, but the donors are also responsible. They stepped in seeing the weaknesses and void in government, and even tended to substitute for government. By doing so have they collectively undermined the institution-building that







have to increase its commitment to de-

velopment of neglected areas. one-window system for NGOs/ INGOs is welcome, but that window should be placed under a strong ministry, and not the SWC (Social Welfare Council), which may not be able to handle the

increased level of activ-NGOs/INGOs disburse huge sums of money and we need a mechanism to regulate them. We've been unable to do that because politicians and senior bu-

reaucrats have fan ilv-run NGOs

1-7 FEBRUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

As time goes

ow that the clouds have cleared, any laymen among you gazing weet you gazing up at the night sky lately will have noticed that the moon is passing into the seventh house, Jupiter is aligned with Mars, and we are living in the Age of Aquarius. This is irrevocable proof, if proof is still needed, that another mating season is soon going to be upon us. It is therefore incumbent upon every Nepali of reproductive age and above to prepare to go forth boldly where many Nepalis have gone before, and begin prepar ing to tie the nuptial knot of holy matrimony as fast as it is physically possible. On your mark, get set, go! And

There is, however, a slight problem. As we know from the observations of Frank Sinatra: woman needs man, and man must have his mate—that no one can deny. But how on earth will they know that they are made for each other if (as we know from the observations of the astronomer Copernicus) women are from Venus and men are from Mars? Won't they miss each other in the vast rocky maze of the Asteroid Belt?

This is a question that has bedevilled Man from the end of the last ice age when our hunter-killer forbears emerged from their prehistoric caves in the vicinity of the Tora Bora mountains wearing nothing but prehistoric thermal underwear made from the chest hair of baby woolly mammoths, and were quickly apprehended at the Khyber Pass for trying to smuggle shatoosh hidden in their prehistoric crevices

I guess what I am trying to say here is: when does she know he is Mr Right? How does she figure out that, in the first place, he is the right species? OK, say for the sake argument he is the right species, how does

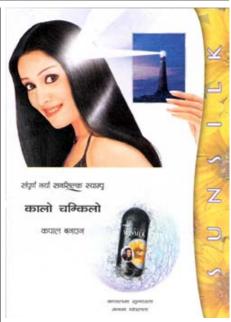
is he right gender? Or have the right girth, the right length, the right chemistry? How can she be sure he will pass the Lifting-thetoilet-seat Test on wedding night How does she know he does not snore, or conduct navel manoeures while slurping bed tea? How does she know he does not practice animal husbandry?

Since there are so many hings that can go wrong in an rranged marriage, the selection iteria are very important. This is where the newly-set up Browse 'n' Wed" cyber-

matrimonials come in very handy with their thumbnails of partner-to-be. Some helpful recent entries:

SCION of well-reputed, nationalistic mafia don who has been in the smuggling business for generations, father drawing six-figure income from fuel adulteration, eight-figure income from illegal brick kilns, and ten-figure income from encroaching on public land seeks latest-model, homely, innocent, tall, slim, fair, clean, boarding-educated, broad-minded girl for immediate induction into household. Women are encouraged to apply.

NEW HUSBAND needed for polyandrous, wellendowed, thrice-married, ex-beauty queen with Green Card and Western Outlook, Candidate must be human male, currently unemployed, be willing to clean dishes and take care of two ex-husbands, be undernanding, ask no questions and expect no answers. Guaranteed annual home leave, Dasain bonus, overtime and other perks. May be made permanent after three-month probation period if he can sing like Frank Sinatra.



friends lost interest

because they were

intimidated by the

school, she felt left out,

as her knowledge of

Nepali was limited.

"The whole class-

room felt dark-it

nuruchi Maya Tamang never went to school. But even as a child she had a yearning for learning. When a local group ran adult education classes they didn't allow her in-saying she was not an adult. So, Suruchi got her mother to enrol and followed her there. You could say Suruchi is (literally) selftaught. She is now at college in Bhaktapur Campus. But in her free time she has started giving nirls in her home village of Khoriya Gaun and surrounding districts the chance that she did not language," she says. When she first went to have to learn to

read and write. impossible to communicate Learning from her own with people and nothing the difficulty in grasping the woolly teacher said made sense," and boring development she recalls. Now reasonconcepts built into reading ably well-educated, Suruchi materials in her adult-literacy feels it is her duty to make classes, Suruchi Maya learning easier for her realised language was the Tamang community. "It is principle barrier. So, she is much easier for beginners conducting her classes in to learn to read and write in Tamang language. This is a their own language. After they know the alphabet, they unique approach, and can move on to Nepali," she Suruchi's experience so far shows that it works. "We says. "Learning can be fun, speak Tamang at home, so and not a chore that is learning new things in Nepali forced on you." was tough. Most of my Suruchi took this idea to

the Bagmati Integrated Watershed Management Programme which works in Kavre, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Makwanpur, Sindhuli and Bhaktapur districts. Half the population in these areas is Tamang, so it made sense to try out Suruchi's idea. Today, thousands of girls and women in these districts who would perhaps otherwise not be literate have learnt to read and write

For Suruchi it was just a hunch, but she is delighted that it turned out well. She told us proudly: "There is no greater satisfaction than nelping my sisters overcome the hurdles that I



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