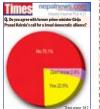
must come in groups of at least 15. The NTB worked hard to get hotels, travel agents and Royal Nepal Airlines together on the package. No mean feat. Now. let's keep our fingers crossed.



Sending money

Nepali workers remit more money than the country earns from tourism, foreign aid and exports combined.

Nepal space

migrating abroad to work will only go up. Other Third World countries export minerals and ore. Nepal has a long history of exporting human beings. Today, Nepalis are going further afield, and into non-traditional jobs as opportunities expand for overseas employment—they are employed as security guards on casino ships in the South China Sea. as guards on oil rigs in Angola, and as hotel managers in China. When Shiva Bahadur Than retired from the British Army, he didn't fancy starting a new career or staying idle. So, he got a job in the merchant marine. Shiva's colleagues from the army are security guards on tankers and container ships, thanks to a spurt in pirate attacks in the narrow Mallacca Straits. Another foreign worker we spoke to, Sampanna says when he failed to make it to the final selection of Nepal's national tae kwon do team in 1999, he headed off to Germany where he uses his skills as a martial arts guru.

Back home, Nepal's tourism is down 50 percent, and the garment, carpet and pashmina industries have laid off an estimated 200,000 workers. More than half the garment workers in Nepal, according to a 1998 study, are in the 20-25 age group and most support families with more than six members. Now without jobs, many will be forced to seek work in the Gulf or Malaysia. With unemployment soaring in virtually every sector, the number of Nepalis

Nepalis to work abroad, but the country still isn't maximising the benefits from its labour export. Many Nepalis are duped and exploited by manpower agencies, who take away a large chunk of the workers' earnings in illegal denosits or commissions, often up to three times the actual cost of a job. A study in Lahachok in Kaski district showed that nearly half the people in the village couldn't afford to pay even the minimum Rs 50,000 needed to get a job abroad. The government could stan guarantee to commercial banks for collateral-free loans to foreign job aspirants, just as it could help upgrade the skills of migrant workers from the low-paying manual labour they mostly do now, so they can earn more. Although promoting foreign employment opportunities is a major component of Nepal's

15 - 21 February 2002

economic diplomacy, the government has failed to act on its own promises. A government delegation led by Labour Minster Palden Gurung last week hmught home rosy assurances about providing at least 200,000 secure and safe jobs for Nepalis in Malaysia, but he failed to clinch a formal agreement.

The government has made it easier for

"Unless foreign employment is regulated the poorest sections of society will not benefit from it," says Ganesh Gurung of the Nepal Institute of Development Studies, who has



16 pages

because migrant workers invest their earnings mainly in the towns. Working abroad can only be a stop-gap arrangement until employment opportunities are created locally in rural areas. Says David Seddon: "What is needed is strategic and selective investment to keep workers in Nepal and in the smaller towns in the nural non-farm economy." He adds that the absence of young men means labour shortages, and possibly the decline of agriculture and the rural economy. The chief economic advices at the News Rastra Bank, Yub Raj Khatiwada, agrees. He told us: "Exporting workers can only be crisis manage ment, not a long-term solution for the national economy."

'Bring Maoists to the mainstream...'

British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs responsible for South Asia, Ben Bradshaw, is visiting Nepal 18-19 Feburary. He will be meeting Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and King Gyanendra, Bradshaw is a former journalist and was the BBC's Berlin correspondent in 1990. Nepali Times asked Bradshaw some questions about his visit, the Maoist insurgency and Gurkha pension.

What is the main reason for your visit to Nepal? Britain and Nepal have extremely long-standing ties. The Gurkha relationship, and in particular the exceptionally high standing in which these brave Nepali soldiers are held in the United Kingdom, is an important mainstay. We are both monarchies. The UK is one of Nepal's chief donor partners. The events of 11 September and efforts to combat global terrorism only serve to make the dialogue between our two governments and countries all the more important, and we want to offer our full support to the vernment of Nepal in its attempts to find a resolution to the insurgency.

Will you be offering any specific advice to the governnent on the resolution of the Maoist insurgency?

Obviously this will be a key point of interest in the talks I shall be having with political leaders during my visit. We support the democratically-elected government, and recognise the right and obligation of government to provide security to its people. The European Union has condemned the Maoist attacks which brought a violent return to conflict in Nepal, and we have expressed our

concern about possible abuses of human rights in the country, including barbaric acts by the insurgents. We believe that the government went to great lengths to ensure a conducive atmosphere for the three rounds of peace talks last year, and I would encourage both sides to make every effort to achieve a solution which will result in the renunciation of violence and bring the Maoists back into the political mainstream. Only then will Nepal achieve the

Some Gurkha ex-servicemen say the issue of pensions exposes the British government/s double standards. Do you see this as an ethical issue?

prosperity which its people deserve.

No I do not see this as an ethical issue. It is important to look at the details of pension arrangements. I don't think that most of our pensioners now benefiting from the significant increase in April 2000 oppose them. British Army pensions are complicated and for very good reasons reflect two different systems. One is for Gurkha soldiers and one is for British soldiers. The Gurkha system involves the soldier serving for a minimum of 15 years, with an immediate index-linked pension available on discharge. For British

they have to serve for 22 years, and then wait until the age of 60 before they benefit from any index-linking. So, or average a Gurkha soldier's pension is paid seven years earlier than that of an equivalent British servicema But there is a key point here: the majority of British soldiers leave the Army at about the nine or 12 year point in their percent of British soldiers not qualifying for immediate pensions and having to wait

soldiers to get the same deal

until 60 to claim a preserved pension. If this system was applied to the Brigade of Gurkhas, many Gurkha soldiers would have to wait until the age of 60 before receiving any pension at all. Most would agree that the need for an immediate pension is compelling in Nepal.

Does the British government envisage an increase in the recruitment levels of Gurkha soldiers in future due to shortfalls in enlistment at home?

Gurkhas are a valuable and integral part of the British Army and will remain so foreseeably. But Gurkhas do not serve in all areas and there is therefore a limit to the extent to which they can be considered interchangeable with British personnel. There are no plans to change current recruitment levels.



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EMERGING FROM EMERGENCY

curtailing their rights.

emergency is extended.

so far. The war will not be won by alienating the citizenry and

As the army carries out its cordon-and-destroy operations

on Maoist hideouts with increasing effect, there is little sign of a

government machinery being mobilised to deliver the goods in

liberated areas. If the extension of the emergency means an

We don't know how else to put this. Nepal is facing an

something is going to give. The leadership is oblivious:

unprecedented crisis. There is a deep sense of foreboding that

bickering in the back rooms, threatening signature campaigns,

back-stabbing, horse-trading, and all the other shenanigans of

a mutiny-minded cabinet. In short, everyone in the game is

extension of this state of affairs, then it does not matter that the

he big issue dominating national politics this week and next will be whether or not the state of national emergency is going to be extended after its 26 February deadline. Parliament must endorse the emergency by a twothirds majority for it to be extended by another three months. otherwise it will automatically lanse.

The ruling Nepali Congress would like it endorsed, but the dissident faction within it led by Girija Prasad Koirala is bent on giving Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba as hard a time as possible. The main opposition UML, euphoric about its impending reunion with the ML, will need to show a token of its opposition status by throwing a tantrum. The UML holds the swing vote in parliamentary arithmetic, and (rhetoric notwithstanding) will be expected to extract its pound of flesh for letting the extension sail through. They will probably boycott the session and thereby support the extension while

seeming to be opposed to it. The Maoists, for their part, also favour an extension since it shows them to be at par with the Royal Nepal Army, and a force to be reckoned with. The comrades know that the longer the emergency drags on the better it is for the cause. Their call for a national strike on 22-23 February is aimed at keeping the populace in a state of panic Time, after all, is on their side,

up quickly one way or But this entire dehate on whether or not to extend the emergency is getting to be a

whereas the army wants to

have this thing wrapped

Either way the country is facing an emergency situation. We have an economic emergency, a fiscal emergency, an emergency of capital flight, a development emergency, we have emergencies in export and tourism.

Many people had different expectations of the emergency when it was declared on 26 November. Some thought it would be like Indira Gandhi's emergency; civil servants would go to office on time and there would be a crackdown on corruption. But the government seems to think the emergency has absolved it from action. "The soldiers are taking care of things, we'll sit back and relax," seems to be the motto. Well, as it turns out, all the emergency did was spook tourists, muzzle the media, and make the civilian leadership extinct in large parts of the country. In fact, except for the capital and the district headquarters, there is no sign of government anywhere else. The Maoists would be

carrying on as they have for the past 12 years: which is what foolish not to step into this vacuum. brought us to the present crisis. The lesson of the past 90 days is clear; if the government is serious about countering the Maoists, then its military campaign must go hand-in-hand with a drive to bring the people on its side. This hasn't happened

who is less worried about the magic number 57 and more concerned about the country's long-term development? Can we ave dissidents within his party less focussed on unseating him and more or working with him to resolve the crisis? Can we have an opposition not gloating at the sight of a squirming povernment, and pondering that a similar fate awaits it when they If this infighting

For once, can we have a prime minister

carries on for much longer, there will be nothing left to fight

So close and yet so distant

In the post 9/11 world, anything goes as long as you say you are fighting terrorism.

NEW DEL HI_It's business as usual again in the Indian capital Auto-rickshaw drivers (when not on strike) have begun to zigzag through the traffic and continue to overcharge passengers at the end of hair-raising journeys. Another sign of the return to

that in the post 9/11 world, normalcy is the resumption of anything goes as long as you say you construction work all over the are fighting terrorism. town. Work on the Metro seems to A direct effect of the cancellation of PIA overflight is that the be in full swing, there is a flyover frenzy not seen since Rajiv the South Asians talkfests have to make Gandhi. Roads are being widened to accommodate the Santros and from Pakistan. In the absence of Zens and Matizes that symbolise an balancing academics from urban middle class consumer Islamahad. Indian nundits have a revolution. Delhi is changing its free run at all IIC proceedings. face so fast a Garhwali cabbie Increasingly, New Delhi's semina claimed proudly: "They are turning circuit has come to be dominated our city into another Paris." The by obstinate ex-diplomats, demolition men of the municipal telegenic ex-generals and other corporation are going after unauseptuagenerian extras who have thorised construction with a made a name for themselves by seriousness that has not been seen being regular talking heads on since the slum-clearing campaign of satellite TV. They may have only a the Indian emergency. knee-ierk stance on matters At the India International geopolitical, but they do have an

Centre, the intellectual flavour of the season is 'Post-9/11'. Hotshots of the Indian intelligentsia are basking in the glory of being closes to America after the bombings in New York, Washington and the Afghan campaign. Senior diplomat of South Block justify denying Pakistan International Airlines the right to fly over Indian airspace on

the specious grounds that anything last?" asked IK Gujral, a little against Pakistan is justified after the anxious about reports in the media suicide attack on Indian Parliathat the toppling game in the ment. The underlying assumption i Nepali Congress had started all over again. Surprisingly, it is being taken for granted by Nepal-watchers here that the Nepali parliament will endorse an extension of the state of emergency. Very few appear to be overly worried about the fire of the Maoist insurgency, but even a

do without even a token participant former ambassador felt compelled to ask, "What is Koirala up to?" The media close to the ruling Bhartiva Janata Party (BJP) is as hostile as ever. Among the Hindutva fanatics, the anger against Nepal is stronger because the somehow feel that Nepal, despite being the "only Hindu kingdom in the world", has let them down by not joining in the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's chorus of Hinduism being in mortal danger. The Hindustan Times carried a story

abundance of practiced sound bites datelined New Delhi where it called that go well with their faded tweeds Jamim Shah a Pakistani national and signature moustaches. and described Hotel Karnali as the On matters relating to Nepal. operational headquarters of ISI and the Narayanhiti massacre continues reported the presence in to be the most common conversa-Kathmandu of the underworld don. tion opener, but the fate of Prime Dawood Ibrahim. With so many Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's people waving that fiction at my face. I found it hard to explain that government inevitably crops up. "How long do you think Deuba will Iamim Shah is as much Nepali as I

am, and that there is no Hotel Karnali anymore.

In contrast, intellectuals who aren't so close to power are refreshingly reflective. A professor who also happens to be a former ambassador admitted to me, "We must ask ourselves, what is it that makes two of the closest countries in the world such distant neighbours? Should we let few square kilometres of barren land spoil our age-old relationship? Why can't we simply withdraw from Kalapani as a gesture of goodwill? Why can't you check your rapacious industrialists who make a mockery of trade treaties for their personal benefit? Indeed, why not? Perhans there is some truth in the belief of a Sri

Lankan journalist who said, "While

in office. Indian diplomats do all that they can to worsen mutual relations. But as soon as they retire they want to make amends and help improve ties. Unfortunately, the influence of a serving diplomat is always much more.

But laying the blame at the door of South Block—guarded, incidentally, by a fellow Nepali—i not the way to build bridges of friendship between neighbouring countries We must do some soul searching of our own. We must be ready to put more effort into our relationship with India. There simply is no other way.

Some academics in Nepal argue that Nepal should pursue the policy of 'equi-proximity' rather than 'equi-distance' with Beijing and

New Delhi. The argument is vacuous, and not just because it is mere wordplay. Such an assumption is inherently dangerous, because our northern neighbour is a friend, while our fate is inextricably intertwined with the giant surrounding us from the other three sides. During the Cold War years, such logic worked, but we must reorient or foreign policy to the new reality where, as JN Dixit puts it in his own blunt way, "National interest is the supreme consideration."

If mere proximity—or even a shared history and culture-were enough to strengthen ties between two sovereign nations India and Pakistan would have been best of friends. The relationship between countries is like human friendship: you need



NATION

No pain, no gain

he Nepal aid biennale concluded last week with a pledge of \$250 million over the next five years. We are told the donors have endorsed the approach of the Tenth Plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes. As on previous occasions, the donors raised many issues. The government, as on previous occasions, appears to have satisfied them all by dutifully pledging to reform implementation and

aspects of governance. In a country where finance ministers take great pride in soliciting more foreign aid, any talk against aid is blasphemy. But the problem with foreign aid is the rise of a duality between the giver and the recipient Between them (those who benefit from giving and taking aid) and us (in whose name aid is taken). What have we as a nation gained from foreign aid? What would we as a people lose if by some miracle there were no foreign aid?

heartily oblige

of thinking on

Our patrons have taken on the onu

In as much as foreign aid is a political and economic relationship, we nave gained patrons. Patrons who give us the benefit of their advice at our cost. Parrons who steer us voluntarily to take a particular political stand as and



Let's face it: foreign aid is not a partnership. There are only givers and takers.

are always right. If their advice does not have the intended effect, the fault lies in its implementation. Our patrons continually exhort greater privatisation and liberalisation. The only way to eradicate poverty is to privatise it, they say. The crowning achievement of foreign aid has been that the voice of the poor has been "elevated" from their roofless huts and villages to interna-

tional forums in multi-stellar locations Over the past several decades development and foreign aid have gone 'hand in hand". As the roots of development have spread "far and wide", so have the roots of corruption. Foreign aid did not invent corruption, but it helped create the infrastructure that institutionalised it. Through the goodies it provides, aid has cally corrupted the minds of our

bureaucrats, planners and politicians Thanks to foreign aid, it is the corrupt who can now effortlessly and eloquently pontificate on the need to rid our society of the menace of

beauty of good governance, the grace of a transparent bureaucracy, and the charm of accountable government. Foreign aid has shown us how "good governance" and "representativ democracy" can be made possible through the corrupt. This is no mean achievement.

Foreign aid has fuelled our historic sense of complacency. We have surrendered what little we had of our decision-making autonomy. Led along by donors, we have lost faith in ourselves. Like pampered children, we now crave dependence and we have been blinded by the dreams of donors The government has lost its credibility in the eyes of the people and the nation has lost its moral ground. We are ethically bankrupt.

We mouth the agenda of the donors and call it planning. We continue strengthening the reins of a centralised state in the name of decentralisation. In the name of transforming society, we live comfortably with the scourge of untouchability and inhuman discrimi-

consumption contaminates all. Foreign aid has made us prey to grandiose plans even when our own resources remain idle. Government after government is carried away by the Aruns, the Karnalis and the Kosis-and small, but fundamental, initiatives are considered heneath us We have been trained to learn from

human rights and practice the opposite

Islands of vulgar opulence, much of it

derived from foreign aid, continue to

our means. Self-reliance is a bad word

when the appetite for conspicuous

Foreign aid has made us live beyond

rise in this ocean of poverty.

afar even when the lessons are right in our backyard. We have lost the feel of our own ground in our orphaned nation. Looking at the loan componen of foreign aid (Nepal's total foreign loans outstanding equals almost half our GDP), we may even be forfeiting the future of this orphan for the nleasures of the present.

Foreign aid has idealised the virtues of the private sector and magnified the sins of the government. Even in the face of lack of competition and regulatory mechanisms, the private sector has been pushed as a viable substitute for the government. The success of the private sector is seen as a result of its essential merit, while its failure is squarely attributed to interference by the government Roles have become confused

The proliferation of NGOs of all hues and shades is also the handiwork of foreign aid. NGOs that have no constitu encies to be accountable to are romanticised as the true face of civil society, while local governments and their elected representatives, are sidelined. "Partnership" is just a polite and hollow notion: there are no "partners" in the present climate of foreign aid. There are only givers and takers.

seum.

aid has been the maintenance of the political, economic and social status quo. Whose advantage has the status quo served? This status quo is challenged by the legitimate issues raised (but atrocious and illegitimate means employed) by the Maoists. But the

The greatest contribution of foreign

15-21 FEBRUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES 3

by PITAMBER SHARMA

NDF bazar yet again pledged more foreign aid as the only means of dealing with the Maoist problem. That completes the foreign aid circle. The problem, of course, is not foreign aid per se. Foreign aid is not thrust upon us. It is negotiated, And negotiation is a collusion of interests. What would we as a nation lose if there were a moratorium on foreign aid? We would lose patrons and the status quo

that they have belied defend. We would be forced to look deeply within ourselves and discover our own priorities to address our problems. We would be compelled to come up with indigenous development strategies and learn from our past. We would have to make do with our limited means, look at our own hard realities and make some very very hard choices

This is bound to be extremely painful to many of us: the current breed of politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, the monopolists in the private sector, the NGOs, the bikas pundits, and consultants included. Perhaps, with time, we would rebuild confidence in ourselves and learn to believe in small, but rooted, initiatives. For once we would suffer for our own mistakes. Perhaps we would learn the hard way: tighten our belts, develop a sense of purpose, buy back our self respect, rescue this beloved orphan from its impending future, and cease to be a nation whose sole preoccupation is a begging bowl.

Am I day-dreaming?

(Pitamber Sharma is a regional planner and former professor of geography, Tribhuvan Üniversity.)

INDIANS COMING The Nepal Tourism Board's objection against mandatory nassnorts for Indian tourists lying to Nepal is welcome "The Indians are coming," #79). It is a marked departure from the orthodox Nepali blindsnot for Indian arrivals We have to stop being xenophobic and try to be more pragmatic in our national interest. But passport-free entry alone is not going to solve the problem of our ailing tourism industry. We must not just make it easy for Indian tourists to fly in, but also to drive up to Nenal, Let us follow landlocked Switzerland's example and allow free and unrestricted entry for cars with the motto "don't check vehicles. check the humans inside". As Indians get more mobile, highways expand and are improved, this will bring in a new influx of visitors who snend money along the highways and not just in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Kathmandu The government considers the VDIS its smartest move to increase revenue, but it may turn out to be economic suicide for Nepal. It may serve the short-term cash flow need. but in the long term it will not solve the problem of bringing the richest within the tax S Grimalii bracket. Due to their higher

access and connections the

Self help: Women farmers in Dang discuss what to do for the community with the money they have saved individually

Loved CK Lal's "Guns and

roses in Delhi" (#79). Never

seen anyone in the Indian

media take apart the hypocrisy

sion with such objectivity and

things that happen to me every

day that prove a latent preju-

dice against Indians, CK Lal

says Nepal is "India-locked"

"ideas-locked"

don't think so, I think Nepal is

of our Republic Day proces-

conviction. Why do I have to

come to Nepal to set things i process my own country in proper Then, people who earned perspective? One thing money through unexplainable though: as a short-time resident of Nepal, I am concerned about the little

J Kumar

means will get away with paying 10 percent of what they say they have earned. It will only help them legalise illgotten wealth. The only people who resorted to this scheme are either the conscientious middle classes, or those who have some money. but are not rich enough to transfer it to other countries The money collected from such groups will not be substantial enough to meet government's real need. The psychological effect of dire warnings of confiscation of property will bring in limited money and discourage further investment. This is a sadistic strategy that will alienate the

richest people have already

transferred their money to

safer havens. The frequent

served to accelerate this

warnings of the deadline just

Rajeeb L Satyal

LETTERS class butterfly collection in existence in Pokhara, but MOUNTAIN MUSEUM which is currently not on There presumably is some display All these could add doubt as to the commercial value to the Mountain Mu-

viability of the Mountain

stand-alone business

to the public. ("Wanted:

mountaineering-only ap-

the scope of the exhibits

available at the Museum.

and memorabilia, which

as the founding father of

exhibition well merits a

Museum in Pokhara as a

enterprise, when it does oper

mountain memorabilia," #79).

One way to get away from the

proach might be to broaden

including the fine exhibition of

Boris Lissanovitch's photos

represent the life and times of

the man duly acknowledged

tourism in Nepal. Such an

permanent home. For 150

vears Pokhara has also been

of the famous Gurkha warri-

ors of Nepal, and there is an

excellent Gurkha Museum

which was recently moved

Gurkha Haven Hotel at the

from Kathmandu to The

Damside. There is a world

Robin Marston

US SISTERS was amazed by Daniel Lak's statement "And not just in Nepal. In America, spousal abuse skyrockets on days of major sporting events when



television and women get on with real life." ("Sisters are doing it for themselves," #77 This statement has no hasis on fact and has been thoroughly discredited.

Shailendra Shukla Gainesville, Florida

NEPALITIMES.COM

weekly online edition of the Nepali Times does not come out on Fridays? Today, Tuesdav, 5 February, I am stil awaiting the January 31-February 7 edition of the Nepali Times online. I have read and reread Under My Hat and am thoroughly sick of Baywatch, Get with it, you guys. Some of us here in the USA find your musings the only ones worth reading amongst the garbage that is generally called journalism in Nepal. And the only way we an get it is online.

Is there some reason why the

Prem Pulami Vermont IISA

Nepali Times online is uploaded every Monday. - Ed.

EMERGENCY ROOM

managed to make it to hospital,

there are many others trying hes

to recover in their home villages

or dying quietly. Sushil Pyakure

RINOD RHATTARAI

tistics of the Defence Ministry's daily briefings and reports of ambushes by the Maoists of security forces are thousands of stories of bereaved families, internally displaced refugees, the wounded and

The statistics are numbing: nearly 3,000 people killed in the past six years of the Maoist war, about 1,050 of them in the past two-and-half months of the emergency. But the wounded seem to fall between the cracks-left to recover on their own in the hospitals throughout Nenal. In fact no one is keeping an updated count of the wounded. Ordinary Nepalis caught in the crossfire, recover ing not just from the physical trauma but also the mental agony of brutal torture, are beginning to fill up the hospitals

At the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) in Kathmandu, the injured are in the orthopaedic ward and new patients arrive everyday in the emergency room.
"This has added tremendous

pressure to our already overstretched orthonaedics ward and the Emergency Room," Dr Mahendra Kumar Nepal, Executive Director of TUTH told us. "The patients require multiple surgery and long rehabilitation. They are all likely to stay for longer periods, and this means we cannot admit other patients.

by security forces on Maoists. but we could not find any of these at TUTH. A handful of

veen the body-bag

nospitals, defence sources say At any time during the emergency there have been an average of about 15 patients being treated at TUTH, and those present there this week were mainly casualties of attacks by Manists after the mergency was declared. They are teachers, social workers or political activists and they come

civilian casualties from military

action have been airlifted and

rom all parliamentary parties:

are being treated at army

Nepali Congress, UML, ML. A 63-year-old social worker and political activist from Bardiya has both legs in heavy bandage. Both his shinbones are shattered—beaten to fragments There have been reports of by the Maoists who attacked villagers who have also been nim. He also has a gaping

caught in the crossfire in attacks khukuri wound on his left leg A 43-year-old farmer and political activist from Tanahu has multiple fractures on his

The trauma centres of Nepal's over-stretched hospitals try to cope with an influx of wounded from the Maoist war. femur and fractures in his right shinbone. He was beaten with rods by attackers, and backed

> right leg.
>
> Then there is the 32-year-old schoolteacher admitted to TUTH three months ago with multiple fractures in both hands and feet. Maoist attackers beat him till all the bones were shattered. Then they bored a half-inch wide hole into his thigh

ttacks were carried out that is shocking. The patients' eyes show he pain, and such is the fear stilled in them that few wanted o be named. Some didn't even want us to print the name of their illage for fear that their relatives ack home would be harmed. Human rights activists say

what is visible in the hospital wards is just the tip of the iceber in the casualties of the Maoist

with a khukuri so that he has ost all his calf muscles in his

of the National Human Rights Commission, says his organisation is trying to tally the numbers of wounded, and admits that most of the information is about victims of Maoist attacks. "We are trying to find out the situation among those wounded security force action," he says. Aside from the wounds, it is The NHRC had written to the the brutality with which the government for information but has not been able to put togethe

the number of wounded. Because of the nature of the njuries, many of the patients we interviewed will probably never walk, and if they do, will need crutches for life. Shanta Bahadu Bhandari, is a teacher at Chapakot in Syangja, and is one of the few who doesn't mind being named. He was the

war. These are the lucky few who | abducted by the Maoists in early November "I was taken away at around 9PM from my ouse and beaten with the noncutting side of an axe," recalls Bhandari from his hospital bed. Then they drilled a hole into his thigh. Doctors have stuck steel pins into what remains of his feet below the knees to align the bones and give them a chance to heal. The other teachers who were abducted. Netra Bhandari and Gupt Bahadur BK, were beaten mercilessly and died of their injuries Today, Shanta

> growing population of people who have fled the conflict. According to Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) statistics, eight teachers and 29 political workers have been killed by Maoists since November, and it appears to be part of a strategy to intimidate villagers

Bahadur, his brother and family

live in Kathmandu—part of the

and stop them from giving information about their whereabouts to the security forces. The attacks have been deliberately brutal, to drive the point home. According to INSEC's tally, 1045 people have been killed between 23 November and 11 February, 816 by the Maoists.

Government numbers from 26 November to 4 February put the Maoist death toll at 463. and wounded at 115. The police and army have lost 76 (police 40), and, says the Defence Ministry, 93 soldiers have been wounded

Amber Bahadur Chauwan, 63, of Gola VDC in Bardiya district is a regional member of the Marxist-Leninist party. He was an active social worker who participated in development activities underway in the buffer zone around the Royal Bardiya National Park, Chauwan told us Maoists tried to lure him to their party and after he refused. returned only after the emergen was imposed. "We were just completing a bridge," he recalls. "I had asked the attackers to spare an old man. But they beat me up instead." A group of about 50 Maoists dragged him out of his house on 6 Feburary, attacked

and a Nepali Congress worker

on 23 November, the day the

from Tanahun. He was attacked

threatened him. He left, and

Bhandari will be in hospital for at least six more weeks. Then there him with steel rods and khukuris. will be another half-a-year of Doctors are waiting for the flesh physiotherapy to allow him to wounds to heal before they deal walk properly again. Tuesday, 12 February was like with the bone fractures. A social worker at TUTH any other day at TUTH. There told us he has never seen worse were 18 patients from the conflict, cases. "Earlier patients did not

and the hospital was waiting for have as many wounds, maybe they another three wounded to arrive were trying to kill or just hurt later that evening. The orthopaedthem," he told us. "After the ics ward is now looking more and more like a field hospital in a war, emergency, I have seen patients with bones beaten to pieces." more so with a newly-build helipad So far, the government is to handle major disasters_and paying the hospital bills of all also so that the most seriously Maoist victims. Another inmate wounded can be flown directly in Chatra Raj Bhandari, a farmer without going to the airport and

being ferried in an ambulance. Hospital director, Dr Nepal, shakes his head. "We are facing an

Maoists broke the ceasefire with

the attacks in Dang and Syangja

"I had no prior warning," Bhandari

recalls. "They just came, took me

out of the house and started

Like the others doctors say

beating me up in the courtyard."

medicines and equipment. And we are running out of space in



3,000 new tax payers

When the Voluntary Declaration of Income Scheme (VDIS) ended Tuesday, the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) had more than 3,000 new taxpayers and additional revenue of Rs 605 million. On closing day alone property worth Rs 100 million was disclosed and net revenue of Rs 10 million was collected The VDIS announced by Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat in the budget last July ended on 13 January, but was extended for month "at the request of the business community". The IRD is now all set to take action against those who should have, but did not show up at the tax office. IRD officials say the department's action against defaulters will depend on priority and the information it has gathered, and may even include raids and confiscation of property.

Straying neighbours

India's Uttar Pradesh Forest Department is delighted after six Nepali rhinos that used to stray from their home in Sukhlaphanta Wildlife Reserve have decided to stay on in India. Normally, there wouldn't be such a fuss as rhinos regularly travel to and from forest corridors between the two countries in the tarai. But the itinerant rhinos have confirmed their permanent residency as one female has given birth to a baby. It's a "landmark" event says a Times of India report given that the Great Indian Rhinoceros was on the verge of extinction in India, hunted by poachers for the horn, considered an aphrodisiac. In 1984, India launched an ambitious project under which a few rhinos from the resident populace in Assam were released in the Dudhwa National Park in Lakhimpur district of UP. Today, the number in Dudhwa has increased considerably, but the rhinos are kept in a fenced-in area. Which is why the arrival of the visitors from Nepal in the Pilibhit Reserve Forest, which adjoins Sukhlaphanta and is home to other endangered species such as the sloth bear and the swamp deer, is a pleasant surprise.

But not everyone is so sure of the number. "The Indian forestry officials must have counted three rhinos that wander the corridor twice. As far as we know, only three rhinos wander into India, and Nepali rhinos are all radioed and marked, so we know just where they are," says Surya Bahadur Pandey who worked at Sukhlaphanta until a few months ago. Last year, five rhinos were translocated to the reserve in Far West Nepal. There, too, one female has given birth to a calf. Conservationists say they don't mind where the rhinos live, India or Nepal as long as they are conserved.

Close shave

Tara Nath Ranabhat, speaker of the House of Representatives, realised this week that his flippant remarks about women could easily be construed as derogatory. The participants of the Solidarity of Gender Equality conference hooted him out for doing just that. Ranabhat, who began his address to the gathering by challenging the women to "correct their ways" before demanding equality with men, even boasted that he could pass the women rights bill with a mere snap of his fingers, if he wished to. But when the women decided they could take no more and raised the volume of their protests, a visibly embarrassed Ranabhat decide to cut his speech short and slink back to his chair. But that was not all-the angry audience confronted him again at the Royal Nepal Academy, where even the organisers of the conference



Announcement



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Bato Hangala School, together with Kuthmundi I is viewity and Hard. Street College of Education annuances a one year minutes tracker certification reconstrates to be foundful in May 2002. Selection of desidalates will be ment toyed Muste Candidates w.O. a. 10-1 decire, in a BA are encouraged to apply. The strength of the programme lies on the Cose weaver between theory and practice in the teaching and

Lorms are distributed (Monany) Orga, shift ridgy of from 15th of Lebouary to 8th of March 2000, from 9.00 a mill to 2.00 p.m.

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luckiest among three teachers



potatoes are alike, at least not outside the cloning laboratory. Nor do they hit the same place on a wall, at the same angle, at the same speed. It's simply impossible to duplicate or—crucially—predict the effects of impact. Similarly, any student of geology will tell you that earthquakes are always different and they simply cannot be predicted. So too the currents of human history, the stock markets, the course of rivers and so on. Until now, chaos theory has been the only way of looking at this notion of utter unpredictability. Things that are in a state of permanent flux and show no trends towards order or disorder are the model for chaos theory. Our frozen potato men beg to differ.

It's not that they think you can immediately impose order on the naturally disorderly by counting potato shards. But the complicated mathematical formulae that they ve devised, after carefully tabulating ever little bit of frozen spud on the laboratory floor, is helping them understand the nature of chaos. It seems that unpredictable systems like earthquake geology or human history do follow a pattern. But it's a pattern so complex and almost microscopic, that it is almost imperceptible. All of this is at a very early stage, but if the potato people can really help us start predicting the unpredictable, the world as we know it will change beyond belief.

Here in Nepal, we'll be able to plan for major earthquakes. We'll have a window on the swings and roundabouts of the global financial markets, and we may even be able to find out what history has in store. I daresay the Nepal Development Forum might take delivery of some frozen potatoes, to help them understand how the vagaries of fortune and finance influence their tasks and cash flow. For it seems to me that the very notion of development, as pursued at the moment, could be wrong. Last month's

human development index, while in many respects a superb piece of work, presented Nepal's efforts to curb poverty as a logical system that would be in equilibrium if only all the inputs and conditions were right. Poverty—the report seemed to argue—would dissipate with better governance, social equity and so on. I wonder if the reality isn't completely the opposite

The potato people would explain to their colleagues in the development business that the condition of society can never be a predictable system, that no matter how many inputs you get right, something else will distort your result. Before non-equilibrium thinking started to take hold, this would be a bleak assessment, rightly condemned by those who work to bring dignity and hope to the deprived. Now the science of "ubiquity", as it's become known, offers real prospects for understanding, if not a quick fix for deprivation and underdevelopment. Crucially, the patterns of qualitative change in social conditions could jus emerge from the statistical morass that exists at the moment

Theoretical physics has to be wild driven by forces beyond the fringe if it is to make new discoveries and offer understanding. There can be no orthodoxy, no conservatism, no mantras or priesthood clinging to ideas. Ubiquity has the potential to make all of our lives more explicable, less blame-ridden. It could transform politics and economics, bring fairness and competence within reach of almost any society.

Or it could simply be a madcap notion that will shatter into smaller bits as it is picked apart by scientific peer groups and academics. It's time to buy some potatoes. If you can afford them..

Ubiquity: The Science of History... or Why the World Is Simpler Than We Think by Mark Buchanan is published by Phoenix, UK



ome of the most interesting new thinking these days is being done by people who throw frozen potatoes against a wall and watch how they shatter. No, I'm not kidding. Scientists are using icy shards of smashed spuds to understand a whole range of previously inexplicable phenomena. Studying so-called non-equilibrium physics, at first glance, seems beyond esoteric, deeply obscure. But when you read what the bits of potato can tell us about predicting earthquakes or the ebb and flow of human history, it may be time to head for the veretable market.

It's a safe assumption that frozen potatoes, flung against the wall, will break into bits along random, unpredictable lines. After all, no two

NEPALI ECONOMY

Bad start

Things aren't getting better

The World Bank says Nepal's prospects for an economic recovery in the medium-term (generally a three-year outlook) is bleak due to everything that happened in Nepal in 2001 and of course the global recession

numbers, which don't factor in the escalation of Maoist violence from the end of November, and the anti-

terrorism campaign launched by the government including the deployment of the army. The government

earlier revised its economic growth estimate to 2.5 percent, down from the roughly 6 percent projected in

the July 2001 budget. Exports are down, as are imports. Readymade garments have been hit badly, and because they comprise about 25 percent of total exports, this will hurt every sector of the economy.

Another reason for worry is the new WTO trading regime, which comes into effect in 2005. Quotas, a

crucial factor in the growth of the garment industry, will be scrapped under the new trading rules. The prospects of a recovery in tourism in the medium-term are also uncertain: it would need extensive—and

Tourism, as everyone knows, is in a bad way. But just how bad? January 2002 arrivals are grim: only 13,

576 visitors came to Nepal by air last month, a roughly 50 percent drop compared with the about 25,900 who flew in in January 2001. Third country arrivals (from countries other than India) dropped sharply, by

almost 54 percent, and Indian arrivals fell by 24 percent. The Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) blames the slump

on the "false perception of travel safety in Nepal", but expects arrivals to improve, especially now that the

United States has downgraded its travel advisory for Nepal. The tourism industry is worried that a third consecutive bad year could be the straw that breaks the industry's back. Overall tourist arrivals in 2001

dropped by almost 23 percent, compared with the year before (including arrivals by land), a trend which

The Nepal Rastra Bank has formalised a contact with Deloitle Touche Tomahatsu (DTT) effective 31 March, under which the consulting firm will manage the Rastriya Baniya Bank (RBB) for two years. DTT

are to receive a management fee of \$5.75 million in exchange for turning around the RBB, which KPMG

auditors said two years ago is technically insolvent. BRS Neupane and Company will be DTT's Nepali

partners. The central bank is negotiating the terms of a similar contract with Price Waterhouse Cooper

India, which has been selected for taking over the management of the Nepal Bank Limited. The World Bar

is giving Nepal almost \$35 million for financial sector reforms, of which handing over the RBB and the NBL

began with the end-December 1999 hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft from Kathmandu, and that worsened with the deteriorating law and order situation in the country and the imposition of the emer-

Minister Ram Sharan Mahat says, any recovery would hinge on the ability of the country to return to

-promotions to get tourists to come even after the emergency runs its course. As Finance

after 11 September. The Bank said growth in fiscal 2001/02 would be about 3 percent going by IMF



Nepali Congress president Giriia sad Koirala was wondering why it was getting so difficult to sell his broader democratic alliance proposal t his own party, he probably got a good idea last week. The theatrics at the central committee meetings clearly show how urgently Koirala needs to go his act together. The ruling party chie should forget about comparing notes with Madhav Kumar Nepal, Surva Bahadur Thapa and Badri Prasad

Mandal and look straight in the mirror. He should consider all those one-time proteges like Sher Bahadur Deuba, Khum Bahadur Khadka, Bija Kumar Gachchadar, Bal Bahadur KC and Jaya Prakash Gupta who have rospered in the rival camp today any rookie *Kangresi* can figure out y now how easily allegiance to Koirala can be altered into a career enhancement tool.

The tragedy lies not in the fact that

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the half-relate with adoptive exposure to client servicing in a repetid long agoncy, corrying or attitude of "**do it better than bellow**", are the

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printing operation of the MRA or graduative with good rest spoken and written English. Should have worked in positions in an agency or have as least two years steadly approximate an broand management functions with reputed

nother and have no qualms about vidently infuriated by the liberty Congress general secretary Sushil Koirala took with secondary sources persistent allegations that the prime who had donated money to the believe, much less paraphrase. everything he saw in print. To prove his point. Deuba recalled all those stories he had read about how Sushii

I the second-generation leaders'

against the prime minister, everybody knewshe couldn't stand Deuba because, among other things, he was barely out of his diapers when she was waving black flags. When the former deputy prime minister criticised Deuba for reportedly saying he would defeat the Maoists with the help of foreign forces, if that was needed, the head of government flew into a rage. Deuba challenged Shailaja to provide documentary proof (apart from those inadmissible newspaper stories) that he had ever uttered such a thing. Reaffirming his patriotism, Deuba pledged he would remain in the

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discussions on critical national issues esembled little more than a kindergar en brawl. It lies in the deep suspicio and distrust with which they view one Hisplaying Prime Minister Deubawa while preparing his evaluation report on the state of emergency. Referring to minister was among senior Kangresis Maoists, Deuba advised Sushil not to had accepted Rs 60 million from a foreign benefactor before the last general election but refused to give credence to. As for Shailaja Acharya's outburs

country to fight any foreign army even

Kindergarten consultations

We need a durable framework for a minority government. It might be a good beginning to set a statutory limit of one prime minister per year, which roughly corresponds to Nepal's record in the last 12 years.

I size of the cabinet and the gender

discrepancy in his own portfolio.

So why does Deuba need a 41-

forces are in charge of the countryside

limited political activity in the capital?

distraction of having to check every 10

minutes whether has still has at least

57 MPs on his side. To be fair, the

prime minister has pledged to form a

5-member cabinet if Girija Koirala

and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai gave him

a list of seven MPs each, complete with

a joint undertaking to immediate call

has seriously taken what could be

government. The situation has

ecome so complicated that the

party's pre-eminent middle-of-the-

roader, Ram Chandra Poudel, is

having trouble finding enough space

the key to the stability of a majority

off their proxy war. Neither party elder

member cabinet when the security

and emergency regulations have

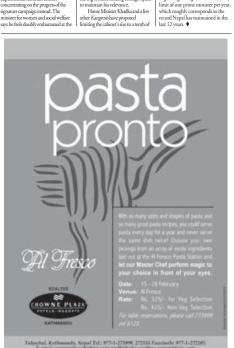
Because he wants to avoid the

from Biratnagar. It turns out, however, that Shailaja detests Sushil with almost equal virulence. She accused the party general secretary of conducting midnight strategy sessions with the premier in an ostensible plot to throttle democracy while masquerad ing in public to be his principal rival. Sushil retorted that he had gone to Baluwatar after receiving Girija Koirala's permission. And you thought the infighting in the Koirala clan would soon be over now that Mahesh Acharya and Amod Prasad Upadhyaya have

switched camps. As for the camp in power, severa tate and assistant ministers have beer complaining of how underemployed they were. Some have had so much difficulty killing time that they've simply stopped speaking to their departmental ministers and are entrating on the progress of the signature campaign instead. The minister for women and social welfare posturing when you recall the list of nearly two dozen MPs the home minister handed over to Deuba alon with his ultimatum before leaving or that Australian sojourn last year. But you have to remember that the 10percent rule would also make it easier for Khadka to manage his faction, which, by most accounts, i the most influential-and, by extension, potentially disruptivewithin the fold.

I say take a wider perspective

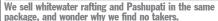
and double the spoils to 20 percent. That way, every ruling party MP would get to serve a one-year nor experience, re-election prospects and time spent in prison and/or exile. ie. This way, a majority parliamen year term and the people spared stump speeches. Of course, this partner of the emerging coalition agreed to abide by these terms. Even hen, you would still have to find a eginning, though, to set a statutory



the number of ruling party MPs. It would be tempting to dismiss Khadka's formula as hypocritical

renewable term on the council of can be worked out through a prudent mix of fund-raising You can throw in seniority and geographical origin in case there is a could expect serve out its full fivemid-term radio jingles, posters and formula wouldn't work in the case of a hung parliament, unless each durable framework for a minority government. It might be a good limit of one prime minister per year, which roughly corresponds to the

Wooing Indians



hile holidaying in India a few weeks ago, this Beed missed the symposium on Prospects and Problems of Tourism Development between Nepal and India" organised by the Hotel Association of Nepal, So, this week, we will ponder on the need to woo the Indian tourist, and ways to do so.

I will admit it. It gets tiresome

ravelling in India—for no reason other than the two questions every citizen of this kingdom is relentlessly subjected to. "So, tell us about 1 June and "What's going on with the mergency?" In most part because of the absence of any voice in the Indian nedia that can claim more than a parachute jumper's familiarity with Nepal, our southern neighbours seem to think this is a country in such extreme turmoil, that the electricity is switched off at 6PM. No surprise, hen, that most well-wishers' attempts are directed at dispelling these absurd doubts, rather than selling Nepal as a ourist destination.

But even assuming we can dispel hese doubts, we have to deal with an appalling lack of consensus as to what recise part of our product we need to promote to the Indian market. The whole world is wooing Indian tourists now, and Nepal's image desperately needs to be revamped from the current "honeymoon upgrade from Ooty and Darjeeling" to something a ittle more current, a little more

So, what can Nepal offer? Most of he younger Indians who can afford to travel see Nepal as a destination where their grandparents undertook a pilgrimage and their parents went for

their shopping-filled honeymoon. For those old stand-bys, trekking and India's cash-rich youth, Nepal does climbing are dirt-cheap and a lot mor not feature on their travel map—they wenient than in Switzerland. can and do go to the casinos of Macau Despite our limited market sav ings are getting better, though. The relaxation of the passport requirement for Indian tourists under 18 comes as a bit of a relief-after all, people who have

and Vegas, and the malls of Dubai and Singapore. Nepal has never really been able to target the Indian market specifically, even in the past. The burgeoning of the conference and passports can also get foreign currency convention market was an accident. and so would just as well go on cheap and so are the tourists who come in on packages to south-east Asian countries chartered luxury buses. We simply do The government may not be able to not understand that within each market Nepal, and may have made no potential market there are different use at all of the media frenzy during the segments. The result: we sell SAARC summit, but they've managed whitewater rafting and Pashupati in to at least get rid of one annovance. Nov the same package, and then wonder it is time for those in the private sector why we find no takers. and travel trade organisations to show Indian youth are the segment w what they can do. Our experiment in should be aiming for-they have restricting foreign travel agencies from purchasing power, and spending on operating in Nepal has gone on long holidays is a major part of their nough, given that our local agencie

expense pie. And that market is only

growing, with even banks supporting

financing schemes for holidays. We

need to tell this group of consumers

that bungy jumping in Nepal can be

who have large operations in India to operate in Nepal. Protectionism may as exciting as in New Zealand, and at a not always be the best weapon. ♦ fraction of the cost, that Nepali safaris are real value for money compared Readers can post their views at with South Africa or Kenya, that even arthabeed@yahoo.com

have not delivered when it comes to

selling hard in the Indian market. Why

not try and lure international agencies

in addition to motorbikes, computers and gold.

Bring in the managers

on management contracts is a major component.

Nepali instant noodle makers seem to have run out of two-word

names-but they are getting better at selling. Almost every noodle

packs of noodles or full-scale lottery prizes. Now the makers of

Mayos have joined the race. Their prizes include a car every month,

maker has some sort of giveaway on the cards, whether free

combinations for branding—the new ones don't have those

Instant awards

"Tourism promotion must not be Kathmandu-centric...



00-acre property includes a spa, a garden and a 165-room sort, and collectively employs over 240 people. But the surism slump has hit the Fulbari hard. Nepali Times caught u

with Jetlev in Pokhara and tried to find out what can be done

Nepali Times: How did you land up in Pokhara? Geeta Jetley: Fulbari had placed an ad in India, I thought I should give it

a shot. I came just like that on a Friday in September. It had rained for a few days and when it stopped, you could see the mountains. I was walking past the hotel when the cloud cover lifted on a moonlit night. Suddenly you had Machhapuchhre and the Annapurnas—absolutely ethereal, something picture postcards and movies are made of.

How are you coping with the slump?

Everyone asks that question. It is not just Fulbari, tourism per se is down everywhere. What is really important is that when the chips are down everybody has to come together and look at the problem with one

MeaningÖ

You can't say "I, me, myself". The "us" part of it has to come out. We have to clearly identify our potential markets and then do it

Let me give you an example of the Indian market. Now people have gone en-masse to Sri Lanka, though Kathmandu is a lot closer to Delhi than Colombo, Why? Because everybody—the airline, hotels and travel agencies-has looked at tourism as 'tourism for Sri Lanka'. Our promotion has to be more focussed, it has to be defined. If you read what others in the industry are saying, it's essentially the same thing. We have to act fast. We have to effectively sell Nepal as a destination as a whole. Nepal promotions cannot just stop in Kathmandu, they have to include Chitwan, Lumbini and Pokhara, Everybody seems to know this

So how come we are not getting results?

Supposing you are walking in a particular direction and find you're lost. You retrace your steps or find a new direction. You can't be eternally lost. That tourists are not coming is a reality: the more important thing is, what are we doing to change that?

What are you doing?

We're talking about Destination Nepal 2002, the International Year of the Mountains and the of Eco-tourism. We're already into this year, and a promotion should have happened at least in the middle of last year. Everyone should have known what we were doing. Still, all is not lost.

What do you think the government should do?

Look at tourism as a whole, not in bits and pieces. You have many tourism organisations in Nepal, you need to get focussed-this is Nepal Tourism, everybody comes together. We have to focus on the markets likely to be the maximum spenders. And then go and get them.

Just how bad are the present numbers?

Bad is a generic word. Let me put it this way, it is difficult to fathom the fluctuation here. We've had huge fluctuations, say like going up from 35-40 to 130 rooms. The way the country is being sold now, the focus seems to be to tell people to come to Kathmandu and go back. That must change. Tourism promotion must not be Kathmandu-centric. For example this year is Kumbh in Mansarovar, a once-in-lifetime wish among Hindus. We talk about religious tourism, but how are we capitalising on this event when we know we have a huge Hindu population to the south?

Are you still an optimist?

You know, learning never ends. In Bangladesh, for example, many Bengalis go to Kolkata for medical treatment. Now Malaysia is giving special medical packages to attract the same people to Malavsia. The early bird gets the worm... The package was being promoted by Malaysian Airlines, not a hospital or medical representatives. That is what I mean by selling the country and its products collectively.

Tourism can help in many ways. We aren't only in the business of earning foreign exchange, there are indirect benefits-infrastructure gets automatically developed. If this resort weren't here, you may not have had the development that is taking place around us. There are shops, real estate prices are going up. You see people's lives are improving, employ ment is generated. Everybody comes and admires what we have, you can see the 'wow' in their eyes. It gives you pride in your country.

How has your experience beenóa woman in Nepal and heading an organisation as big as this?

I have worked in Iraq as a woman and I have headed an organisation there. At the end of the day, when it comes to professionals, you are identified as a professional and somewhere down the line gender does not matter. That is if the professional part is strong enough and respected. As a matter of fact, in this part of the world you have far more women

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Nepal from Park Space A gallery of dramatic pictures of Nepal taken from orbit.



Bhaktapui

The Arniko Highway south of Bhaktapur skirts terraced fields of wheat in this picture taken by a satellite flying 250 km above the earth at about noon in Feburary 1987. The poplar trees cast long shadows.





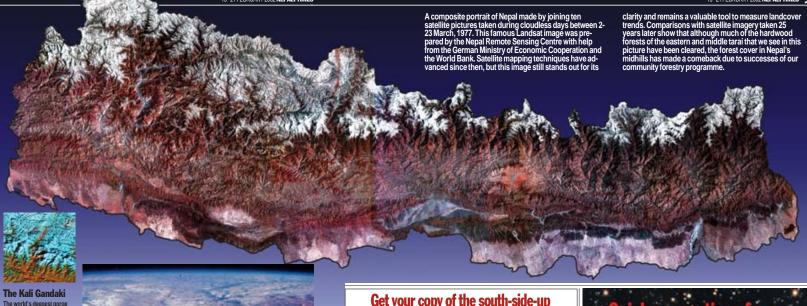
Kathmandu

Kathmandu Valley's topography is dominated by the former lake-bed and the channels cut by the Bagmati and its tributaries through the alluvium. The lake was formed by the tectonic upilf of the Mahabharat Range at the southern rim of the Valley, and the Bagmati was uttimately able to cut its way through the limestone hills at Chobhar, draining the lake. These two pictures are an X-SAR digital elevation model (left) and radrad amplitude image (right).



Mt Everest

This spectacular picture looks straight down at Mount Everest. The highest mountain in the world casts the longest shadow. The Rongbuk glacier snakes off to the right into the 1 Tibetan plateau, the narrow cup of the Western Cwm starts at the head of the Khumbu Glacier. The top of ME Everest is made up of yellowish limestone, meaning that the rocks on the highest point on earth were formed at the bottom of the ocean.



The world's deepest gorge from the Landsat Thematic Mapper taken in January 1989. Snow and ice appear as blue while vegetation is green. Rocks are red and clouds white. Most major Himalavan rivers are older than the mountains. The river basins follow the location of the original pre-Himalayan rivers that drained the Tibetan marginal mountains and flowed into the Tethys Sea 75 million years ago. As the mountains rose, the rivers were able to cut through them. This is why the Kali Gandaki, Arun, Bhote Kosi, Buri Gandaki and the Karnali all have their headwaters beyond the main chain of the Himalaya and have cut stupendous gorges through



One of the most prominent physical features visible on the surface of the earth from space are the Himalaya. This unique photograph was taken from a space shuttle in 1988 and shows the ochre expanse of the Tibetan plateau on the right, the snow-covered Himalaya stretching diagonally across, and the dark green of the Mahabharat Range on the left. The red circle shows location of Mt Everest and the yellow circle shows Kathmandu.

Dhaulagiri

This is not a picture taken from a jet at 35,000 ft, but a slanting view of the Dhaulagin range taken by the Expedition 1 crew from the International Space Station using a figh-magnification less. The photograph was taken out of the window of the Space Station from an orbital altitude of 200 natural miles Space Station from an orbital altitude of 200 natural miles Tibetan Plateau and Dolpo towards the world's seventh highest mountain, Dhaulagin's which dominates the horizon. The upilif of the Himalaya continues today at a rate of several millimeters per year, pushed by the continuing collision of the Indian tectonic plate with the Eurasian one that began about 70 million veras ago.

Himalayan smoke

After three years of Himalayan drought, there was a rash of forest fires in the Himalayan midhills from Kashmir to Himachal Pradesh in the spring of 2000. Smoke from the fires, carried by westerly winds right across Nepal, can be clearly seen in this SeaWIFS satellite image. Also seen clearly are the crystal blue lakes dotting the Tibetan Plateau.

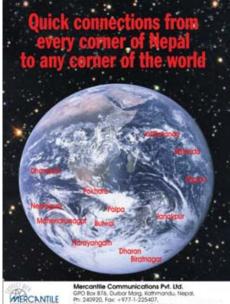
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WORLD

RANJIT DEVRAJ

extended US military pre

NEW DELHI - With the prospect of

Central Asia now likely, Russia has

revived a three-year-old proposal to

rope India and China into a trilateral

wer axis. When Russian leader

Yevgeni Primakov first proposed a

trilateral axis against a US-centred,

unipolar world in December 1998

neither New Delhi nor Beijing were

lingering from the Cold War. But

Chinese Premier Zhu Rongii's

successful India tour in January,

followed by the visit of Russian

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, might

have advanced the idea to the point

where "working towards informal

alliance" is now possible, said an

Indian spokesperson. This is likely

happening because all three want to

protect their own interests in strategic

fossil-fuel rich Central Asia, rather

than counter a unipolar world order

enthusiastic, given mutual suspicions

across the cities of the mainland. Yuppies and intellectuals are arquing; which flower would be the right national symbol for an

ascending power, self-conscious of its long history but eager to embrace modernity? It might have been easy for Empress

Debate flowers in China

elegant peony

China's national

National People's

by JOHN ZIMAN

Tempting science



doctrines are devaluing the public



cientists everywhere are buy exclusive access to profitable new creasingly uneasy at the rising discoveries, they are always in the influence of business upon market for preferential consideration Valuable gifts may appear to purchas university research. They realise that direct financial connections with the intangible favours. Cash for scientific private sector can damage their answers is not as obviously comunt as reputation for independence and cash for parliamentary questions, but integrity. Nevertheless, the traditional doors separating academia from So far, there have been few open industry are being quietly dismanscandals. Scientists in both academia tled—sometimes even smashed and industry can still be trusted to do down. Specious free-market their work with honesty. In most

services that those doors protected external influences—military and not least the free flow of wellpolitical as well as commercial—are informed, critical speech that is trivial. But a number of worrying vital to open inquiry. cases of falsification or fabrication car Of course every scientist wants e traced back to direct pressures more money to do research, and every from funding sources. In some nation needs as much good science as disciplines it is becoming difficult to find academic scientists who are not it can get. But good science is in some way dependent on corporate expensive; so if some perfectly reputable company is prepared to pay support. The bodies that fund and for it, why be choosy? Industrial publish research are now asking research is an immense asset to necialist referees and authors to society, not least in advancing declare all such connections, in case scientific knowledge. But commercia these might seem to affect their firms are not philanthropies. They are cientific judgement. Disclosure of conflict of interest' is becoming as under constant competitive pressures shareholders expect a return on their mandatory in the world of science as investment. Even when not trying to in politics and law.



neasures like these will hold back the forces of Mammon. But increases transparency also reveals the blatant instrumentalism that now pervades university research. Demonstrable utility is the over-riding priority. Even governments now fund science primarily for its promise of public or private gain. Yet academic science plays an important 'non-instrumental' role in society. It enriches us spiritually with trustworthy knowledge about humanity and the world. It warns us of hidden

Most academic scientists

doubtless hope that formal counter

environmental dangers and opens up inexpected paths of technical rogress. It brings an element of ard-nosed critical rationality into all societal debate, and fosters awareness of uncertainty and change in the rofessional education of skilled practitioners. Above all, academic cientists are in continual demand as independent experts in public arenas controversy and decision. In short, iversity research is the principal ntelligence agency of civil society.

It is often supposed that science s able to perform these functions ecause it is so completely rationa and objective. Unfortunately, this supposition is not supported by serious philosophical analysis or sociological observation. În reality vhat makes scientific knowledge so credible is that it is produced by an ppen, imaginative, self-critical, isinterested, communal process. It these institutional characteristics of scientific research that win our vorldly-wise trust. People seldom ppreciate how deeply these characteristics are woven into the iniversity tradition. For example, lecturers and professors are not tested for their expertise, nor employed to

However technically sound they may be, research results produced in secret or for corporate profits are inevitably suspected of bias.

carry out specific research projects. Nevertheless, customary practices such as 'publish or perish,' peer review and academic tenure ensure that they are indeed good scientists. They retain their intellectual autonomy, but could only have won their university posts-and thereby access to research facilities—on the basis of competitive assessments of the originality and promise of their published research. University research organised in this manner is only one of many

possible ways of carrying out 'public science.' The key point is that up to now it has had a distinctive nonnstrumental role that cannot be performed by 'proprietary science.' However technically sound they may be, research results that have been deliberately produced, in secret, for corporate profits, are inevitably suspected of bias

worrying. This is precisely where societal demands for trustworthy scientific knowledge and non-partisan expertise are most pressing. The fashionable call for ever-

closer union between academia, industry and government ignores a vital element of the scientific enterprise. These great sectors of our economy and polity will surely go on evolving internally, and interacting energetically, beyond anything we can easily foresee. In each sector, the research system will be reformed and reconfigured along with the knowledge that it produces. But scientists in all three sectors should fight openly against changes that fail to recognise, celebrate, and fully support the distinctive, irreplace able role of 'public science' in an open, pluralistic society. Project Syndicate)

John Ziman is a Fellow of the Royal Society and Emeritus Professor of Physics at the University of Bristol. His latest book is Real Science: What it is and what it means

One jab or three?

By admitting 'conflict of interest,'

scientists engaged in such research

themselves from the worldly agendas

show that they cannot disengage

of their patrons. Nor can they

exemplify to their students the

fundamental scientific values of

intellectual autonomy and open

sincere their expertise, it can do

little to strengthen civil society or

Of course the funding of science

raises many political and economic

problems. For example, how should

governments justify public expendi-

such as particle physics and as-

solved by handing them over to

commercialised fields such as

biomedicine that the merging of

ture on completely 'useless' discipline

tronomy But these problems are not

'market forces'. Indeed, it is in highly

public and proprietary science is most

the public good.

dissent. No matter how potent and

There is a raging debate on in the UK about whether there is a link between autism and the MMR vaccine. While parents want a choice of vaccinations. public health experts warn of a disaster in the making.

Public health vs individual choice

The MMR debate goes to the heart of the relationship between the individual and society. This is an age in which people expect to exercise choice; but there are times when the collective good must prevail. The great programmes against cholera, polio and smallpox could never have taken place had they not been enforced. Yet here we have the makings of a public health disaster, with drift, fear and confusion. The unconfirmed findings of maverick scientists such as Dr Andrew Wakefield prey upon a public which has grown at once more consumerist and more scentical of authority, with good reason after the BSE and foot and mouth fiascos.

The new risks are much greater than any arising from the use of the combination vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella. The overwhelming factual evidence is that there is no risk from the MMR vaccine itself. Dr Wakefield's unorthodox work has been confounded by more rigorous studies in Britain and elsewhere, which show there is no link between autism and MMR.

To prevent epidemics, 95 per cent of the population needs to be covered by inoculation. The proportion now covered by MMR has fallen to 86 per cent. Tony Blair must urgently square up to his responsibilities. His mulish refusal to disclose his own decision over baby Leo has compounded public doubt. He is, we accept, entitled to privacy but in this respect he is like any other parent who must expose his child to a negligible risk in the interests of a greater public good. On such matters privacy becomes more of a luxury than a right.

The government must now launch a massive educational offensive. The campaign must not be patronising or needlessly frightening. It must avoid the lofty mandarin arrogance which so incensed the public when the scale of the BSE disaster became apparent. And it should address frankly the fears of people caught in doubt and dilemma, who are worried about the unexplained rise in the number of diagnosed cases of autism.

Perhaps, too, we can learn from the French who offer the alternative of single jabs. There are serious problems with this approach: when it was used for whooping cough in the 1970s, coverage collapsed and there were two epidemics with 100 avoidable deaths. Single jabs for measles, mumps and rubella require six acts of vaccination, and increase the risk of infection. Single vaccines imported to meet the current shortage have not been licensed or tested for toxicity. But there has been no row in France and little resistance to triple inoculation because the policy has been less dogmatic and allows a degree of choice while still putting a premium on the common good.

The government must regain control of this issue, and quickly. (Guardian,

e-way power

a and China could finally be getting counter US influence in Asia.

ter George Fernandes said China ented the main threat to India e government wrote to then US lent Bill Clinton to say that ı (rather than Pakistan) was the rtant factor in this country's lear weapons programme. estan pointed out that China i icularly worried by the NMD ct because it has a limited ser of inter-continental ballistic es (ICBMs), while Russia

ontinues to have enough warheads to challenge the reliability of the US umbrella. Although relations bet India and China have been steadily improving since the landmark 1993 greement to maintain peace along their common borders, there has bee a steady proliferation of missile and nuclear weapon technology from Beijing to Islamabad. Kanti Bajpai, professor of international relations at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, adds that other areas of conflict include competing interests in Burma, rivalr Ocean and the South China Sea, Tibet, and Beijing's non-recognition of Sikkim as an Indian state

Russia wields considerable influence in both India and China as: major supplier of military hardware to oth countries. India is this week finalising the nurchase of an aircraft carrier, nuclear-powered submarines and long-range strategic bombers from Russia as part of a multibillion dollar

ar tests in 1998, India's Defence | shopping list. Ivanov used the opportunity to vigorously promote the idea of a trilateral axis and also allayed apprehensions that this would in an way hurt India's rapidly improving ies, including military cooperation with the United States. In his State o the Union address last week, US President George Bush clubbed the ree powers together when he said America was "working with Russia and China and India, in ways we have never before, to achieve peace and prosperity. According to Rajiv Nayan, a

earcher at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), a government-funded think ank, it is important to note that one of three countries that would form the trilateral axis wants to be seen as a long-term dissident to US olicy. On the other hand, he added, the triangle as envisaged by Primakov "would not like to make the US a natural ally because its ver objective is to create a competing centre against the United States." Bajpai said that though the proposed trilateral axis had the potential to build an Asian security system, tackle religious extremism, utilise Central Asian energy resources efficiently and handle better Washington's missile defence plan there is at present little prospect of the three turning into strategic partners because of continuing menicione 🌢 (IPS)



when breeding flowers for pleasure was forbidden, China has vet to decide on its national flower, "It is very important... a national flower strongly symbolises what a country is all about," argues Professor Chen Junyu of the Beijing Forestry University "Of about 100 large nations, we are the only one without a national flower." Chen suggests that the peony and the plum blossom should both be chosen in a "one country, two flowers" system, echoing the late leader Den Xiaoping's "one country, two systems" formula that the mainland put forward in its reunification cause with the former colonial territories of Hong Kong and Macau, Professor Chen says the peony will represent ancient culture while the plum blossom will stand for China after the end of the empire. Significant in Oriental mythology, art and literature, the peony was revered as the King of Flowers in China and, at one time, restricted for the enjoyment of royalty only. The plum blossom, one of the most loved flowers in southern China, was traditionally a symbol of the Kuomintang government, which led China in the early decades of the 20th century before it was defeated by the

Communists The issue has been debated since 1982. and in 1994, a nation wide campaign mobilised people to vote for their favourite flower as a national symbol. Peony

and the Chinese Floral Association proposed it to the Standing Committee of the National People' Congress, but a decision was put off. And it is only getting harder—parting with the austere habits of the early communist era means Chinese people are beginning to enjoy flower shopping, breeding and gifting, China has in recent years become one of the largest flower growing and consuming countries in the world. By the end of 2000, China produced 2.7 billion fresh flowers and its exports abroad hit \$260 million. Tropical orchids, sweet-scented osmanthus, bright azaleas, snow-white lilies and Holland tulips all vie for attention at Beijing's 10-odd flower markets. (IPS)

Jean-Pierre Cabestan, director of

Crony capitalism, American-style

Enron forces us to ask: how do we

balance government and the market?

the Hong Kong-based French Centre

for Research on Contemporary China

says, "The US-led war in Afghanistan

has compromised Beijing's funda-

mental and long-term objectives.

increased the say that its Asian rivals

(in particular Japan and India) have in

regional security issues and weakened

s image as a great power," Cabestan

said in a lecture here last month.

Cabestan said Beijing has begun to

take India more seriously due to its

newly overt nuclear policy, its open-

door economy and its status as a rival

power that could get uncomfortably

is palpable in New Delhi's loud

support for Washington's national

missile defence (NMD) programm

Once a Cold War Soviet ally,

India is now ruled by a right-wing

coalition that is aggressively increas

its contacts at all levels with the United

States, even seeking support from the US rather than from Russia in

containing China. Soon after India's

close to the United States. This trend

Remember the East Asia crisis? When the US Treasury and its IMF allies blamed that region's problems on crony capitalism, lack of transparency, and poor coporate governance? Countries were told to follow the American model, use American auditing firms, bring in American entrepreneurs emember the East Asia crisis? When the US Treasury and its IMF allies to teach them how to run their companies. But the unfolding Enron scandal

brings new meaning to a favourite American saying: "What goes around comes around.

Enron used fancy accounting tricks and complicated financial products (derivatives) to mislead investors about its value. It used its money to buy influence and power, shape US energy policy, and avoid regulations. Crony capitalism isn't new; nor is it the province of a single party. Former US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin reportedly tried to influence the current government to intervene on behalf of Enron in its dispute in India In office. he had intervened when the supposedly independent board setting accounting standards tried to clean up the accountin of senior executives' share options. Partl due to him, this effort to make corporate

accounting transparent was stymied. America's willingness to provide multi-billion dollar bail-outs to airlines or create cartels to protect its steel and aluminium industries suggests that free market ideology is but a thin guise for

old-fashioned corporate welfare: give to those with connections. Enron was not bailed out and the problems were uncovered—some say testimony to the absence of crony capitalism. I believe it is testimony to the importance of a free press, which can curtail abuses. As the press started looking more closely at Enron, the number of members of Congress who had accented money from Enron became clear. Campaign contributions were not just a matter of public spirit, but an investment

Many lessons emerge. Some concern politics: the case for campaign finance reform in the US is strengthened, as is the need for stronger laws requiring public disclosure. The Bush administration, for instance, refuses to disclose information to clarify the role of corporate interests in its energy policy. Other lessons concern the economics of information. For markets to work, appropriate signals for efficient resource allocation must be provided, investors must have information. There are inherent conflicts of interests

owners and managers have a natural incentive to present a picture as rosy as possible. Auditing is intended to put limits on potential abuses. But who andits the auditors

We rely heavily on incentives. Auditors wish to maintain their reputation. But the interlinking of consulting and auditing practices puts other

> to please the clients, who dislike infavourable reports. Arthur Levitt, former Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, recognised that a many within the auditing firms focus on their own short-term interests, the integrity of the audits could be compronised. But auditing firms and their orporate clients roundly attacked his proposal for separating consulting from uditing. What Levitt grasped, and what the Enron debacle shows so clearly, is that incentives matter, but that unfettered markets themselves may not provide the right ones. The new economy and its complicated new financial instruments enhance the problems of reliable ccounting frameworks, making it easier to obfuscate. But corporate America turns its back, aided and abetted by crony capitalism. American styl-

> The central issue is finding the right balance between the government and the market. The status quo will argue that

Enron is an exception: that its demise was due to fraud, that we have laws against fraud, and that those who violate these laws should and will bear the consequences. But much of what Enron did was not illegal. Its auditors claim its central practices were within the law; that thousands of firms do the same They are right. And that's the problem. Investors need assurance that the information received adequately reflects the economic situation of a firm. Within the current regulatory and legal environment, with derivatives and other off-balance-sheet liabilities, there is no way for investors to have that assurance today. We need better standards and stronger laws. While we will never be able to prevent all abuses, we can get the incentives right. ♦

(Joseph Stiglitz, professor of economics at Columbia University, was formerly Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of the World Bank.)

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15-21 FEBRUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

It's politics, stupid!

India is sticking to its contention that Nepal's exports of vanaspati ghiu, acrylic fibre, zinc oxide, copper wire, etc have seen an "unnatural surge" since the 1996 treaty, which is going to expire in a few weeks. India has already stuck an "anti-dumping duty" on zinc oxide and other Nepali exports. To be sure, some of India's concerns about the manufacture of these items and the impact of the process on employment are legitimate. But will the problems of Indo-Nepal trade treaty be resolved just by addressing the issue of these controversial items?

"A DEATH WARRANT FOR INDIAN FARMERS AND INDUSTRY? (INDO-NEPAL TRADE TREATY) APPEAL TO H'BLE PRIME MINISTER

BELIEVE IT OR NOT BUT TUGLAS'S SPIRIT SEEMS TO BE ROAMING IN THE POWER CORRIDORS OF "DELHI DARBAR". HOW? ON THE ONE HAND GOVERNMENT STAKES BIG CLAIMS TO PROTECT THE FARMERS AND INDUSTRY WHEREAS IRONICALLY ITS POLICIES ARE FORCING THEM EVEN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

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- We appeal to the Government of India and in folios Topiak the decrease trade-based Transit, and process a least placing has for indian factors.

151 U.F. Vanaspati Warrafacturery' Association, Aligarit (U.F.) (v) Federation of Indian Vanascati Manufacturers, Culti-

Front-page ad in India's Economic Times, 9 February

The Indian anti-dumping tariffs have not just been slapped on zinc oxide, the export of Nepali steel rods to India is also being stopped herause they don't have the Indian standards seal. Non-tariff barriers such as quarantine rules are being enforced on traditional Nenali agricultural exports. The export to India of Nepali Ilam tea is being obstructed.

What's more, even the expor of toothpaste manufactured in Nepal by Indian multinationals has been stopped because of the retroactive imposition of Indian taxes. What is clear is that the real reason for the breakdown of trade relations between India and Nepal is not entirely the 1996 treaty.

The ruling BJP in India has always been critical of the treaty. For the last three years, the Indian government has been angered by two things: what it sees as a treaty harmful to Indian economic interests, and its nercention that Nenal is allowing Pakistani intelligence

(ISI) to operate in Nepal. Clearly, that there are political reasons why our economic and trade relations with India are never on an even keel. It could be that the reason for the difficulty in suppressing the Maoist insurgency is also this iciness in political relations.

Nepal must therefore tackle the political roots of the crisis in renewing the trade treaty with India. We suffer more than India when bilateral relations take a knock, so it is in our own pragmatic interest to be proactive in this. We need know: what does India want from us? If their concerns and demands are legitimate, His Majesty's Government must address them, if they're not, it should inform the people that they're not. But just sitting around twiddling our thumbs is not going to get us anywhere. It's the politics, stupid,

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

We have been bribing administration with the money we should be paying in tax, for which the nation is

—Raiendra Khetan, industrialist, in Deshantar, 10 February



Loudspeaker: National democratic alliance Voice: Turn around and say it louder

हिनास व टाइन्स Himalaya Times, 10 February

Kangresi meet

Bimarsha, 8 February

THE PROPERTY (Excerpts of an article describing what actually happened at a 6-7 February closed-door meeting of the ruling Nepali Congress.)

Sushil Koirala the general secretary had presented the party's assessmen of the emergency rule, and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was asked to respond. He replied that the party's assessment was partly true, but that most of the report revolved around what had appeared in the papers, which was not reliable. He then said that he had another meeting to attend and wanted to leave. Party members sho back asking how he could do that. knowing that the party was meeting. At that point, Deuba promised to stay on at all party meetings in future.

The controversial party report says that the government has not been able to control the Maoists in accordance with the mandate giver to it by the party. Basing its conclusions on the information provided by the Chief District Officers, the report says the



government has not been able to effectively coordinate the activity of the security forces. In fact, the report said, the government is eve unable to pay informants and even for the fuel and rent of cars that have been deputed for security work. The report also charges that the government with being responsible for the gradual erosion of civil rule, because the CDOs do not have the nower to make executive decisions. It also charges the government with trying to spread the message that 'development is possible only during an emergency, not under democracy which, it says, smacks of dictatorial tendencies, and gives rise to suspicions of possible corruption. The report also says the government has forgotten the goal of the emergency and reminds it that the declaration was for tackling "terrorists" and instituting law and order, to enable the people to live in peace. The report also says that ministers have been focusing on appointments, transfers, promotions and contracting out works, which would not send a positive message to the common citizens... The party report also says the government mus take full responsibility for everything that happens during the emergency.

Shailaja Acharya (former prime minister Ĝirija Prasad Koirala's niece who was voted out of parliament in May-June 1999) also nad a chance to have her say. "I said earlier that we should not make She Bahadur prime minister because he is a weakling," she said. But he was, she added, elaborating that Sushil Koirala and Deuba were "conspirators", and even though Koirala opposed Deuba in public the two had clandestine meetings at night, "Both of them are useless " said Shailaia

Money for iobs Deshantar, 10 February

Following raids by the tax department two weeks ago, instances of fraud by owners of manpower companies have come to light. According to a source in Lumbini Overseas, the company chief Madhu Lamsal has been sending unwitting Nepali labourers to South Korea as "trainee workers" and pocketing the money. Lumbin Overseas is the one company permitted to send Nepali laboure to South Korea, and it is hoodwinking the labourers. It makes each worker pay a refundable deposit of Rs 100,000. Once in South Korea, the labourers forget to ask for their refund, and the company does not remind them to collect either. The company routes this money back to its accounts through déposits in a number of finance companies and banks in the capital. Dhruba Kumar Sharma, a Ministry of Labour and Transpor

pokesman, says it is illegal to ask

Some workers who have

returned from South Korea

or such deposits.

complain that they have not been able to get their deposits back. "Despite asking, about 80 percent of my friends haven't got their deposits back," says a returnee. In 1994, the Labour Ministry allowed ompanies to charge each individual Rs 62,500 as service fees. In 1996 the amount increased to Rs 79.800 Lumbini Overseas bas een adding Rs 100,000 to the rvice charge. But since people are lesperate for employment, and riven the peace and security ituation in the country and the ack of jobs, they are willing to pay any amount as long as their jobs are guaranteed. And so it has hecome easier for companies to pocket extra money. Lumbini Finance, established in 1994, was permitted to export labour after it ned an understanding with the Korean Federation of Industries There was demand for a little over 1,000 workers in 1994, and for 400 abourers in 1996. Ministry records show the company has sent 2,988 neonle to Korea. The company

asn't advertised in accordance

with the law, and it also does not

have proper papers for a number of

the workers, who it sends to South

Korea via Delhi

The Nepal Rastra Bank has everyone played well. lso suffered in its dealings with the company, which has yet to eimburse the bank of a large amount of capital, Lamsal has removed himself safely from the company and is going around aying he can displace Labour Minister Palden Gurung in a second. As a result, a committee has been set up at the Ministry to look into the activities of Lamsal and Lumbini Overseas, Under Secretary of the Ministry Basanta lar. Our bowling and fielding were Kumar Upadhayaya has indicated really appreciated in every place we that Lamsal has worked in played in New Zealand accordance with Ministry regulations, but that the Ministry's directions might themselves be controversial. While it has been decided to set up a high-level committee to look into the functioning of the ministry, it is yet to be finalised whether the committee should be chaired by a indee or another high-ranking official, says Adhikari. This is not the first time a committee has beer set up to look into the dealings of

Lumbini Overseas. The firm was

even closed down once, but

husiness resumed after Ishwor Pokhrel, UML Standing Commit prime minister Man Mohan Adhikari, permitted the compan to resume work once again.

Under-19s

Rajdhani, 12 February eron and Excerpts from an interview with



Are you satisfied with the team's overall performance in the under-19 World Cure As the captain of the team, I am fully satisfied with Nepal's performance. We performed well.

Whom do you owe this success to?

This was a group effort. The principal effort was made by our Sri Lankan coach Roy Davas, We need

Although Nepal's performance throughout the championship was good, the final game with Zimbabwe wasn't so...

Zimbabwe is a better team than we are, and on top of that, they won the toss, which proved fatal for us They elected to bat first and gave us a target of 247 runs. We were under a lot of pressure and our batsmen only that 247 in mind. So we just started hitting ever ball we faced, which meant we lost wickets faster. Our fielding and bowling weren't that great either.

In your personal opinion, who were the top players on the Nepali team? Bardaan Chalise performed especially well. He batted and bowled very well. Shakti, Manjit, and Lakpa also played very well. Shakti couldn't bat as well, but his bowling was splendid. Overall,

Nepal's batting was compara tively weaker than its fielding and bowling... To be frank, our batting wasn't that good. We have always been weak on the batting front, but after coach Davas came we have improved a lot. We were able to play the full 50 overs. In future, we will watch our batting in particu-

What needs to be done so this team can move forward Our bowling and fielding are strong, but if we get special training from a batting expert, we will be the best team in the world

What is your message to Nepali cricket lovers? The appreciation and encourage ment we got from our Nepali fans was invaluable. Give us some time, and we will give you surprising results.

NEPALITERATURE

THE SOUND OF WOMEN'S VOICES:

Gunjan

woman writer, according to Virginia Woolf, must have freely, they cannot travel freely, they two things: an independent cannot gain the same exposure to world literature as their male counterparts. But the fact remains that when wrote, and brilliantly, in an absence women do write excellently, this is attributed to sheer chance-or attempts are made to undermine their stature by questioning their personal lives. Women writers are simply not granted the kind of authority as men in Nepali society. Gunian was formed in 1998 to amplify the voices of Nepali women

writers. To overcome limitations on The fact is that these writers women's mobility, the group holds are exceptions; the vast majority of monthly meetings on literary issues. women writers have succumbed to and also organises larger literary literary anonymity because they events. Its members are writers and could not compete-with their poets Padmavati Singh, Bhagirathi hands tied-against their male Shrestha, Bhuvan Dhungana, Hiranya Kumari Pathak. Chandrakala counterparts. In Nepal, not surpris-Newar, Usha Sherchan, Gita Keshari, ingly, the number of women writers is minuscule, compared to men. Sulochana Manandhar, Pratisara Pariiat is the single name among Savami, Gvanu Pandev, Susmita those canonised as Great Writers Nepal and Mridula Sharma. In her wake, poets and writers Many of these women are accomsuch as Dev Kumari Thapa, Tova nlished poets, writers, journalists, Gurung, Banira Giri and Prema songwriters and columnists in their Shah have countered great odds to own right; I have translated, below, establish themselves in the literary the noems of two. The first was field. They are followed by women originally written by Pratisara Savami in Newari; I have translated it from its such as Maniu Kanchuli, Maya Thakuri, Sita Pandey, Benju Nepali translation in Newari Bhasaka Sharma and others. However Kehi Adhunik Kabita because of women's financial dependence on their families, their

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE PADDY STALKS

PRATISARA SAVAM

Next to the road I had reached: green, quivering paddy stalks As soon as the breeze started

they laughed and tittered in play pushing and shoving each other, these young women

After five or seven days: those same stalks now hent in abashment decked with golden flowers like brides arriving at their new homes

After some time: how they had stooped, these like trees burdened with fruit like a wife preparing to bear a

Today again I saw the same stalks turned into straw and laid out on the fields: like a woman just through with delivery

like the bloodless face of a woman suffering anaemia

The second poem is by Usha Sherchan, a songwriter and writer of muktak traditional quatrains This poem comes from a poetry collection titled Najanmeka

LIFE IN THE BEGGING **BOWL OF DEATH**

USHA SHERCHAN

new life

Emptiness...emptiness...ultimate in a gigantic cage

locked vehicles keep rolling transporting empty passengers transporting empty breasts in the silence one hears wails and sobs covered volcannes in the emptiness, lives and

deaths become accursed Lives are making merry deaths are joking and jesting

from close up all re-examine the carrying pathetic laughter piercing with frightful cries

From the snace between finners nitiful life neeks out death peeks out as well In a voice that breaks in unison from the autter life also flows life also flows voices cry in unison voices slice time (perform an operation)

Don't get in a frenzy to kill the before rays of hope get to shine don't get in a rage to set the dam

before tides of emotion get to Allow life to play without thought for propriety

shattering the long emptiness breaking the long silence allow life to turn over allow life to gain new dimesions

To make anticipation rest the nerves have begun tingling insensibility has begun to take Play with such force that all the strings break don't let life get intoxicated Sing with such power that the raga breaks don't let life hecome insensible

Don't let emptiness quash Don't let silence prickle Colour life by playing the strings of a guitar Break the emotions by rubbing the sharp strings of a sitar

So that all becomes bloody-Make life awake from the dream realms with the niercing of instrument strings Come, demolish the emptiness. Awaking from a dream Come, demolish the emptiness. Awakening from a dream

Oh! Who's trying to break through again -these soft waves Oh! Why are they laughing again -these frightful deaths Look! Those who plot to take life by tricking it into laughter Look! Those who plan to take

by flirting with life Look! Those who think of taking life by playing with life

There...look There...look Death just sauntered by leaving behind anticipation Death just turned away

taking with it sweet hope

Nalam ich Army Camp Hallane chowk Prittwi Chowk Pokhara Stadium Rastra Bank

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

Birauta Chowk

weak social support structures.

intellectual and physical mobility

they are easily hushed by men

writers Part of the problem is

practical: the quality of women's

writing does suffer because they

and the many constraints to their

o what if trekking, rafting and the rest of it seem a little iffv in nany parts of the country now. For those of you who like to get a little sweaty, the Pokhara Marathon 2002, being organised by the Nepal Ex-Athletes Forum and the Nepal Amateur Athletics Association, might be just the ticket. "There are city marathons all over the world," says Ganesh Bhattarai, coordinator of the Pokhara Marathon 2002. "We thought, why not give Nepal it's own. And this won't be the last one either

Run for fun...

... or to win Nepal's first city marathon. Something like this was direly needed to make people realise

that life must go on, and the organisers couldn't have picked a better place to hold the run, giving the hospitality business in Pokhara a much-needed boost. By all accounts, people are excited-Bhattarai expects at least 50 competitors from different countries to participate in the full international length 42.195 km marathon

The Pokhara Marathon will be more than just one long run around the lake city. It will be even more than promoting Pokhara as destination paradise or the usual suspects of peace and national solidarity. What this really is, is a warm-up, as it were, for something truly out of this world—the Cross Country Mountain Marathon from Pokhara to Lo Manthang planned for later this year. The race circuit will include villages of different ethnicities in the Annapurna Conservation Area and is planned to challenge the participants, and also highlight the challenges that Mustang's cultural heritage and natural environment face in the future. Says Bhattarai, " A sporting event of this magnitude will not only help highlight Nepal's prospects in adventure tourism, it will give prominence to our own sportspersons."

For now, though, there is the Pokhara city marathon to contend with-and there's plenty at stake. First, second and third place winners will receive Rs 25,000, Rs 15,000, and Rs 10,000 respectively, along with the obligatory shields and certificates. The first under-19 participant completing the run in two hours and 45 minutes or less—the Nepal Amateur Athletic Association record—will receive a cash prize of Rs 10,000. The first ten competitors to complete the race will also receive gifts and certificates. The marathon will start from the Pokhara Stadium where participants will gather at 8AM for a medical check-up, and from where they will leave shortly after. There will also be a non-competitive Run for Fun Contest with prizes and gifts. The marathon is free and anyone can—and is encouraged to call, email, or just show up, and run for it!

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ARCHITECTURE

RAMYATA LIMBU

his cap. The Kathmandu-based

architect's design just won first

prize in the design competition held

Integrated Mountain Development.

"It is about time we have a

initiation of the building to coincide

Mountain." But ICIMOD didn't just

They wanted it to be modern-wired.

efficient, and earthquake- and fire-safe,

tural heritage of their home city. They

but also show respect for the architec-

wanted a building that would reflect

their mandate to promote sustainable

mountain development, and encourage the transparency and teamwork the

design contest, as is done so often

around the world when a major new

So what did they do? They held a

with the International Year of the

want any old place to call its own.

ICIMOD, for its proposed headquar-

manent home of our own," says an ICIMOD official. "And we want the

by the International Centre for

ters at Khumaltar, Lalitpur.

EXHIBITION

- . Prints and paintings by Uma Shankar Shah. Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. Until 15 March, 11AM-6PM
- * Discover Japan through contemporary posters Nepal Art Council, 15-22 February, 10AM-
- 4PM. Embassy of Japan, Nepal Art Council, The Japan Foundation. Wind of the Snirit Korean contemporary artists on show at the Negal Association of Fine
- Arts Hall, Naxal, 15-21 February, 11AM-5PM, 270417
- 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

- Phillips Saturday Bowling Each Bowler rolls three games, the bowler with highest average score wins Free Phillips systems. Rs 500, 16 February, 12PM onwards, Bowling Boulevard, Kantipath. mg@mail.com.np
- Nepali classical dance and folk music at Hotel Vajra. Dances of Hindu and Buddhist gods Tuesdays and Fridays, 7PM onwards, the Great Pagoda Hall. Ticket and tea Rs 400. Nepali folk tunes Wednesdays and Saturdays, 6.30PM onwards, hotel restaurant, Hotel Vaira, 271545
- V-Day isn't over yet Valentine's celebrations with 1974 AD and buffet dinner. 16 February, Rs 600 per head, La'Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque, Pulchowk. 535290

 Harmony Evening of music, painting and sculpture. Rs 250, with refreshments. Artscape Gallery, Newa Guest House, opposite East Meets West Music Box, Thamel. 256411 Live music by Catch 22, Tuesday and Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle

Restaurant, Thamel, 414336

. Herb vodka, your cocktail recipes at the Corner Bar, Radisson Hotel. 411818

- · Pasta Pronto Choose your pasta shape and ingredients to be combined by the chef. Rs 325 vegetarian, Rs 425, non-vegetarian. Until 28 February, Alfresco, Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 273999
- · Tibetan Lhosar 15 February, Stupa View Restaurant, Baudhanath Stupa. 480262 . Perfect Symphony Dark or white chocolate mousse with fresh coffee. The Piano
- Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti, 248999 Hawkers Centre Street food cooked right before you, including kathi rolls, fish amritsari, nasi goreng, pav bhaji, noodle soup, desserts. The Café at Hyatt Regency
- Kathmandu. 491234 Sandwiches Over the Rainbow American Diner has reopened. Fifth Avenue sand-
- wiches, full meals at backpacker prices. Opposite Pilgrims Book House, Thamel. 42651 Chef special luncheons For office-goers at special rates, 12 noon-3PM daily, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488.
- Patan Museum Café Mixed menu, garden seating. Lunch only, 11AM—2PM. 25 percent off with Summit Card. 526271
- · 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
- Winter Specials Hot mulled wine, ratatouille-filled pancakes, Chicken hoisin. Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 250440
- Barbecue lunch with complimentary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children. Saturdays at the Godavari Village Resort, Rs 650 per head. 560675

- 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
- · Muktinath Darshan Two nights/three days on B&B basis with Pokhara/Jomsom/Pokhara flights and airport, resort transfers, Indian nationals Rs 6,999 per head expats \$250 per head Jomson Mountain Resort salesjom@mail.com.np or jmr@soi.wlink.com.np. 496110



- * Escape to Nagarkot Special packages for Nepalis and expats at The Tea House Inn. Singles Rs 800 B&B, couples Rs 1,200 B&B. 410432, 680048
- Heritage Package Two-night package with six-course Nepali dinner, massage, breakfast, \$155 per couple, Dwarika's Hotel, 479488

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

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL Nothing much to report for the coming week. Expect breezy afternoons with clear skies with a gradual increase in maximum temperature, misty mornings clearing by 10 am. The westerly that dumped nearly 20 mm of rain in Kathmandu valley on Monday night has now moved on, eastern Nepal will still see some cloud cover while some high altitude cloud will move swiftly across the central Nepal skies as well. A weak westerly front will pass through during the early part of next week but without much precipitation. A massive high pressure area reigns over northern India and the Tibetan plateau and this should keep things quiet for a while KATHMANDU VALLEY



The Art of Peace: Nobel Peace Laureates discuss Human Rights, Conflict and Reconciliation Jeffrey Hopkins, ed

Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 2000 Rs 1.845

losé Ramos-Horta from East Timor, Betty Williams from Northern Ireland, Rigoberta Menchú Tum from Guatemala, Archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa, Oscar Arias Sánchez from Costa Rica, Bobby Muller, co-founder International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Jody Williams from the US, the Dalai Lama from Tibet and Harn Yawnghwe for Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma

discuss their views and practical experiences to deal with conflict and human rights violations and effect reconcilia-

An Open Heart: Practising Compassion in Everyday Life The Dalai Lama, ed Nicholas

Hodder and Stoughton, London, 2001 This volume is aimed at giving the reader a basic understanding of Buddhism and some of the key

methods by which Buddhist practitioners have cultivated compassion and wisdom in their lives. One doesn't have to be Buddhist to use these meditation techniques. Meditation can be thought of as a way by which we diminish the force of old thought habits and develop new ones.



meditation can eliminate disease.

nental habit of 'labelling' in causing illness and shows how developing compassion through Kumari Shobha Vijaya Malla, Philip H Pierce, trans. Royal Nepal Academy, Kathmandu, 2001

gives us the tools to create our future happiness. He addresses the central role of karma and the

First published in 1982 in Nepali, this work is a fictional study of the love between a living goddess and an educated youth who fails to be swayed by the belief that she is supposed to bring an early death to her husband. Malla displays his trademark ability to probe into his characters psychology and probes the disjuncture between tradition and modernity in Kumari worship.



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

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K-Too! Beer and Steakhouse not the "longest "highest", "first" or any other superlative. Just a relaxed, easy-going bar and restaurant with the coldest beer and juiciest steaks this side of the moon. By the Kathmandu Guest House. 433043

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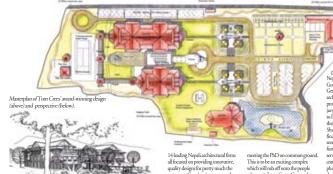
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And the winner is...



construction project is undertaken.

particularly by organisations that hope to be part of the cultural and social

fabric of its surroundings. Architects

entering the competition had to best

irements—and stay within the

interpret ICIMOD's long list of

Centre's \$1 million budget for the

project. "There were lots of specific

reflect ICIMOD's development

tional building. It was certainly

demands, complex requirements," say. Archiplan's Biresh Shah, one of the

three finalists. "The architecture should

approach and the needs of an institu-

Says Kai PrasadWeise, who tied

with Shah for second place, "What's

good is that there was a design competition. It was fair and the jury

was good." Most participants as well a

other architects concur-in a country

where few competitions take place, they

say, and projects are won on the basis o nections and low costs, rather than

the quality of work, ICIMOD's

way to Pokhara from Kathmandu in the two-day motorcyle rally on 9 Feburary

petition could start a trend

Selected from designs submit

same cost, Crees' project apparently met ICIMOD's myriad needs best. "I tried to imagine the mountain farmer

who use it," says Crees. Crees, who also designed the UNDP complex back in 1976, is better known for

a breath of fresh air

Shah and Weise all made it to the final round, after which they had some time to refine their designs further. Finally, says Shrestha, who served as coordinator of the competition, "The jury evaluated the plus and minus points of the final designs, and the ICIMOD Board made the final selection on the basis of their requirements."

IF YOU WANT IT TO BE BETTE IT BETTER BE The entries were judged by an international jury including Uttam Shrestha president of the Society of Venalese Architects, Dr Neils Gutschow, professor of architecture, Germany, RK Sahu, professor of architecture, India, and Don Treese, professor of architecture, USA. The ury then passed on their appraisals to ICIMOD's Board of Governors at heir meeting last December. Crees, BERTOLLI

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15-21 FEBRUARY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

The taxman cometh

s conscientious Nepali tax payen, it is deeply satisfying for many off us to see that the government is putting our hard-arned taxes to good use by coming up with creative new ideas for new taxes. In this way, some of us who still have some disposable income will not just be sitting unproductively on our non-performing assets, but will get off our butts.

Still, this is not the time to hem and haw, or for ifs and buts. It is the time for every Nepali of taxable age to ask himself and herself some wrenching questions: is the government doing enough? Is it leaving any stones unoverturned to enlarge the tax bracket and

overturion to entage the test School and which the test set My personal feeling (and this is entirely my opinion and does not in any way select the opinions, if any, of my present employers, or of the various cognitions that there worked for future is that it is not. The government is not of the property of the prope

civic day at the prescriptance to bring to civic day at the prescriptance to bring to the civic day at the prescriptance to bring to may be a slight conflict of interest in going any further with this column since the Ministry of Finance, Pvt (Lat) basjust hired this carbo (shidner) known as "youst rush", and hereinfarter effered to as "me) sax consultant to advise the government on a more futuristic tax policy. But in the national interest is my dury to privately lack to you the salient points of my suggested recommendations to the Mol:

Torture. The government has stopped short of using this time-tested revenue-raising method on tax dodgers.

This technique, which involves actual physical contact at the sub-cuticular level, between the taxman and the payee has guaranteed efficacy. It is currently being used with excellent results by certain underground parties which shall remain nameless till the state of national emergency is lifted.

2. Graft Tax. The Ministry of Finance should immediately set up a Department of Kickbacks where the 10 percent VAT, 2 percent Service Charge and 4 percent National Security Surcharge will be levied on every kickback and bribe given or received within the kingdom.

3.Capital Flight Levy. All monies apprehended at the capital's airport awaiting boarding will be slapped a 50 percent tariff before departure. Outbound flights will be affected, but what the heck, they already are.

4. Adulteration Tax. All fuel adulteres throughout the kingdom will have to mandatorily add 5 percent more kerosene to the diesel they selfal args stations over beyond the present 50 percent adulteration they carry out, and hand over the take to the Nepal Oil Corruption. Revenue thus generated will be used as a Hedge Fund to bail our pertol stations in case adulteration is

5. Sunshine Tax. It has come to the notice of the Tax Department that wage camers have been sun bathing on the terrace for free. A solar tax has therefore been slapped at a flat rate of Rs 100 per head per hour of sunshine. A Lunar Tax will also be announced soon to tax the income of monoliphers.

banned in future

The above five bright ideas will put the government in a comfortable position to meet any exigencies by mobilising internal resources, and reduce our dependence on donor support.



NEPALI SOCIETY

Nepalki chhori Helen

nai ho," Helen says about how

her father passed on his love and

respect for the Nepali people to

her. "He taught us to appreciate

what was good in the Nepali way of life, and be a part of the

After going back to Norway at age 11, Helen managed to infect

language and the culture."

f you close your eyes when you speak to Helen Eikeland, you could easily imagine you are talking to someone born in Gorkha. And you'd be right.

The 34-year-old Norwegian was born in Ampipal, where her father was a teacher at the famous Luitel School run by the United Mission Nepal. She was born at home, Nepali-style, and was named after a Canadian doctor at the Ampipal Hospital who helped in the delivery. Helen grew up in Gorkha and Kathmandu till she was eleven and her mother encouraged her to go out and play guccha and luka mari with her Nepali friends on Ampipial Bhanjyang fly changa in Sanepa, munch makai and titaura with the didis who also picked jumra from her hair (jumra change their colour chameleon-like, so Nepali jumra turned blonde in

It was this total immersion in Nepal that gave Helen her fluent, unaccented Nepali. We have heard a lot of foreigners speak Nepali: Brists Gurkha officers, Peace Corps volunteers, and Josuit Priests, but there aren't many with Helen's colloquial smoothness. "Malai Nepali maya garaune mero buwa



Helen returned to Nepal in 1994 with her husband Harald, joining the UMN, and both now teach at Mahendra Bhawan School. "I wasn't going to marry anyone who wasn't prepared to return to Nepal with me," she says. And Harald has learnt Nepali as well. "Being married to someone so dedicated to

Nepal, you have to," he quips. Helen sometimes meets Nepalis she grew up with in the most unusual places: like childhood friend from Sanepa she ran into after 25 years—at Vienna airport. Both recogissed each other immediately. Returning to Nepal has given Jalen a chappe to fulfill ber

nised each other immediately. Returning to Nepal has given Helen a chance to fulfil her lifelong dream of helping her other motherfand. "Nepal is going through a difficult period," she says in flawless Nepali, "but I know first hand about how strong and resilient Nepalis are. We will pull through this."



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