



God

16 pages



EXCLUSIVE

Foreign aid policy

For once, a deadline in Nepal has been met. On 4 March, the government and a team of donors actually agreed on and finalised the Foreign Aid Policy, which still needs the endorsement of the Cabinet to be an official document. On 7 February the government promised to have the policy ready within a month. A government source told us the most contentious section govern ing aid from INGOs and NGOs has now been "fine-tuned" to everybody's liking. Donor representatives from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and UNDP and major bilaterals participated in the two meetings held to finalise the document.

Cosmopolitan capital

Musicians, culture vultures businesses and even the Nepal Tourism



Board are coming together to make Nenal an even more attractive tourist destination. On Tuesday, 12 March, the first-ever Kathmandu Jazz Festival kicks off with a 12-hour-long show at the Gokarna Forest Golf Reserve. Sponsors of the 10-day long festival tell us they're investing despite the recession, hoping this will be an annual event that can draw more high-spending tourists to Nepal.

See also iThe hills are alive,î

nepalnews.com

O. Do you think the government was right to agree t

HEMLATA RAI IN LAMJUNG

ven at noon, Besisahar, Lamjung's dusty district headquarters, wears a deserted look. By evening, there are a few people hurrying home before the seven

After the Maoists booby-trapped an army convoy two months ago, all vehicles are stopped at the district border after 5.30 PM. There is an undercurrent of fear bordering on panic here. The locals hesitate to talk to strangers, and if they do, there are no smiles, no welcomes. Besisahar's traditional hospitality and friendliness is gone. There is fear here of the Maoists and the security forces. Too many have had friends and relatives taken in by both sides. Not surprisingly, business is badly hurt.

As the gateway to Manang, the town used to get 100 trekkers a day moving up the Marsyangdi valley. These days there are barely ten. The town's only colour lab used to process 30 rolls of films every day, these days it gets a third of that. Bal Prasad Parajuli lost his business because his lodge is situated at the northern end of Besisahar, away from the protective range of the barracks. Saraswoti Khaniya's clients don't come anymore for just the opposite reason-her tea stall is too close to the army post.

Lekhnath Adhikari, president of the Besisahar Town Development Committee, says the present calm is deceptive. "Unless an environment is created for people's representatives to return to the district, the people's desire for development will not be estored, and there will be no peace," he told us. So far, the Maoists have not attacked hotels, but lodge owners are victims of Maoist extortion. "You can call it protection money," said a hotelier who did not want to be named. "If the situation does not improve this season I'll just pack up my bags and leave." A lot of Lamjungis

Lull in Lamjung

But is it a calm before the storm?



are doing just that. A villager from Nalma told us there is hardly anyone left in his village except children and women. This isn't new for Lamjung, people

from here have traditionally migrated to serve in the Indian or British armies or to work in India. But this exodus is on a much bigger scale. Lamjung's young left in the thousands when the Maoists started forced recruitment after the declaration of the jilla jana sarkar ("district people's government") last August, Many of those who staved joined the militia during the three-month ceasefire. Those who resisted, or quit the insurgency disillusioned, are vulnerable to the Maoists and the security forces. Security sources in Lamjung told us that most of the Maoists put in the district iail are teenagers or in their early 20s. Lamjung Chief District Oficer Shiva Prasad Nepal admits the youth feel trapped. "Maoist dissidents are secretly migrating to Kathmandu and other towns.

They are afraid of being taken in by both sides," Nepal told us.

The local people are of little helpthey're so afraid of Maoist retribution, they do not disclose the identity or whereabouts of Maoists who have extorted money from them. "Even the elected representatives are reluctant to inform the police about the whereabouts and identities of the Maoists, said Pitamber Adhikari, who heads the Lamjung District Police Office.

The main casualty of this atmosphere of fear and panic is development. Lamjung's development budget was Rs 5 million. This was slashed by ten percent after the mment diverted money for security The Middle Marsyangdi hydropower project will bring a Rs 20 million bonanza. but not for another five years. "Development work in this district has come to a halt," says Jamindra Man Ghale, DDC chairman. Nearly three-quarters of

Lamjung's population is literate, much better than the national average. But education has been hadly affected by the Maoist threats against schools. Some 10,000 students in 30 private schools including the Himalchuli Boarding School, which has a record for best SLC results. have nowhere to go. Work on the Germanfunded 39 km Karaputar-Samle Bhanjyang-

Singdi road is suspended.

claim the

are chased away " •

Security sources say about 100 suspected Maoists have been interrogated, and both the army

and the local Editorial administration Learning from Afghanistar and Sri Lanka

Manists are on the run. But even DSP Adhikari admits the peace can't last unless there is rehabilitation and development. He says: "We have to step in and fill the vacuum after the Maoists

Target: Development

wo days after the Maoists hit Accham on 16 February, a helicopter flew into Mangalsen with a special mission; evacuate 25 development workers who had survived the night of carnage. In another farwestern district, development moved out last week after the rebels locked up the District Development Committee chairman in his office and threatened to attack the headquarters. Said one NGO worker from the far-west: "Everyone is scared about what could happen next."

In Kathmandu, project personnel and donors are worried who, if anyone, is in charge. Most are involved in grassroots development building drinking water projects, mobilising communities for forestry and sanitation, or setting up savings schemes. And now they are caught in the crossfire and development work is grinding to a halt.

Many of them have fled the fighting (some temporarily) and are in Kathmandu. In interviews, they told us that three months ago the Maoists used to shake their hands, saying: "We both want to help the poor, so you needn't worry." Those doing genuine work thought they were safe.

But after Magalsen no one is sure that agreement holds anymore, Rural

road building has been badly hit. Immunisation has been affected by overall uncertainty, and every time a rural powerhouse is hit, vaccines are ruined. "It's getting more and more difficult to help people when they need it the most," one donor representative in Kathmandu told us.

Development agencies are now exchanging notes and trying to find new, effective ways of delivering services to people who need them the most, while ensuring safety of staff. Rebels used to ask aid agency workers for "donations", but let them do their work. Now even those lines of communication are cut.

The only way may be to communicate directly with the people. When Maoists looted development supplies in a mid-western district, they were opposed by locals. In another district in the east, a micro-finance NGO threatened by Maoists was asked to return by villagers. "We don't want to pull out completely because we know we have people's support," one worker said, "But it is getting difficult to even retain a minimal presence,"

Early this week rebel supporters forced schools to shut down for two days, and the Maoists have called for another five-day strike next month. If the last strike was any indication, most Nepalis will stay home, not because they support Maoists but because the government can't protect them.

Another exasperated donor rep told us: "At times like these I wonder where Nepal's real leaders are. We can do little unless Nepalis decide to help themselves." .





Turveley beings you Maha Shivarari and the Katonanda Jazz Festival, Surround yourself with maric and nature within Gokuma Ferret 12th March 2002 - from 12 noon till late night

Not your usual day out.



Den Rarryon & Dreits Mart, Ales Mart Ster Mart Set (Americalia) Bernit's Landon Law Groves (M.) Dreses Rayes | India | Babai (parter) M.) Contents, Sepal Complete Martining Completes \$7000 \$0 \$860 ... TO THE RESULT OF THE RESULT OF THE RESULT OF THE RESULT OF THE PARTY OF THE PA

LEARNING FROM SRI LANKA AND AFGHANISTAN

Peace is breaking out all over the region. A shaky calm has returned to Afghanistan after 30 years, the deaths of 500,000 people, and the displacement of an entire generation of five million Afghans. Out in Sri Lanka, 20 years and 65,000 lives later, there is an indefinite ceasefire and hopes of peace at last.

This may be a good time to ask what the wars in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan actually achieved. What was the sense in all that carnage? Did the freedom fighters achieve what they set out to? What ever the cause, can mass misery on such a scale for such a long time ever be justified? What is an acceptable price to pay for freedom and self-determination? Who really benefited besides the arms merchants?

We ask these questions as Nepal itself lunges towards a similar abyss. Even in Jaffna or the Panishir Valley, it would be rare to see the kind of casualty levels we saw last month in Achham and Salyan

If this is the prevalent kill rate at the beginning of our own conflict, we shudder to think how it will all end. Have the architects of this revolution pondered where this is taking us? Who gave them the right to determine our destiny? Is violence really the shortcut to power that

After 65,000 people are killed, Prabhakaran is willing to compromise on the single most important goal of his struggle: an independent Tamil homeland. Will it take twenty years and 100,000 dead Nepalis for our comrades to say, oops, it looks like armed struggle was a dead-end street, now let's talk. It may be safe to say that by that time there may be no Nepal, and nothing left to talk about.

It is so much easier to wallow in cynicism and despair, and to look erudite while taking on a hopeless pose. It is hard to sound confident and harder still to be credible standing amid the carnage to say: all is not lost, we must pull ourselves together. To take an existentialist perspective amidst all this, we remind ourselves that in the end there is no choice but to assert our humanity amid so much inhumanity.

What is worrisome is the desperation of those who will benefit from the coming anarchy. And there is a danger of society becoming irreversibly brutalised, our instinctive humanity smothered by blind anger and bad blood. It gets debilitating writing and thinking about these things day after day. There is a sense that we are collectively dragging each other down, and we will all end up in the muck of violence, corruption and greed. Every day, good people are being brought down by the wealth, audacity and sheer persistence of those who benefit from a system that has lost morality and purpose.

VALUING VALUES

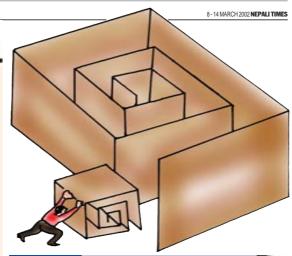
It looks bad, but maybe the country needs to be brought to the brink to peer into the chasm before it can pull back. This is why sober voices are needed, voices that rise above the din, statesmanship that keeps these voices clear and pure. That is the only way we can pull through by not allowing events to overwhelm us as individuals and as a

The lesson of Sri Lanka is never to let the grievances of minority communities and the disenfranchised pile up. And if they already exist, to begin to redress them. The oppressed have nothing to lose, and if their aspirations are subdued for long enough they will rise up. with or without an ideology. And they will not need to call themselves Maoists, or Zapatistas, or Naxalites,

The lesson of Afghanistan is that it is bad enough addressing the concerns of domestic militancy, but interference from regional and global superpowers takes the war to a whole new dimension. One power's freedom fighter then becomes another power's terrorist as they all just become proxies in the great games of outsiders.

Defusing uprisings necessarily means taking away the reason for revolt: providing health care, education and jobs to those in desperate need of them, giving hope to those without it. In post-1990 Nepal we saw that just giving an impatient people freedom and a right to elect their leaders is not enough. Democracy must deliver development so people can value freedom





Fatal attraction

The inner Maobadi circle needs to be penetrated, and dramatically.

ing news bulletin of Radio Nepal begins these days with the latest body count of 'terrorists', a deadpan voice reading out a press release detailing the arithmetic of encounters between the Maobadi and the defence forces. Occasionally, there is a separate press release from the Home Ministry

adding more impersonal numbers. These announcements are now so custom ary that we mentally switch off when they begin. We hear the news of death and devastation without actually listening. There is an analogy with the so-called credibility gap of nm-era five o'clock follies run by the COMUSMACV, the Commander of the US Military Assistance Command. The underlying assumptions of all such spin are similar: those killed on the other side must have been terrorists, everyone held is inevitably a suspect n the face of the enemy fire, the possibility of human error is considered too insignificant to

But unimportant it is not. The death of even one innocent is morally reprehensible as well as strategically disastrous. Just as every Raktabeej gave birth to hundreds of other demons in the story of Durga in Hindu mythology, every innocent victim breeds many ore recruits for the insurgents.

Unlike in a conventional war, inflicting naximum casualty is not a desirable goal in fighting insurgency, mainly because it's almos sible to differentiate between a friend and a foe while fighting an elusive enemy. Insurgents have a tactical advantage—they can creat error by targeting practically anyone. Security forces can't, because even one misfired shot can lienate the entire population of an area and irreparably damage their credibility. In every nsurgency, security forces have to fight with nd tied behind their back, unable to distinguish between insurgents and the people This is an unfortunate but inevitable part of

fighting a section of one's own population. with the Vietcong or the Khmer Rouge, Nepali Maobadi are also composed of cadres that form three concentric circles. The outer ring consists of the people who have perfectly imate occupations by day, but turn into deadly fighters by night. In the day, your friendly neighbour could be a simple peasar eking out a living on his unproductive pakho land. He could be a teacher, a shopkeeper, or an NGO worker. He could even be a village council member representing a legitimate

ferocious face behind the innocent mask comes out to attack the first security personnel in

Occasionally, a part-time terrorist is caugh in the dragnet of the armed forces, and then all hell breaks loose in the relative safety of urban areas. Human right activists, political leaders, and sundry other do-gooders make a hue and cry over the excesses of the security forces. The best way to avoid this trap is to minimise the casualty in this category of Maobadi. In any case, these 'terrorists' aren't beyond redemp tion, and as the experiences in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh in India have shown, many of them can prove helpful in isolating the 'full-



motivated and highly mobile cadres who attack isolated police posts and poorly-guarded state installations loot banks and spread terror in populated areas. Some may eschew camouflage but most don't, blending easily into the countryside when pursued. Despite the rural nature of the Maobadi assault, a significant section of these fighters probably come from an urban bourgeois background, originally indoctrinated by aboverround communist parties. Disillusioned by the shenanigans of leaders of these parties, their more idealistic members perhaps strayed into the lethal arms of Maobadi. If the political dimate of the country were to improve, many of these young neonle could excite be weaped over to the

The innermost circle is the tough one Consisting of romantics with suicidal instincts,

embers of this hardcore group are said to be skilful organisers and doughty fighters. Like Maoist guerrillas elsewhere, they do not expos themselves easily, and do not fight the security forces unless they have an apparent advantage and are fairly certain of winning. Since in the long run insurgents acquire legitimacy from their victories, rather than ideology or votes this group needs to be smashed to contain insurgency. Unfortunately, these people are near-invisible and the intelligence network of security forces has proven fatally flawed, unable to penetrate the movement to this level. They have acquired an image of invincibility becaus not one has been apprehended till date.

It is hard to gauge their strength—there is an impenetrable veil of secrecy over their training camps-but educated guesses put the strength of this group at about 2,000, and their weapons are only as advanced as those they looted from army barracks of Dang and Mangalsen. Many of their camps could well exist on Indian soil, but there have to be at leas some in Nepal. What is most glaring is the complete failure of security forces in exposing

Nepali Maobadi have been mercilessh feeding the outer ring to security forces, selectively using their middle ring to create onfusion and inflict damage in places as far apart as Salleri and Sitalpati, and successfully employing their innermost ring for decisive ictories like Dunai, Dang and Mangalsen, If all war is propaganda, the Maobadi sure know how to wage one with skill and determination. n comparison, the technically superior forces of the state come across as bungling novices

The news of muskets and socket bombs seized, explosives found, or Maobadi literature confiscated fail to reassure an edgy population exposed to more direct threats like the forced sure of educational institutions. When ever the daily body count has apparently little impact, the security forces risk losing their

credibility even further in a drawn-out conflict In the long run, feeding the news-hounds with faxed news releases may turn out to be counter-productive. The info-war against incumency badly needs comething dramatic something like the parading of the Nepali counterparts of Gonzalo, Guzman or Charu mdar in front of television cameras. The illusion of invincibility around these elusius leaders needs to be shattered. Only then wil the insurgency cease to exert its fatal attraction on desperate people.

8-14 MARCH 2002 NEPALI TIMES 3

Why do we need constitutional reforms?

Reforms to the 1990 Constitution being called for from all politica directions. The Maoists want a being called for from all political Constituent Assembly to be set up for this purpose. Some want a referendum on the question "Constitutional Reforms or Constituent Assembly?" Still others wish a re-negotiation by and between the king, parliamentary parties and the Maoists representing the dominant ideologies and

centres of power.

And then there are those who wish that reforms be undertaken by the ruling party while negotiating with the Maoists for and on behalf of all other parties, without altering the fundamentals of the present system, namely constitutional monarchy multi-party parliamentary democracy with sovereignty residing in the people. The demands for change are wide and

- . the state should be secular, albeit with a Hindu monarch and duly recognising the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-lingual fabric of society:
- · an electoral democracy be founded on free and fair elections by forming an interim
- vernment to oversee elections: the prime minister can go to test the people's will whenever he deems it necessary nolitical parties be bound by due process
- of the rule of law and not function as extraconstitutional bodies; • the system of castes, outcastes and gender inequality imbibed in the traditional law of



Reform not for reform's sake, but for the nation's.



the body politic must be cleansed at

privileges as he is otherwise hostage to parliamentary politics:

 electoral democracy has been weakened by muscle-power, money-power and the invisible hand of the mafia In addition to the core principles laid

down by the constitution, there are others that need to be enunciated: that Nepal is "nationsvithin-the-state" and not just a "nation-state This means that our structure of governance must be unitary, with federal features.

Westminster model, giving rise to the phenomenon of majority, minority and coalition governments, with the attendant political instability that contributed to the rise of the Maoists. There is also a proposal for a 'national' government" to collectively deal with the demands of the state of emergency and its prolongation.

The Anglo-Saxon winner-take-all system of voting has not gone down well, as the parties in opposition resort to bandhs and walkouts to exact compliance or concessions from the executive. Then there is the uniqu phenomenon of party factionalism where, for want of a common ideology parliamentarians, rally around personalities and have no qualms about splitting parties, hence the

iumbo cabinets. Parliamentarians are also and to be disinterested in or unqualified to delve into the intricacies of lawmaking, as well as monitoring the implementation of existing laws. The simplest measure of reform is, it is

believed, to have parliament enact a law to govern limits on funding for political parties and call for audits, accountability, and good party governance. Another would be to have parliament require that all constitutional organ of state, as well as the chiefs of central security, the judiciary, and the civil service, be empow ered to play their executive leadership roles. The state desperately needs an autonomou public service that is beholden to the rule of law, not committed to the rulers, as in the past All heads of constitutional organs should be subject to impeachment by parliament. Equally simple, as it can be done within the present constitution, is to reduce the number of nistries. The creation of new department should not be allowed unless it is mandated by

an act of parliament. And how about requiring the effective separation of the powers of the executive and legislature and, to promote party unity centred around its ideology and its parlia mentary leader, MPs should be disallowed

constitutionally from being ministers. Let the prime minister, elected by the Lower House, have the freedom to appoint anyone from inside or outside his party-other than an MP—to the position of minister. The

play party politics.

It would also be a relatively simple matter to accept constitutional changes that provide for an interim government to manage the affairs of state, led by the king with a few ministerial advisers nominated the parliamentary parties.

governance. The real challenge to remaking

main duty of an MP must be to govern, not

If constitutional reforms are needed after all this, then they need to be part of a quest to re-structure the democratic system and reengineer the democratic process. For democracy to be meaningful to the people at the grassroots, decentralisation is the key Principles governing 'devolution', 'deconcentration', 'deregulation' and 'delegation' should be well spelt out to promote modern concepts of 'community sovereignty', and enshrined in the reformed stitution. This can be enhanced through progressive Nepali society the incorporation of the principle of local referenda, so the local people can decide on all critical subjects related to local self-

Village Development Committee and Ward levels such that the poor have equitable access to development. The VDC and Ward chairperson and vice-chairperson could be elected on the basis of open voting for individuals in the Panchayats, based on their leadership ability.

An Upper House that replicates the Lower House is a waste of national resources especially when it is a repository of candidates who have lost their elections or are unfit to be elected. A bicameral parliament should be designed to provide adequate checks and balances to the Lower House by representing the plurality of society. This way, lawmaking and review, as well as national policies, would have the voice of the most non-partisan interests, and be geared to longer-term considerations than is possible in the debates of the Lower House Excessive lobbying by organised vested interests would

A National Security Council (NSC) is a strategic must and should be built into the constitution as an independent organ of state. An autonomous secretariat occupied by independent scholars must be available to the NSC. The council should have a broader esentation in the manner of King-in Council to deliberate openly on nationa security policies, strategies and issues. Leaders of all national political parties to should be present at its proceedings, and all plenary sessions should be chaired by His Majesty the King.

The challenge is to create a society that is democratic, just, free, fair and progressive. The way ahead is to push for participatory democracy where the state mobilises the poo socially to harness their creativity, resilience and wisdom in a new social contract between the poor and the elite.

We can get out of this morass if we begin to trust each other, care for the poor, and have hope and project a vision of ourselves living peacefully and in harmony with one another in a

(Madhukar SJB Rana is with the Institute of Development Studies in

Kathmandu)

STANDING UP... On 1 March, my college was

attacked by Maoist students.

ies burnt down several computers and destroyed many more. Police arrived but not in time. The comrades were gone, the officers were left evaluating the destruction and we were witnessing the utter failure of law and order in this country. The leaders of the Maoist should understand that though there are thousands who are afraid of their guns and bombs, there are a few who are not. And they can

> and unjust actions. Bharati Ghimire Maharajgung

...OR NOT In the past few months I have listened intently for a sign that would suggest even a slight step toward the end of the atrocities being committed by the Maoists. Being away from home, it is difficult to contemplate the emotions that have a stronghold over the general

stand up against their terror

population. But it is physically and mentally debilitating to go through your routine with a will help, at least not until the country undergoes through enormous reforms. We are at a stage where the general public cannot do anything but

Perhans a wave of oninion ated citizens will incite some efficient response from the government, which has more or less utterly failed in its attempts to reconcile this problem. No credit goes to the Maoists either-talk about brains going to waste! How a civil war will improve the state of our nation is beyond my comprehension. With the tactics being used we are getting nowhere and will gain

> Sipee Kaphle By email

NEPAL IN NEPALI

The article "Black clouds over Nepali nationalism" by Pradeep Nepal, UML MP, is interesting. It argues on the prominent Indian paper in New Delhi" and also some

LETTERS

other Indian paper, but does not give the name of the paper. I do not understand why. If the newspapers were identified. any interested person could read the basis of Mr Nepal's article himself and make his

USA

Pradeep Nepalís piece was a translation featured in our From the Nepali Press section.

CK LAL

I read your naner every week but try to avoid reading Mr Lal's column. I can't figure out what he is writing or for whom, and it is impossible

to reach any conclusions writing. In his last column ("No time for games," #83) vague statemer "An army that had

doing so in a terrain designed to favour querrillas." Who did he expect to bring to fight-Indians? Americans? Most of our army's training is done in such terrain. A less informed Sambhu Pant nerson might imagine from Mr Lal's article that the Nepali army trains in farmlands in the tarai. Mr Lal seems to be the

virtually no experience in

fighting an insurgency was

one expecting quick results. Does Mr Lal try to please all political parties by repeating in every column that the elite have hindered democ racy? Twelve years of multinarty democracy and we haven't vet seen development

How many more vears before we have land liherty and the live? Mr La may not be aware but time is the one thing our not have. Democ

racy has failed us

terribly. We need a newer system devised by our people and for our people. If that too hesitate to throw it out. That for me is the definition of democracy.

NARAYAN GOPAL

With regard to Mrs Pemela Guruwacharya's letter (Letters, #82), I am sure Narayan Gopal's having once been a taxi driver does not detract from his greatness as a crooner. Quite the contrary. If our good old CK Lal's memor is to be trusted, Narayan Gopal is a shining example of a person rising above adverse circumstances to fashion a magnificent life. Mrs Guruwacharya should not try to cloak her late lamented spouse in the false parb of

greatness in the process. Is driving a taxi shameful? Saradchandrika Sharma PK Campus, Kathmandu

thoroughly enjoy Mr Lal's columns. However, instead of insisting that the late singer

Babu Sahehs and deny his

have closed the issue by apologising for hurting the feelings of Pemela Guruwacharya, instead of adamantly insisting that he right. A bit of humility and sympathy, Mr Lal, instead of arrogance, After all. taxi drivers don't like to be called taxi drivers, sweepers don't like to be called sweepers,

madheses don't like to be

called madheses, etc. etc.

was a taxi driver. I think a

writer of his stature, intelli-

gence and standard should

The list is never-ending.

This matter is now closed.

COURAGE TO BATHE

Reading "Back at Sundarijal,"

(#82 annarently it took our great leader 12 days to decide to have a bath mainly because "morally, the opera tion involves a courageous decision and action." No wonder Nepali politics stinks today. Leaders of today, take a

bath. Be courageous.

RAMYATA LIMBU

 tern-looking sentries check visitors' bags at the gate, a curious monkey peers down from a tree, and a couple of maroon-robed nuns wind their way up a dirt road to a nunnery on a hill in the heart of the Shivapuri National Park, Other than that it all quiet, as always. The only indication that the protecte area—until three weeks ago officially known as the Shiyapuri Watershed and Wildlife Reservehas just been designated Nepal's ninth national park is the yellow board being repainted by

park officials. Shiyapuri isn't 'just another national park'. "In terms of tourism the area has great potential," says neur and former forester Karna Shakya. "It's probably the only protected area in the world less than a dozen kilometres from a teeming me tropolis and international airport And the biodiversity in there is remarkable by any standards."

And, of course, a quarter of the Valley's drinking water supply comes from here. About 30 million of the 200 million litres of water that flows out everyday from

HERE AND THERE

Shivapuri are tapped from nume ous streams, including the Bagmati and Bishnumati, which originate in the Shivapuri hills. The water is collected into reservoirs and fed nto pipelines to Kathmandu, and i is usually good, clean water compared with some of what passes or potable water in the capital.

But that is starting to change,

just as it did about 25 years ago.

livelihood, and raise awareness

among local residents so the

"Most of the water originating from ow that the area is a national the headwaters in the Shiyapuri park, and it will be easier to watershed is clean and unpolluted. implement them firmly. If things certain areas inhabited by villagers go the way they should, people in Sundarijal are polluting the water will be relocated to areas where source," says a park official. Back in the impact of their settlements of the mid-1970s. Shiyanuri was the fragile ecosystem and the watershed will be minimised and increasingly affected by urban there will be more tourists sprawl and the degradation of its enlarging the local economy. "It rests. Landslides and slips became common and the quality of drinking will take time, but once the park water deteriorated. From the mid regulations come into force, we 1970s to the early 1990s, all kinds expect to increase park fees. of things have been tried for promote eco-tourism, and start Shivapuri—it was first declared a community projects, " says Bed protected watershed area, then a Kumar Dhakal, assistant warden nrotected watershed and wildlife of this forest just 13 km north reserve. There were programs to of the teeming Kathmandu encourage conservation farming, reate alternative sources of

The trouble is, about 45,000 eople depend directly or indirectly on Shivapuri for their livelihood, and residents of the products of the forest, and the parts

used cautiously rather than

past. But all programs were

who should have control of

discontinued when donors and

the government couldn't decide

them-donors wanted to decen-

There will be stricter rules

tralise, government wanted to

retain its authority.

exploited as they have been in the

A national park comes to the capital

afford it. "At one time, the

Shivapuri Development Com-

mittee worked out that it would

cost Rs 120 million to shift the

settlements over three years. But

the Finance Ministry didn't have

the money—today, it would

Given that money is being

diverted from developmen

probably cost Rs 150 million."

anyway, it seems unlikely this

The effects of the alternative

stricter enforcement and harsher

penalties, could be offset by an

increase in revenue from tourism

"But," says Sherpa, who runs a

lodge inside the park, "the local

people should be allowed to run

the lodges and hotels, not some

big company from Kathmandu.

The VDC chairman says he has

reason to be sceptical—he hasn't

seen any of the income collected

by the reserve go back to the

will happen any time soon.

What does the new Shivapuri National Park mean for Kathmandu?

area have seen so many programs fail, they are divided on this. Some are worried they will be forcefully relocated, and others aren't certain that the benefits. when they come, will help them directly. "Quite a few programs have come and gone. The people have benefited a little, but the benefits are negligible compared with local needs. There are few signs remaining of all that activity," says Nima Sherpa, chairman of the Sundarijal Village Development Committee. Pointing to a peach tree in bloom—the result of a project to help locals grow fruit-he adds, "What can one expect when you try distributing 50 apple saplings to 25 VDCs?"

Six of Sundarijal VDC's nine

wards fall inside the protected

area, and Sherpa's own house is one of approximately 400 households of Okhrepani and Mulkharka villages that were not relocated outside the watershed area when Shivapuri was declared a reserve. There have been plans on and off, to relocate the settlements that remain inside the park boundaries, because human and agricultural waste (chemical fertilisers, insecticides etc) generated by the villages have polluted the water source in Sundarijal. Some reports even cite the presence of faecal matter in the water, and recommended that the local populace be relocated. "Nothing's happened so far. We are aware that Kathmandu's residents are drinking water that is polluted by waste generated here. But where else can we go," says Sherna

Troubled by marauding animals bent on destroying crops grown on 20 hectares of largely infertile land, and caught between the strict rules of the protected areas and the necessity to make ends meet, some are even not averse to shifting. "Given adequate compensation we would be willing to move away, resettle in more fertile areas in the tarai," says a local Narayan Shrestha. Now that the reserve has been designated a national park, he's concerned that regulations will be stricter community "Sure they might and fines will be higher and that have built some resthouses and

it will be harder for villagers to such, but what's the use of make ends meet. And even if building unnecessary infrastructure relocation is back on the agenda. when people need health care and education, it is a matter of some debate whether the government can

> imminent relocation and that the government will take over the land mmediately surrounding the area. which was designated a national park by an official notice published n the Royal Gazette on 18 February, "Of course now that this is a national park, there is some public concern that between 500 m and 1 km of land around the park will come under conservation rotocol. That's in keeping with national park regulations. But nowhere in the regulations does it say that land ownership will be affected. It's basically gossip spread

More probable in the future. says the assistant warden, is that a ouffer zone will be formed and there will be integrated community development programs, with local people voicing their opinions and concerns through user groups.

NATION

No help for self help

Thuli Maya Tamang never imagined she'd see a school up close. Now she is helping run one for the children of her village. Everyone in Pipara Simara in Bara, Thuli Maya's village of 70 households makes their living crushing stone. It's a hard life, but they've made some real sacrifices so their children have a brighter future. Wanting a better life for their children, they have decided that though they don't have much, they would do their best to get a school in their village. They raised enough funds to establish a primary school, and now each one of them contributes Rs 100 a month to keep it going. Before the neighbourhood school was started, children from Pipara Simara had to trudge 7 km away to Pathlaiya village, and only a handful of children went to school. Now all that is changing, and virtually all school-age children-enough to keep two teachers busy all day-have the opportunity to learn.

The only problem is the district's education administration, which is far from encouraging of such efforts. Children in Pipara Simara village are already half way into their first academic year but the Bara District Education Office is still hemming and having about giving the school a

Opposition's proposition

The main opposition UML has made public its proposal to amend the constitution. In an eightpoint proposal, the UML recommends the creation of an all-party election government for free and fair elections, and a national government during times of economic crisis and natural disasters. It also recommends forming a cabinet from 10 percent of the members of parliament strengthening local government and clearing the confusion about the prime minister's power to dissolve parliament

The country's largest left party has also proposed strengthening the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority and creating an effective system to regularly investigate and monitor the assets of high-ranking public figures. In its other seven-point proposal on social and economic issues, the UML seeks to empower dalits, minorities and women, strengthen social justice, improve education and health, increase employment end the politicisation of security forces, and resolve the problems of citizenship in the national interest. Now if only words became deeds so easily.

Curbing corruption

The government appears to be intent on curbing corruption. It has decided to form a three-member judicial commission chaired by a Supreme Court judge to investigate the assets of all individuals-and their families-who have been in public office since 1990. It expects over 1,000 individuals to be investigated, including six prime ministers, four deputy prime ministers, a large number of ministers, parliamentarians, and elected representatives of District Development Committees and municipalities. Government servants above grade three and their families will also be under investigation.

Government spokesman and Minister for Information and Communication Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta also told a press gathering last Monday that the authorities expected a report in six months and that they also planned to introduce a bill aimed at empowering the Commission for the Investigation of Ábuse of Authority and curbing widespread corruption. If that is the case, maybe they should take former Nepali Congress Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala at his word. Investigations should begin at home.

Saving Sajha

The government shouldn't liquidate a corporation that has provided essential public transport services to Nepalis for 36 years, say employees at Saiha Yatavat. They argue the corporation should be revived and restructured as an enterprise under the Company Act, which will also help fight off the growing influence of private transport syndicates. They say the cabinet's

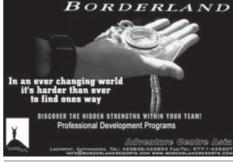


8 - 14 MARCH 2002 NEPALI TIMES

decision to liquidate Sajha Yatayat, taken three months ago in the face of the corporation's increasing financial liability, contravenes the Co-operative Act. Analysts say the corporation has enough assets to run 60 buses that would be operational with minor repairs, and run with a downsized staff and improved management. For the past couple of years, the corporation has operated eight buses with over 700 employees—most of whom allegedly got their jobs through political pressure and government intervention.

Human rights

Despite recognising that the Nepali government "generally" respects human rights, the US State Department's 2001 human rights report on Nepal sharply criticises both the police and the Maoists. The report, which was released on 4 March, notes that though police forces are subject to "effective civilian control", since the declaration of the emergency on 26 November, "the police committed a number of serious human rights abuses." The report says that these include, at times, the use of unwarranted lethal force and torture as punishment to extract confessions, and arbitrary arrests and detentions. The report also points to the disappearance of persons in custody as a problem and says prison conditions remain poor. The Maoists have come in for a fair share of criticism too. The report criticises the insurgents for waging an insurrection "through torture, killings, bombings, extortion, and intimidation against civilians and public officials." The annual human rights report is required by US law so the State Department can determine if countries receiving financial assistance meet the human rights standards set by the US Congress.



The long and short of Shivapuri

Shivapuri is large and diverse-nine km north to south and 20-24 km east to west, ranging

from an elevation of 1,000 m at the Likhu river in the northern valley to 2,732 m high Shiyapur

peak. Spread over 12 Village Development Committees of Kathmandu, nine VDCs of Nuwakot

district, and two Sindhupalchowk VDCs, the Shivapuri National Park covers approximately 144

square km of land. It is the country's only park that lies entirely within Nepal's middle hills and

The a 111 km boundary wall around the park, and Royal Nepal army quards protect the

mixed hardwood forests of oak, pine, birch, rhododendron. The park area's rich biodiversity

consists of endangered species like the sloth bear, black panther and the clouded leopard,

177 species of birds, including nine threatened species (including the paradise flycatcher)

and 102 species of hutterflies even the rare Kaiser-i-Hind, and 129 species of mushrooms

blowing in from the Trisuli, Shivapuri was deemed in the Panchayat era a good place for a

For the culturally-minded, too, there's plenty here. Shivapuri has several religious sites for

Hindus and Buddhists. On Nepali New Year, crowds from Kathmandu flock to Baghdwar and

Bishnudwar, where the holy Hindu rivers Bagmati and Bishnumati originate. A two-hour hike

trekking route to Helambu passes through various Sherpa and Tamang villages in Shivapuri

Last fiscal year, the reserve collected about Rs 30 lakhs, 60 percent of which the govern

ment is entitled to. Nearly 24,000 people, mostly Nepalis, visited the park last year, almost

brings you to Shivapuri peak, which offers a panoramic view of the Himalaya, and the main

the park, for fear of leopards and boars. A fog-free area because of the mountain winds

domestic airport, but that didn't materialise owing to a shortage of land.

double the number of people that visited seven years ago.

via Sundariial.

Park brochures advise visitors not to hike alone on the fair weather road and foot trails inside

there are plans to extend it towards Chandragiri and Pulchowki

Wonderin' where the lions are

ynchronicity is a strange thing. One recent bandh morning, I found myself discussing the merits and demerits of Singapore with someone who thoughts the interest and demerits of Singapore with someone who thought the island state's style of governance held lessons for Nepal. The next weekend, I was walking through Changi Airport on an unexpected and unplanned foray southeast, towards the equator.

The sheer efficiency and comfort of the airport alone is enough to sway most Asia-weary westerners. My temporary travelling companion was a medical veteran of the United Mission to Nepal, on his way back home after a trip to Kathmandu. He told me that he always flew home through Changi because "the alternative is Delhi and that's no alternative at all." I pointed out that while Changi was certainly a good taste of Singapore Indira Gandhi International was by no means representative of Delhi. But he wouldn't be swaved.

Out into the gentle streets of eastern Singapore, the taxi driver friendly and-yes-efficient, suggesting tourist activities and recommending restaurants. No, I don't think his brother had any hospitality busine interests. At my midrange hotel, a sign read "no tipping please, our staff are well paid to look after you". In the shops, bazaars and endless restaurants everything is immaculate, reasonably priced and of superb quality. Food is a glorious thing in Singapore, eating many times a day is a local obsession. You never see a local drunk although there are bars and evidence of bee culture everywhere. Public transport is among the best in the world and the authorities wisely try to restrict the use of cars through swingeing fees for daytime use of the city streets. It is often too hot or wet to walk very far but surely only California has more air conditioning units per capita.

Of course, much that was colourful, exotic and interesting has disappeared from Singapore. Bugis street, once home to Asia's craz tite scene, is now an ersatz Chinese village-cum-shopping mall. The lush Asian ways, Asian values, Asian democracy. Singapore might just have lessons for Nepal.



green parkland is surrounded by flowing traffic as local affluence easil rcomes the cost of driving. Árab Street, Little India, Chinatown and other neighbourhoods are architecturally present but have a feel of theme park about them, tourists outnumbering residents; restaurants and boutique hotels everywhere. New buildings are almost all Chicago style glass-steel wers. The tropical colonialist ethic of tile roofs and pillared verandas is

still there, but dwarfed by brash skyscrapers. As for local politics, benign authoritarianism overlaid with democratic

symbols rules the day. Only 24 opposition candidates ran for 84 parliamentary seats in the last election. Few succeeded. Some dissi dents have been sent to prison in the past, according to internation human rights group. A cosy elite of business people and highly skilled bureaucrats run the economy, yet few Singaporeans are bothered. This is why so many working with governance issues in Asia wonder if former Prime Minister Lee wasn't right when he spoke of Asian ways, Asian values, Asian versions of democracy.

Put simply, Singaporeans are proud of their status as a fulldeveloped country—fifth in per capita income, ahead of Canada Sweden and Australia. They're proud of their airline, easily one of the world's best, and their diverse economy based on hard work, education and brain power. Singapore is smaller than all but four Nepali districts and its three million people are almost entirely refugees and migrants—the hardest-working people in the world.

Where then are the lessons for Nepal? The two countries share a ontinent—Asia. Both also had turbulent births as modern states. Nepal in 1950-51 and Singapore later in the 50s and 60s. Big neigh bours lurk over the horizon in both lands although Singapore's economic success keeps it punching above its weight with Malaysia and Indonesia. In the end, I wonder if that's the only real thing of note for Nepal about the Lion City. Size doesn't matter, or can be mitigated, if you make a success of yourself. The price of failure, by contrast, is devastating, and believe me, they're aware of that in

The advantages of geography, a refugee population and relative political unity are simply not to be downplayed by those in search of a magic formula for Nepal. ♦





Dhakal shrugs off rumours of

by estate brokers," says Dhakal.









ngaporean lustre?

False promises inevitably brought

their moments of truth. If some

racy with death, bondage and th

Nepalis are today equating democ

pursuit of sorrow, it's probably an

overreaction to the pranks fate has

been playing on them with agonis

ing regularity. Even in the midst of

this despondency, however, some

identify opportunities inherent in

the invocation of good governance

represents almost all mainstrean

no single party can solve Nepal's

problems. Coming out with such

steely conviction requires great courage, especially considering the

engeance with which the Maoists

continue to insist only their part

can save the nation. But Nepal's

Actually, no single polity may be

able to meet the people's expecta tions. Instead of becoming too

enamoured of what Museveni

Mahathir and Musharraf may

have achieved, we should star

Perhaps we can start by

had since Padma Sumshere's ill-

fated draft to create a charter that

blends the Ranas' ruthless adminis

trative and judicial efficacy, the pre

panchayat modernisers' willingness

tradition, the panchas' follow-the-

leader regimentation and today's

overnance that could best suit our

innate Nepaliness, we might even start

njoying the plunge into this reservoir

of self-discovery. But there's an equal

risk of being caught in a bottomless

a lifetime complaining how each

the one it replaced.

pit. Many Nepalis, after all, have spent

polity has turned out to be worse tha

to co-exist with the forces of

civil society's robustness. As we

struggle to evolve a structure of

gathering all the constitutions we'w

thinking locally.

eeds are more complicated

political groups, has concluded that

This group of leaders, which

politicians have been quick to

What proportion of democracy and decency should a polity deliver? Post 11-September this is changing, but that's nothing new for Nepal

governance, buttressed by endorsements from a beyv of important foreign visitors, has brough Nepalis closer to some unconven tional role models. Consider the following three leaders international development organisations like to cita as exemplars of excellence today: Museveni, Mahathir, Musharraf. These politicians, who invariably used to be in the news for their authoritarian proclivities, have nov edged out the likes of Yeltsin, Walesa and Havel as credible agents of political change as well. Uganda's transformation from an

emblem of state-sanctioned pandemo-

godavari

s attributed to the leadership of President Yoweri Museveni. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, who kept Malaysia out of the hottest noments of the 1997 Asian financial meltdown, has exemplified how criticism and emulation of Western capitalism need not be mutually exclusive pursuits. In Pakistan, Gen Pervez Musharraf has shown how an army chief could become president without imposing martial law, muzzling the press or maddening the middle class

This alteration in the perceptio of what proportion of democracy and decency a polity should be able to

deliver has been accentuated in the encourage national checks and aftermath of the 11 September balances in a way that would ultimately advance international terrorist attacks. But its foundation goes back to the monumental security held true for a while. Bu reading of what the breaching of when micronationalism fuelled by the Berlin Wall signified. The collaps ancient grievances stepped into the of communism in Eastern Europe and political space freed by liberal dissolution of the Soviet Union democracy, the peace dividend the provided an opportunity for architect former cold warriors were expected of all moulds to craft a new world to lavish on the world's neediest order in their own image. Since was spent on confronting a new set of challenges. Multinational corporations, too, modern-day mercantilists hurtled far ahead of everybody else, they used their ardour and candour to redirect saw much of their optimism go up in the new wave of democracy towards

smoke. Big Tobacco discovered tha expanding the global marketplace. werseas markets weren't expanding The traditional political assump fast enough to make up for the declin tions that a league of liberal democrain sales in the West and rise of classcies would advance peace and action suits. The checks and balances orogress, create a middle class capabl that came to the forefront were ones of defending society from the that had purely commercial connota depredations of fanaticism, and tions in corporate conglomerates and

the criminal underworld. As Third World debt, the AIDS pandemic and environmental degradation widened the fault lines between North and South, voters in dono nations became more interested in how the foreign-aid programmes their taxes funded were faring abroad. In a global atmosphere where political discussions cam

> globalisation weren't part of the anticapitalism protests in Seartle and Genoa, but they did provide the rioters their cause. The post-11 eptember stare into the root causes of terrorism has identified good governance as an instrument of clearing the deadly swamps of desperation in the developing world. The economic and political imperatives of building national institutions that work have cristallised into

how demands for good governance in Nepal are rooted in the domestic compulsions of donor governments as well. Nepal's multiparty crusaders didn't expect to gain power within 60 days of launching their "people's movement". For politicians once willing to settle for a waiver of the class-organisationaffiliation provision of the panchayat elections, overseeing and adapting to a wholesale transfer of power from the palace secretariat to the prime minister's office was undoubtedly overwhelming. In their stupor, what else could the new leaders have done apart from making pledges radiating with

packaged in such themes as the "clash of civilisations", "illiberal democracy" and "cultural relativ ism", the ability of Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito and Indonesia's Suharto to hold their countries together became more than a subject of academic inquiry. To be sure, those marginalised by

today's guiding global philosophy. This recapitulation of post-cold war history is central to recognising



the Fitness Centre or play an energetic game of tennis. Enough respirementing seums and a southing massage:

The Godpush Weekend Package is your bleel holiday package. Goest can avail the Package any day of the





8-14 MARCH 2002 NEPALI TIMES NEPALI ECONOMY

Nepal-India treaty

Nepal and India have agreed to renew the preferential trade treaty, but it now comes with new definitions for manufacturing, as well as quantitative restrictions on the four problem products of which there is said to have been a "surge" in exports to India to the detriment of industry there—vegetable ghiu, acrylic yam, copper wires and zinc oxide. In general, Nepali industry is happy that the treaty row is over and it can get back to business without worrying for another five years. But it is unhappy that it took so long, when it was already clear last August last year that India wanted specific rules of origin and other safeguards in place before it would sign the extension. Sensing that, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and its Indian counterpart the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had proposed a way out months before India actually sought the changes on 14 August. But the government sat on the FNCCI idea, rather than acting on the proposal.

Under the new provisions. Negali phiu makers will now only be able to sell 100 000 tops of the product in India duty-free. (Last fiscal year Nepal exported roughly 125,000 tons of ghiu). Any sales over this new limit will take place under the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) regime. Likewise, the quota fixed for duty free acrylic yarn export is 10,000 tons (against the roughly 11,000 exported last year), copper wires 7,500 tons and zinc oxide 2,500 tons. This could mean short-term problems for all four industries—which involve a total investment of over Rs 10 billion—but industry sources say that the decision could be helpful to Nepal in the long-run, since it would direct investment into other industries that involve more value addition This could be a problem because it is uncertain who would issue and monitor the quotas.

"The new protocol is more restrictive but we knew it was coming," said Rajendra Khetan, vice president and spokesman of FNCCI. "We now have to be more competitive and not rely only on duty differentials and prepare better for joining the World Trade Organisation."

Under the new agreement, which came into effect 6 March, Nepali products seeking duty-free access to Indian markets-except tobacco, alcohol and cosmetics-will be required to have at least 25 percent local value addition this year. From 2003, the foreign content in finished products crossing the border should not be over 70 percent. The updated protocol also requires that exports be accompanied by origin certificates in a new format, but Nepal has a "transition period" for this until mid-April. The revised protoco requires that the ex-factory price of the export product be stated, as well the CIF (the cost cost, freight and insurance at the customs point) value of the imported raw materials and parts, and the value added in Nepal. In addition, the treaty now specifies what cannot be considered sufficient to pass as "manufacturing" or "processing"-for example, cost of operations to ensure safe storage of materials, breaking up and assembly, slicing, cutting, slitting, re-packaging and labelling, etc.

Finally, there are very stringent safeguards: the affected country can take unilateral action where exports cause "injury" to local production if joint consultations between the two countries do not yield a result within 60 days. Should this clause be activated then the entire industry, and not only the erring. producer, could be penalised. The agreement was signed in New Delhi on 2 March. Nepal's exports to India have grown five-fold after the December 1996 treaty, from Rs 5.2 billion in 1996/97 to Rs 27.2 billion in 2000/01. Imports from India have also doubled, from about Rs 25 billion to Rs

47 billion during the same period.

Glen chimneys

The B&B Trading Concern has begun marketing a new range of household appliances manufactured by Glen India Limited. The company says the chimney hoods it markets bring to Nepal the Italian way of keeping kitchens free of cooking smells and fumes. It also says it has chimneys to fit any



At it again



The renewed trade treaty will only make sense if you look at the larger picture.

with quantitative restrictions? And if

that is done, who will be responsible

for the licensing procedure and for

chance that the creative import

enforcing the restrictions? Is there a

documentation so commonly used to

undervalue quantity and rates will be matched by similarly creative export

documentation? Without someone to

enforce all these restrictions, the treaty

is worth less than the paper it's written

on. And given the shenanigans of the

provisions in place or if they will make

The little coverage in the Indian

surprise—where is all the news about

industries are reacting to the treaty? It

would be nice—and forewarned—to

know whether they are happy, or still

their way in the implementation phase.

On the Indian budget, going by what

lobbying their government to have

border customs police already in

evidence, it is hard to imagine how they will deal with the various

more than a rudimentary effort at

press on the treaty comes as a

how India's protected domestic

the Nepal and India trade treaty, and would like to linger while on the future of the trade relationship, now that the troublesom greement has been renewed. The newal of the treaty was, cynical as it may sound, at the behest of geoolitics rather than socio-economics. More to the point for our common future, if we are willing to share one will be analysing the Indian federal udget recently tabled in parliament and asking what the oh-so-subtle nveiling of Reforms II in India

But on that subject, your istential oracle of all things economi willing to bet the streets of Chandni Chowk and Ason came alive in whatever draughty South Block room he negotiations were taking place in. And that both parties walked away smugly satisfied with their haggling skills, with the question of value addition, the main feature of the new, dubiously improved treaty esolved through that age-old tool of The adventures of the famous

e-vanaspati ghiu, copper twine, acrylic yarn, zinc oxide and steel pipes—have been cut sadly short and the option of calling foul using the export surge catch-all phrase has been institutionalised. The wording of the treaty was agreed upon, but have the nodalities been set out to define 'export surge', and is there a quantitative mechanism to cap exports? Will the licenses issued to producers come

the Finance Minister says, it doesn't seem to have anything that would especially affect Nepal. The unstated ention to continue with reforms by rolling back subsidies and tax sops to middle income taxpayers will have to be first agreed upon by the political parties in the ruling alliance. The cut in customs duty indicates that the right moves are being made to comply with the WTO on tariff rationalisation, but from the Nepali perspective, the lowering of customs duties in India means fewer opportunities of informal trade. The impact of higher LPG and other petroleum product prices will, of course go through a 1.6 spiral on reaching Nepal.

the perspective of the changes that the Indian economy is adopting. A fair railway budget and now a rational federal budget are the backdrop against which import-export as well as monetary policy will follow. What the altered treaty does is bring a semblance of the notion that Nepal and India might now be trading partners, a definite step up from the impression the earlier treaty gave of one partne given blanker benefits. For Nepal, this is a chance to revisit the critical issue of core competencies, and what industries and businesses these car sustain. The Beed challenges the powers that be to do so

This is why the renewal of the

trade treaty should also be viewed from

Readers can post their views at



nakal, Third Vice-president of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce stry (FNCCI) also runs Momento s, one of Nepal's largest exporters of US retail outlets such as Walmart and JC

Nepali Times: Weire told you are running a sinking business, just how bad are things?

The industry is going through the worst times, not only because of internal problems. 11 September was a major setback, but we had problems even before-our competitive edge was gone when the US allowed duty-free, and quota free garment imports from sub-Saharan and Caribbean countries. Besides, our inefficiencies, production and transport costs always made our goods more expensive by 25-30 percent. This is a sensitive industry, but we've never received recognition from the government and political parties.

What kind of recognition?
Look how Bangladesh treats its garment industry. We began in garments at almost the same time, the late 1970s. Bangladesh took the industry very seriously from day one, attracting Korean and Japanese investors and setting up assembly lines. In Nepal the Indians came with their old

"We need trade, not aid."

paddle machines. India still does manual sewing except in some large cities, but manages to get business because they have skilled, cheap, readily-available labour, and fewer work and supply disruptions. compared to us, and their workers are more disciplined. So they can go for labour-intensive items such as embroidery etc, and also highquantity bidding. They also have very good cotton and fabrics.

In Nepal our governments have failed to realise that this is an industry that could have employed thousands of people-with the right incentives. Even good policies are rarely implemented. Investors have lost confidence in government promises. Our competitors get new facilities almost every two months. Bangladesh does not allow strikes, here even political parties and educated people encourage striking.

How many do you employ? How much have you invested? The garment industry is Nepal's largest, in terms of foreign currency earnings and employment. I have been the highest exporter for the past four years running. My initial investment was \$5 million; with upgrades to provide customers new stitching and finishing, the total investment is about \$6 million. There are 2,000-3,000 people working there, 99 percent Nepalis, 90 percent women. We use the assembly-line approach and have strict quality controls to meet international standards. My turnover in 2001 was \$13.9 million.

How can we do business afer the quotas are gone?

Nepalis are losing interest in garments because of the recession and the upcoming WTO regime. Other countries are taking measures to adapt— Bangladesh has reduced interest rates, India and China have raised incentives. In Nepal we don't expect cash incentives, but we want appropriate policies and their implementation. In our case, export industries are supposed to be tax-free. But we pay 0.75 percent tax and 0.5 percent service charge, above the disadvantages we already face being landlocked and having high industrial factor costs. Meanwhile China, for example, is dumping anything anywhere, which it can do, because its production is efficient and there's a climate where people can work undisrupted day and night. In this industry if you don't meet deadlines you're gone. Our strikes prevent us from meeting the vessels sailing from Calcutta, but politicians don't realise that.

How bad were post 11-September cancellations? Personally I didn't have cancellations of ready orders, but business we were expecting has been put on hold, which means it's gone-seasons. fashion trends don't wait for us to sort things out. The business I was expecting in November or December may have gone to other countries And the almost daily news on the insurgency may have begun to divert potential orders elsewhere. Our customers have gone through delays caused by bandhs, hold-ups caused by changing rules. We have major image problems, which affect customers' perception of our ability to deliver. Our competitors get the business we lose.

What are the chances of a revival?

The good old days are gone forever. The only way we can shore up business now would be major, government-backed support like softloans, deferred LoCs (Letters of Credit), more banking facilities, less red-tape. We have to make this industry competitive and sustainable. We need to tell the US government immediately: if you want to help us, we need trade, not aid. This industry can generate the employment needed to re-activate economic transactions

Has there been a follow-up to US Secretary of State Colin Powellis promise to look into textile quotas?

I think we need to continuously lobby to follow up on that assurance Our embassy in Washington should be doing that on a daily basis. We have continued to campaign, but things aren't moving.

How many industries have shut down?

More than 85 percent. Central bank data shows exports are declining by over 30 percent compared with last year. This would have been the right time to increase production, but this year production is already down by 50 percent compared to last year.

How bad will the situation be after the WTO rules take effect? We will have more competition, our survival will depend on our ability to enhance productivity, quality and the overall business environment. We lie between two giants, India and China, which have everything businesses need, from production to shipping lines. Without commensurate facilities here we can do little at the industry end. We work with quotas, which will not be there after WTO. There are possibilities within the WTO so least developed countries can get customs exemptions. The government should be working on that now, before the trading rules take effect. With those things in place, some industries may stay around, and they'll be able to help Nepal by generating employment and earning foreign currency.

opportunity" to hear top class

spread over ten days gives the

few years from now it will be hard to remember a time when Kathmandu and Nepal weren't magnets for jazz aficionados. Starting next Tuesday, Maha Shivaratri, entertainment and culture take on a whole new meaning in Nepal, at the first Kathmandu

buying tickets for every show,

for me, this introduction to jazz. This festival will give the younger generation a quicker avenue to this genre of music." In addition to the international acts, there will be performances by wellestablished Nepali classical and folk musicians, as well as younger anxious not to miss out on what artists, and a few sessions of jamming that shall happen as and many see as "a once-in-a-lifetime where the fancy takes the performmusicians play all kinds of jazz at ers. "My hope is," says Cadenza's Pravin Chhetri, "that the festival will expose fresh talent in Nepal. In a variety of venues in Kathmandu and Pokhara. That the festival is these troubled times I can't think of a better way to promote harmony

Chi Thapa, bass guitarist of

Cadenza, the band that inspired all this, "It's been a long journey



8-14 MARCH 2002 NEPALI TIMES



well as a place to promote business. It is difficult to overstate the potential of the coming two weeks to alter international perception of Nepal. As the events of the last 18 months have shown, suddenly it isn't enough to have only mountains, or architecture, or Buddhism, every tourist destination needs more and better things on offer. What Nepal offers needs to be upgraded every so often, such efforts. and no one will deny that right now the tourism industry badly

goodwill an initiative like this generates, and the display of cupport that has inundated festival promoters, Chhedup

Bomzan, Cadenza's manager and there will be another one, and owner of Upstairs Jazz Bar, and Susan Sellars, assistant coordinathe year after, and so on, until it is an annual fixture not just on tor of the Palmer Street Jazz Nepal's tourism calendar, but on Festival, is astonishing given the the Asian music schedule. general decline in industry There's no telling how many people will come here specifionfidence and spending, Sponsors have put up offers of air tickets (Singapore Airlines are cally for it, or stay on longer to flying in seven musicians from attend, or simply come to explore the modern, cosmopoli-Australia), hotel rooms (Shangri-La Hotel are putting up 18 musicians in Kathmandu and tan environment that nurtures Pokhara), media support (includ-Businesses seem to recognise the long-term possibilities and ing this newspaper), and everyrequire from alcohol and tobacco to sightseeing, T-shirts and even





Who's playing

From 12 to 23 March, Jazzmandu will feature bands and soloists from the UK, Australia, Dubai and India, along with Nepal's own jazz quartet and co-organisers, Cadenza,

The Brisbane-based Afro Dizzi Act, almost every member of which has formal, university-level music training, meld in their performances their wide range of musical interests-funk, orchestra set-pieces, the gamut of jazz styles, electronic/ dance music, hip hop, soul and traditions of music from around the globe. With their expertise in jazz piano, saxophone, bass, percussion and new music-making machines, Afro Dizzi Act is among the most interesting outfits in Australia today, and every one its five members is in demand for performances with other artists as well.

Another musician peers and listeners alike are "glad to have in any group" is Kevin Hunt, one of Australia's top jazz pianists. Acknowledged as a splendid and skilful live performer with a nuanced grasp of technique and order, and an unabashed sense of fun Hunt has been known to play around with the sounds of the synthesiser and belt out innovative and imaginative solos

If you've ever imagined making the rounds of the jazz bars of London or the international festival, Bernie's London Jazz Groove is the outfit to watch out for. Every name in it has a long history-Mike Cotton, a trumpeter forty years into the game who's played with The Kinks as well as jazz legends Aker Bilk, Bud Freeman and Harry Allen, among many others; Mike Hogh, a trombone veteran who founded the London Jazz Big Band and has played mainstream jazz with the likes of Max Kaminski, Bill Coleman, and the Charlie Watts Orchestra: Bernie Holden, clarinettist and saxophonist who is a regular fixture on the London and New York jazz scenes and the international festival circuit; Max Brittain, a guitarist who's played at every major UK concert venue and toured extensively throughout Europe, Scandinavia, the Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand, and worked with such diverse musical talents as Georgie Fame, Marian Montgomery, Terry Lightfoot, Ronnie Scott and Charlie Burd, and Peter Goodwin, a bass guitarist and veteran of London jazz since the 1970s who has a long-time association with, among others, the Soweto township jazz

The biggest draw of the festival for those who know their jazz history will be Australian Don Burrows. A multi-instrumentalist who plays flute, clarinet and all saxophones from alto to baritone Burrows is a household name in Australia and has performed and recorded cuts with everyone from Oscar Peterson, Dizzy Gillespie, Nat King Cole, Mel Torme and Stephane Grappelli to Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Kate Ceberano and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Burrows ran into Cadenza at the Palmer Street Jazz Festival in 2000, and was so impressed with them that he agreed to come and play here for nothing more than a nominal fee and airfare.

Closer home, a combination that promises progressive and virtuoso jazz includes South African iazz pianist and composer for theater Donovan Rossouw, who is influenced by iazz, blues, southern African music and "Cape-style" goema, Bostonian saxophonist Carl Clements whose heroes include Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, and renowned Goan drummer Giles Perry, who graduated from the Berkeley School of Music, and after a stint in the Hindi film music industry, moved on to play professionally in the United States

Mumbai-based Groove Suppa has its own collection of talented pros. Shyam Raaj, who plays tenor and soprano sax and flute, has played with Louis Banks, among others, and toured Europe

and the US. Drummer Lindsay Demello is a regular session player and is behind Bombay Black, which recently opened for Aerosmith at an LA concert. Dwigh Pattison has played bass with drummer Ranjit Barot and bands such as Indigo and Crosswinds. Benay Rai, originally from Darjeeling, is a session guitarist influenced by the blues and Hindustani classical music. Nationalists will be pleased to note that Kathmandu's musicians are also well represented. The now-legendary tabla player Homnath Upadayaya will play with

Cadenza and other Nepali classical musicians, demonstrating his versatility, and his commitment to convincing a wider audience that classical needn't be stuffy. A group of Gandharbas will play the arbaj and sarangi to add a stunning new sound to jazz paradigms mainly to reinforce their belief that music needs both traditions and the space to ne innovative. The Elite's Co-Ed School Marching Band adds a light-hearted and youthful touch, bagpipes and all.

Where to hear what

Gokarna Forest Golf Resort, 12 March, Rs 880. From 12 noon to midnight all the bands except Don Burrows and Kevin Hunt take turns playing at a Woodstock-style show. A free shuttle bus runs every half hour between Gokarna and

Jazz by the Lake, Shangri-La Village, Pokhara, March, Rs 990.* Dinner and jazz under the stars at the Shangri-La

Village.

Jazz by the Lake, Lakeside, Pokhara, 16 March, ticket prices not confirmed.* .lams in small hars around Lakeside

Jazz Fusion, Patan Museum Square, 20 March, Rs 990. Jazz fused with Nepali wind, strings and skins, a follow-up to Cadenza's sold-out show in

Jazzmandu Shangri-La All-Stars Supper Club, 22 March, Rs 1,980. Don Burrows and the all-stars of the festival backed by Cadenza, with a five-course meal at

* The Shangri-La Village, Pokhara has a package offer for both nights. For details, ring

"Music is the message."

Though the band itself needs no introduction, here they are, the men who gave Nepal its first taste of high-altitude jazz:

Navin Chhettri vocalist and drummer Now 29, Navin started early, singing at four and starting guitar at six. In college in Darjeeling, under the influence of heavy metal, he started the band that played acid rock, classic rock and reggae-and eventually metamorphosed into Cadenza. After arriving in Kathmandu, Navin turned to the drums, and Cadenza began to explore the more complex chord structures associated with jazz. In 2000, Navin and his



brother Prayin were invited to Australia's Palmer Street Jazz Festival, which sourced Navin's determination to bring jazz to Kathmandu to encourage cultural exchange, musical inventiveness and to give other musicians the chance to share the sheer excitement of playing at a jazz festival. "I love playing jazz and fusion, the immediate exuberance of creating and improvising. I chose this path, this is what I want to do the rest of my life, make music,

Pravin Chhettri, guitar.

Pravin, also influenced by heavy metal when younger, got into jazz after moving to Kathmandu in the mid-1990s. Pravin learnt to experiment with the genre and now switches from rhythm to lead to bass with equal dexterity. The 24-year-old also worked at a recording studio learning to record and

Laxmi Raj (Chi) Thapa, bass guitar.

At 32, Chi is the oldest band member. Chi grew up on the classic rock staple, and formed his first band at 14. Then came a seven-year stint living and making music, blues and soul, in Pokhara. In 2000, seven years after he got hooked on jazz, Chi joined Cadenza.

Jigme Sherpa, guitar.

The baby of the band, 23-year-old Jigme started playing guitar in his early teens, focusing on again, heavy metal. He too met the brothers in 2000 while doing studio work in Darjeeling. "It's been an amazing road. I had to travel back to listen to and play earlier rock before progressing to jazz," he laughs. In the last year he has moved from playing rhythm guitar in the background to producing some pretty sweet sounds on lead. "I feel privileged to have the opportunity to play with international musicians. I think it's a plus for tourism in Nepal, Music is the message





Membership Open!













PRAGUE - An annual summit called on 1 March by the Visegrad Group (the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary and Poland) on subsidies for farmers and financing in an enlarged EU was cancelled after an old dispute was revived. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban demanded cancellation of the Renes decrees, issued in

August 1945 by then Czechoslovak President Edvard Benes, which stripped about 2.5 million ethnic Germans, or Sudeten Germans, who

were settled along the northern, western and southern borders of

what is now the Czech Republic, and about 30,000 Hungarians of

Czechoslovak citizenship. They are alleged to have welcomed

Hitler's forces in 1938, and Hungary supported Germany, both of

which led to their expulsion from what was then Czechoslovakia

Old war, new fight

What's in your food? Porn police

BROOKLINE - Canada's health department has launched a programme to monitor the health mpacts of foods containing genetically modified (GM) ingredients, but experts and critics say sorting out the impacts, if any, will be extremely difficult unless th products are labelled. An estimated 70 percent of foods on Canada's store shelves contain GM ingredi ents. Yet, despite widespread publi support, the federal government opposes labelling GM foods.

"We have no way to monitor o

track whether GM foods are causing a problem or not without Canada is a major food labelling," says Ellen Desjardins of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA). The association includes public health epidemiologists, nutrition professionals, and inspectors from Canada's most populous province The OPHA is not opposed to biotechnology, Desjardins says, bu it is a "powerful technology that should be tightly controlled, and labelling would serve the public health of Ontario citizens." An independent panel of scientists at the Royal Society of Canada examining the regulation of food biotechnology also advocated

Position Title · Computer Systems Administrator

good use of the organization

Microsoft Exchange

the Human Resources Office, GPO Box; 295, Kathmandu, Nepal,

systems applications and programming

: Fluent in both written and spoken English.

Skills & Abilities: Ability to install and troubleshoot various third-party software as well

be able in explaining computer problems patiently

Application Procedures: Interested candidates who meet the above qualification criteria

mandatory labelling. But a mandatory labelling lav "could place agricultural trade at risk," Michael Presley, director general of the Canadian agriculture ministry's food bureau, told a health ministry hearing on GM

Duties

Education

Experience

Knowledge

Language

abels could violate WTO and North American Free Trade Agreement rules and "would almost rtainly be strongly rejected by the United States," Presley said. Washington opposes labelling and has threatened to challenge an EU oposal for mandatory labelling at the WTO. The FII has been working on an identification scheme requiring food manufacturers to label their products and keep records to monitor their movemen from the farm to the supermarket. US exporters say the labelling could cost them \$4 billion per year.

xporter, accounting for four ercent of the world's food trade valued at \$15.6 billion per year. The US is Canada's biggest customer, buying 60 percent of its food exports. Other major nunchasers include Japan, China and Mexico. Among those products, foods with canola rapeseed oil), maize, or soy are likely to contain GM ingredients because there is little segregation of GM from conventional crops GM crops have been grown in Canadian industry groups also

oppose labelling. It makes no sense because there are no prove health or safety issues with GM foods, according to BIOTECanada, a 108-member industry and research institution association. A 'May contain GM ingredients' label would not mean

An international organization in Kathmandu is seeking an experienced and highly self-motivated

individual to fill a Computer Systems Administrator position. This is a full time position with a

Remuneration: Salary and benefits package commensurate with skills and experience.

: The incumbent is responsible for day to day operation of PCs and LAN

systems. The incumbent installs various software, performs regular

of workstations. The incumbent troubleshoots computer networking

running of cables, troubleshooting hardware and software issues,

issues as well as physical infrastructure of networking which involves

maintaining computer electrical accessories including UPS, changing

communities and keeps abreast of any software updates and puts to

: College degree in computer science preferred. MCSE or other types of

certification a plus, as well as training courses in PC Operations,

: Two or more years of successful computer systems operations with

experience in LAN administration preferably Windows NT with Microsoft

Knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite, Outlook 98, Windows NT, and

as hardware. Ability to configure a Cisco router a plus point. Ability to

communicate effectively with both expatriate and Nepali personnel and

hard drives, CD-ROM drives, network cards, computer memory, etc.

The incumbent establishes contacts with the local technological

backups, and carries out regular maintenance of servers and a number



Labelling GM food in Canada isn't good for the country's economic health, argue trade groups.

anything, says Janet Lambert, the group's president. As well, "there are major considerations for any labelling scheme because of the volume of trade with the United States," she adds.

Public interest groups say Canada is making a mistake. "Eat first, ask questions later is a dangerous public health policy Pat Venditti of Greenpeace Canada said in a statement. "Îf the government doesn't know the risks it shouldn't be allowing GM crops into our food supply and into the environment. If they truly want to

otect public health, they should label products so Canadians can avoid them in the first place." The government's monitoring project is designed to find long-term harm from GM foods, which confirms critics' worst fears, says Venditti. "We can't put GM back in the box once it's eaten or released into the environment but we won't know the harm until it's too late. Canada's health officials have

one to great lengths to persuade

Canadians of the safety of GM foods but now the same departmen is studying their health effects, observed Nadege Adam of the non wernmental Council of Canadians. "This is tacit admission there's cause to be concerned about what we're eating." The health ministry formally known as Health Canada must explain exactly how it can study health effects of GM foods when, without labels, it is imposs ble to link the impact to the food source, says Adam. ♦ (IPS)

Mandala House VERYICED APARTMENT

Profes Microbia o Pd Baltimata PM Ban 1747 Phys e was acted to be producted

EASY TIMES

Are cybercafe owners service providers or Internet police?

MUMBAI - Those wishing to ban Internet pornography are waging an improbable battle, but it's not for lack of effort. If a special committee set up by the Mumbai High Court gets its way, proprietors of cybercafes will be forced to police their premises in the name of protecting minors from "unsuitable Internet material" and cyberstalkers.

The six-member committee wants the High Court to issue a binding "direction that would make all cafes in the state of Maharashtra (of which Mumbai is capital) responsible for requiring customers to show photo-identity cards, recording their personal details, maintaining logs of all the sites the users have visited and restricting minors to machines that do not have cubicles.

"This will prevent easy access of pornography to minors and help police trace those who e-mail inappropriate material to minors from cafes," committee member Gautam Patel said. Advocates believe that once this direction is issued, other states are likely to follow.

The recommendation has angered many cafe owners, who say the direction would be costly to comply with and detrimental to business. Viewing pornography in the privacy of one's home doesn't come under the purview of the law. but to do so in a cafe, which is legally defined as "public space," is illegal. Illegal but rampant. One cafe owner in uptown Mumbai said "about 50 percent of my customers come to access pornography

Another, Seshagiri Shanbhag, said, "Even those who want to just check their mails will think twice before entering my cafe. Nobody wants to share his personal details or telephone numbers with some stranger in a cafe. Also, visiting a cafe is an impulsive decision. What if you don't have an identity card on you? I lose a customer? And, maintaining IP logs is a drain on my resources. I have to invest a lot of time, or buy software that will do the job. Keeping track of the sites a user has visited is the same as monitoring his activities, which will put him off. Also I have to invest in tearing off the cubicles to accommodate special seats for minors. The whole thing is very unfair."

The committee obviously believes otherwise. "The committee's job is to focus on protecting minors from Internet pornography," Patel said. "That our recommendations will discourage even adults from accessing such sites in a cafe is purely incidental." The committee had earlier rejected the proposal to block pornographic sites because it was, according to its report, "technically and legally unsound." But there is a move to get Indian Internet service providers to invest in software that will filter out pornographic sites. That probably would spark the same kind of anger from ISP providers that has been voiced by

The cafe controversy shouldn't be understated. Since PC penetration in Indian towns is less than 12 percent, cybercafes have done brisk business over the last few years. They are far more popular than they are in the United States. No official count exists of the cafes in Maharashtra, as they are a highly unregulated segment. So the committee has also recommended issuing special licenses to cafes. Since the cafes do not have an association, they have not united yet to officially oppose the recommendations.

But in an unprecedented move, the Court asked that the committee's report he put up on a website. Suggestions and objections have been solicited. The Court will scrutinise them in April before issuing the order.



One, two, many Afghanistans



WASHINGTON - As the United States waded deeper into Indochina in the 1960s, the Argentine revolutionary, Che Guevara, called for "one, two many Vietnams" to bog down the superpower in hopeless conflicts all

over the Third World. While Guevara's contribution his futile attempt to launch an insurgency in Bolivia—was quickly nut down at the cost of his own life almost 40 years later his dream may President George W Bush's "war against terrorism." The Bush administration is committing US military forces and advisers to global hotspots with which it has virtually no istory or experience at a dizzying pace. Even perennially deferential Democrats have begun to ask questions. "I think there is expansion ithout clear direction," noted Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle in quie understatement. "If we expect to kill every terrorist in the world, that's going to keep us going beyond Doomsday," exclaimed, somewhat less politely, Senator Robert Byrd last week. "How long can we stand this

Byrd asked, pointing to the \$48 billion increase the administration wants in military spending next year

Last Thursday, a week after ten US soldiers died in a helicopter crash in the southern Philippines after ferrying the first of at least 150 Special Operations Forces (SOF) troops to dvise Philippine soldiers in subduing a small Muslim insurgency the Pentagon confirmed plans to seno 100 to 200 military advisers to the faction-ridden former Soviet state of Georgia and several hundred more to emen to help those governments root out "terrorism" on their territory. This news came days after Washington's chief envoy to Afghanistan announce that some of the 4,000 US troops and military advisers in the country to hunt al-Qaeda and Taleban remnants might be sent to areas where tensions between rival warlands have bailed over into fighting. Meanwhile, a US arrived in Kabul to begin a two-yea process of building, training, and equipping a 30,000-strong multinational army

The administration also eaffirmed its request for \$98 million to train, equip, and provide surveillance for new battalions in Colombia to protect an 800 km oil pipeline owned by California-based Occidental Petroleum Company despite the collapse of a three-year peace process there. Washington

ed to increase and expedite aid and intelligence to Bogota in anticipation of an intensified civil war there. Meanwhile, it is believed that to ersuade the region of the seriousness and long-term nature of Washingon's commitment, Vice President Dick Cheney, on his upcoming to of US allies in the Middle East, the Gulf, and Turkey, will pledge 250,000 US ground troops, as well as its formidable firepower, to oust President Saddam Hussain and prevent civil war or the break-up o rag in the aftermath ngo that there were Uzbeks, Tajiks and Pashtuns in Afghanistan," a

"I only just learned five months Congressional aide who works or foreign policy told IPS. "I hadn't given a moment's thought to Georgia, military advisers to some place called the Pankisi Gorge, on the border with Chechnya!"

because there's a real possibility we're really overplaying our hands," Ivo Daalder, an analyst at the Brookings Institution and formerly with the National Security Council under President Bill Clinton, told the Los Angeles Times last week. These quick new commitments appear to violate virtually every tenet of the basic creed Republicans have urged since the US military misadventures in Vietnam. Lebanon and Somalia. Legislation assed by the Republican-dominated Congress in the mid-1990s, and seemingly endorsed by Bush during his election campaign, called for presidents to deploy US forces only when a vital national interest was at stake, the objectives were clear and achievable and there was an identifiable "exit strategy" so Washington could withdraw its forces at little cost in US blood treasure, or pride. Even Secretary of Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell. who, as much as any single military man, has been identified with this ument, seems to have surrendered. Asked by Congress to define victory in the war, Powell said last month "...reaching a state where people are no longer afraid of terroris ctivities, where they can go about their lives not concerned about the kinds of things that happened on the 11th of September or the kinds of car mbings that take place in Jerusalen or the kinds of terrorism meted out by (left-wing guerrillas) in Colombia. It will take us a long time to reach that state." \((IPS)

by SHLOMO AVINERI

"We need debate in this country

after the end of the WW II. Thousands were killed in a mass exodus. Czech Prime Minister Milos Zeman is under fire from Germany and Austria for a recent interview with the Austrian magazine Profil in which he described the Sudeten Germans as "Hitler's fifth column" and "traitors" lucky to have escaped death. Orban has told the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament that the expulsion decrees, which still stand, are "incompatible with European legislation" and that the Czech Republic and Slovakia should repeal them before joining the EU. The two countries boycotted the 1 March meeting in protest, and Hungary was obliged to cancel it. It was a critical meeting as the Visegrad Group states hope to join the EU in 2004. EU Commissioner for Enlargement Guenter Verheugen said the Benes decrees were a "bilateral" matter, but centre-right politicians in Germany and Austria have threatened to block Czech efforts to join the FU and Germany's Federation of Expellees insists the Czech Republic be admitted to the EU only if the decrees are repealed. Several modern-day commentators say the Benes decrees give sanction to ethnic cleansing and a notion of collective guilt. (IPS) How far does democracy go? BANGKOK - With words like "shameful" and "acts of oppre critics are assailing Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra for besmirching his country's current status as one of the most democratic in South-east Asia. Last Friday, the prime minister drew fire following revelations that the government had intimidated one of Thailand's respected pollsters after the results of its recent poll portrayed government figures in poor light. "It is shameful. The prime minister is using executive authority beyond anyone's comprehension," a livid Kraisak Choonhavan, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

told IPS. Local newspapers were as harsh in condemning the manner in which military officers members of the special branch of the police and

officials from the ministry of university

affairs, repeatedly visited the office of the Bangkok-based Assump tion Business Administration College (Abac) Poll, at Assumption University. The poll that prompted this intimidation was conducted between 5-9 February, where Abac researchers queried 1,302 people about the public image of the Thaksin administration and political issues in the news of late. While the results of this survey were particularly severe on the public image of the country's powerful defence minister and public health minister. they also faulted the Thaksin regime for conflicts of interest involving government members. (IPS)

Land of paradoxes

at "America, the Great Satan," thanks, partly, to President George Bush including naming Iran in the "Axis of Evil" involved in terrorism and the production of weapons of mass destruction. But beneath the surface Iran is no longer Ayatollah Khomeini's sharia state.

Iran does deserve to be classified as a regional and, perhaps, global promotes of instability—its support for the fundamentalist Islamic terrorism of the Hizbollah in Lebanon is aimed at undermining the diminishing chances for a Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, But internal developments in Iran are complex and neither demonising the Islamic Republic, nor drawing a simple dicho between "conservatives" and "reformers"—led by President Khattami, is helpful.

Iran is perhaps the most interesting country in the region, with the greatest potential for development leading to-not Western-style democracy—but greater opening and liberalisation. Paradoxically ran's potential is embedded in its ideology as an Islamic state. After the first turbulent and murderous years of the Iranian revolution. there have been remarkable developments in the last few years. Elections are confined to an Islamic discourse, and all candidates and parties must secure the imprimatur of the country's highest Islamic authority before they can be listed on a ballot. Yet, there is a fierce tions. Because elections to the Majlis (parliament) and the residency are contested, they are

meaningful. President Khattami was elected with the support of women and younger people, and the "establishment" candidate was not. In other Arab ountries—Egypt, Syria, Belarus—there is virtually only one candidate, and he receives 97-98 percent of the vote Parliamentary debates in Iran are real, unlike the rubber-stamp sham parliaments of countries like Egypt and Syria

Women can vote and participate actively and publicly in political life. The image of Iranian women suppressed behind black chadors is complicated. For example, because male doctors are prevented by strict Islamic law from treating romen, the government has encouraged the training of female doctors. Today there are more women doctors in Iran than under the Shah, and the number of women dying at childbirth is among the lowest in the region. The government has also instituted a pro-active birth control program, and legitimised it within an Islamic context, saying "we want educated Islamic families, not just large Islamic

The shades of grey have real consequences for policy towards Iran: as an Iranian political scientist recently said at a seminar in Germany, younger people in Iran do feel they are Muslims, and Iran will never be a secular society. But they view their Islam as part of their Iranian identity, whereas the older clerics viewed Islam as a universal revolutionary identity. These younger people—the Iranian scholar claimed—are first Iranian nationalists, and would like to dissociate

themselves from Middle Eastern politics, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict Iran presents a complex, sometimes confusing picture. But anyone who knows European history can identify a parallel: the Calvinist, Puritan rev Calvinists of Geneva, or Cromwell's Puritans, were—like the mullahs of Tehe-

ran-biblio-centric, with a Holy Book as their model for an ideal society—puritanical, frugal, non-permissive, with laws against conspicuous umption and luxuries, and anti-feminist. anchored in patriarchal family structures. Because the Calvinists did not accept a Church hierarchy, they-like the Iranian Shi'ites who aren't part of the Sunni majoritarian universalism—based their legitimacy on a ommunity of believers, and introduced elections. Once you hold real elections, differen ways of interpreting the Holy Book become possible and legitimate. Suddenly, there exists a mechanism for participation, control, dissent (limited though it is) and the introduction of innovative strategies to legitimise change within a traditional context. In Europe, Calvin's

Geneva—an autocratic theocracy, more similar to Khomeini's Teheran than to any other regime-eventually developed, through English Puritanism, towards modern parliamentary government. In Britain until the 1820's only members of the Church of England could vote in parliament or be elected to it.

Will Shi'ite Iran follow a road similar to the European Calvinists'? Nothing is pre-determined, but the parallel is striking. For all of today's involvement of some Iranian leaders in terrorism, the picture is more complex, more interesting-and perhaps more promising than President Bush's speech suggests. ♦

(Shlomo Avineri is professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a former Director-General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

gy Iran has the





..... Where the tales are as tall as the mountains

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



may apply with a resume along with a photograph by close-of-business March 25, 2002 to Women candidates are encouraged to apply

Prabhakar Sumshere Rana Deshantar, 24 February

From a service-based industry like the Soaltee Hotel to a production-based one like Surya Tobacco, Prabhakar Sumshere JB Rana is an industrialist who, once involved in a venture, is completely dedicated to it and ensures that it will be a success. Rana, who is also involved in an industry linked to the royal family, is being talked about as a possible diplomatic appointee Deshantar spoke to him about Nepal's politics and

What do you think of Nepalis current financial

There are internal and external reasons the economy is in trouble. The 11 September terrorist attacks in the US had a global impact. We have numerous internal reasons as well-instability, bad governance, political fighting. There has been too much of all this in the 12 years since the restoration of democracy, and this has directly affected the economy. There is a problem in the tourism sector, industries

are full of problems, and many have already closed down. Even service-oriented industries such as banking and the financial sector are in trouble. Nepal's financial state is in tatters. On another point, Nepal's budget is based on aid and help. At the recent Development Forum, donor nations were not satisfied with Nepal's performance. Even if the government is spreading the rumour that donors have pledged cash as evidence of their commitment to Nepal, how is this possible? So much money is being channeled to shore up the state of emergency, which has hurt development activities. The bottom could fall out of Nepal's economy. We hear overdrafts have been needed to pay civil servants' salaries.

The people have repeatedly given the Nepali Congress, considered the oldest party, a majority vote. We say the constitution has made the people sovereign. But parliamentarians have ignored the sentiments and wishes of the sovereign people, and devoted themselves instead to infighting. When can the people really exercise their power in an underdeveloped country? The Nepali Congress has dishonoured the people.

So there have been mistakes at the political level.

Without political stability development is impossible.

Our political leaders lack vision and direction. We could learn about civil service, education or business from say, Sri Lanka, If the political leadership there missteps, the people, who are educated, vote them out. The current president and the government are from different parties. Despite dealing with a civil war for years, their economy remains strong. In the last two months, Sri Lanka's tourism sector has done very well

The British ruled in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and though it left behind administrative rules in all three and India and Pakistan have more resources, Sri Lanka is better off today because of education. Educated people look for appropriate leaders and also serve their country.

Can we say that in underdeveloped Nepal, the current political system is a failure?

Democracy means a people's government, the political parties belong to the people. If the people do not direct them right, or if the parties work outside the people's interests, democracy has failed. After that, the administration or the army might rule, but that is different. For multi-party democracy to work, civil society must play a strong role in controlling the leaders, but they have failed. After 40 years of public life, I can say we are only intellectuals in name. We sit in our rooms, playing cards and debating. We don't stand up and say this is not right, or we do not want this.

For example, the income tax declaration scheme everyone was talking about recently. If taxpayers don't pay up, where will the government get money to run the country? Are we to beg forever? Paying taxes is a responsibility, an obligation. But I have my suspicions about the means by which the government tried to raise income tax. I hear the middle class was totally against this scheme. And without the middle class, no

We lack leadership in government, in civil society, and in the commercial and industrial sectors. I eader ship requires clarity of vision—this is what I want, this is how I will operate. The government today offers no vision, which limits its administrative efficacy. Civilians have concluded that political leaders cannot work. The common people have no hidden personal agenda, which is why such a large section of society has felt compelled to point out the flaws in the government's attitude. Negal is an unsuccessful nation.

Is this a result of the restoration of democracy?

I don't think it is only that. Surely there were failures even prior to the last 12 years. But rectifying them needs uncommon effort. And right now, people do not have the slightest hope that their leaders can do this Because of not just education, but the information revolution, even the poorest know what is going on, and that this kind of leadership cannot run the country. The emergency was passed with a two-thirds majority. but look at how irresponsible our leaders are. Even now, they are going to cut a cake here, a tea ceremony there, sometimes the opening of a film. Even the nation's capital, with the army and police walking down every street, could be shut down. How are people to feel safe? Some even supported the bandh, saying that if the government cannot work, why should they support it?

If we don't find one, we will sink. We're already on our way down. To solve it we need a leadership with vision. More than that, we need commitment. Úganda was in a far worse situation 30 years ago. We got democracy at about the same time, but today Uganda is a success story and Nepal is not. We need to realise that too many cooks spoilt the broth

How should Nepal go forward?

We're in a globally competitive market. We need to concentrate on things where we might have an advantage. Like Nepal, Uganda is agriculture-based. Even the soil is similar, they can grow anything. They used this advantage systematically, and are today successful African nation and a global example. We have around us powerful nations such as India and China. That isn't a disadvantage—it means we have large markets that we just haven't been able to exploit.

Are only political leaders to blame?

We have this habit of blaming each other. We cannot just blame the political leaders. Leaders from other sectors have not been able to pressure the political leaders. After all, we live in the same country. People outside politics must understand this.

We have developed two negative aspects. One is this habit of begging—from everyone and anywhere. I think corruption started with this. After one could not beg and get more, corruption was the last resort. I doubt there are any honest political leaders. We hear that not even lower-level workers do their job without asking the boss for money, because they know how much money their bosses makes.

Do you see any administrative system that can bring the Maoists to political mainstream?

What the army is doing is temporarily defeating them and telling them join mainstream. It is not possible to kill every last one of them. They took the wrong step in taking up arms to make their voices heard. But it is still possible for them to give up arms and come to the table for talks.

Deuba and corruption

Aircraft Jana Aastha, 27 February

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba forced the cabinet to approve the decision to purchase a new aircraft for the army on 21 February, which has created a stir in the ranks. Officials say the cabinet has decided to buy an aircraft called the Sky Truck. The prime minister himself proposedand pressured—the cabinet to approve the deal involving the Polish made 18-19 seat aircraft Just 26 of the craft have been produced so far, and only some former Soviet states have bought them. The European sion does not approve the aircraft. The proposal was made soon after Deuba took office, coming through Ms Arzoo Deuba and her brother, who runs a finance compar [On Sunday Ms Deuba categorically denied the association, asserting that process and that she was ready to be 'hanged in public" if there was any airborne unit (the 11th Battalion) is said to have earlier ruled that the aircraft is unsuited to conditions in Nepal. After Deuba, who is also defence minister, managed to get the cabinet to approve the decision, he it pressure on the 11th Battalion, which then retracted its earlier conclusion and has apparently submitted a recommendation approving the aircraft. The aircraft allegedly corry \$3.5 million (P. 20) edly costs \$3.5 million (Rs 273 million), and on adding various

options, this goes up to \$4 million, a price believed to be about a million dollars higher than the craft's real cost. (Deshanteralso carried a report aying: "The cabinet approved the urchase of two Sky Truck aircraft last Thursday [21 February]. The aircraft is to be purchased at \$4 million, but aviation experts say it does not cost more than \$3 million Security sources said the aircraft cannot land on any airstrip suitable even for a Twin Otter and is too parrow to transport goods. The aircraft in ion has not been approved by either the US or the British regulator Our sources tell us the government decided soon after the emergency that the army could immediately hire any fixed wing aircraft it needed. The army has more pressing needs now: night vision binoculars and other logistics. For three months the oldiers on the ground have not even



Roads

Deshantar, 3 March Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba who came to power promis ing law and order and good rnance is proving corrupt Fearing he'd lose power over his failure to control the Maoists and manage the emergency, he seems to money. People had barely forgotter the flurry of construction before SAARC, supposedly under the direction of the prime minister's residence, when two new scandals associated with the prime minister have emerged.

Our source tells us that a day

before the prime minister promised to end corruption and provide good governance in parliament, his lence was trying to raise Rs 40 million by asking the Department of Roads to change a decision on a tender. The Asian Development Bank-supported Fourth Roads Improvement Project was awarded to: firm that came fourth in the technical evaluation. The firm's fee for the Rs 7 billion project is said to be Rs 450. applied for pre-qualification, seven were selected, among them British American, Japanese and Canadian companies. Japan's Nippon Koei is said to have got the highest points in the technical evaluation, US firm Louis Berger was fourth. Louis Berger's local partner Suraj Vaidyawho also got the SAARC road maintenance contracts—was able to convince the power centres through his other partners in Honey Enter prises, Dinesh Prasad Shrestha and Jitendra Lal Shrestha. The prime minister, uncertain if the emergency

contract on payment of Rs 40 million Our sources tell us the money was paid out of their accounts at the Himalayan Bank and the Standard Chartered Bank

The director general of the Department of Roads told us he'd heard the technical evaluation for the contract was done in a hotel mom Our source tells us the decision to bump Louis Berger up the list was taken at the Sunset View Hotel

The establishment of the Nepali

The other side Tarun, 4 March

Congress has been after Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for quite some time. To embarrass him they sometimes go to parliament without their badges and IDs, or cook up false stories about corruption and make the world laugh. One news outlet was recently caught in a similar design. Our source tells us the prim minister himself was unhappy with the working of the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works. When he learnt of the games the employees and other powerful politicians playing in the tendering for the Asian Development Bank-funded Fourth Road Improvement Project, he

prime minister's wife and her brother

Bhushan Rana were also said to have

malign the prime minister's character

The people behind this incident need

to know that Rhushan Rana isn't the

local agent for the aircraft the army

instructed the ministry's secretary no to yield to any pressure and decide in accordance with the rules. Some department heads were also present is the room when he made that call. One departmental head had actually asked prime minister, the secretary and other departmental heads to give the contract to a party he "favoured." Thi did not happen, and so he sought the help of the NC establishment in a character assassination campaign. The

influenced the proposed purchase of the Sky Truck by the Royal Nepal Army. But the people who concocted the news didn't realise that if kickbacks ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY e involved, neither Arzoo Deuba nor her brother would be made the agents for this aircraft. The defence ecretary himself denied this news Since the people involved couldn't make charges against Prime Minister Deuba directly, they dragged in the names of Dr Arzoo and Bhushan, to

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

There has always been corruption in this country. It was here during Prithvi Narayan Shah's time, it's here now

-Senior advocate Ramanandaprasad Chaudhary, Sanghu, 4 Marcl



Crocodile: Terrorist Balloon: It is imperative to finish this first. This way, please.... Arrow: Constitutional amendment

Jana Bhawana, 4 March

Back at Sundarijal >6

"Life is settling down to a pattern"



Nepali Times continues with BP Koirala's English diary from inside his prison at Sundarijal in 1977. The diary is written meticulously in neat handwriting with a fountain pen. He writes that his initial period of anxiety is being replaced with growing monotony and boredom. Even jail-mate Ganesh Man Singh (GM) isn't surch of a belan Man Singh (GM) isn't

8th January, 1977

It was a cloudy day, with sharp cold wind blowing. I kept myself most indoors. Life here is settling down to a pattern. Now the initial period of anxiety will be replaced by a period of growing monotony. The second stage has started. GM looks after me with ease, but he is not such a company to me that can enliven the monotonous hours of the prison. His interests are very practical and he brings this practical sense to bear upon the political subject which is the only common subject between us. He is not interested in theories and abstract thoughts. My tastes are opposite to his. Therefore he

can't provide company of the kind that I need. We don't have books to take up my interest. By chance, GM brought some books, mostly unreadable. One of the books is a collection of essays by Santayana and another is by Cahn Predicament of Democratic Man. They aren't the stuff that can rouse me from present psychological depression. Santayana is woolly, like some

Hindu Philosopher, and moreover the important essays in the collection are pragmatory and were initially meant as rough drafts for longer composition. Predicament of Democratic Man is just readable. I need books which can titillate my interest in studies to begin with. Novels perhaps, history, biography-to serve as appetisers. They can raise me, in the process, from the trough of despondency. I cannot contact home for books. I didn't bring any

The camp commander is under the impression that we will get the facilities of interviews and correspondence as before which means we can send letters on the last day of the month, and on the 2nd day of the month our people can interview us, i.e. today is 25th Paus-five days hence, we can send our letters and seven days hence, people will come to meet us. But there is a snag. In the old times we got letters, any number of them, on any day, with proper and careful censor. Since we haven't received any, the major impression may ultimately prove wrong.

GM thinks that our being kept in incommuni-

interviews are granted. Political purpose of our detention in strict isolation could be that the king would talk to us. We have not been given newspapers-and no written communication of any kind from home.

9th January, 1977 Sundarijal

In the morning I got up as usual, took tea with GM. Did routine exercise but I felt a little out of focus. For sometime, I get buzzing sensations in my head and also feel as if I am putting on a cap that tightly grips the head. I have sometimes felt for the non-existent cap on my head. I also get pulse throbs at the roots of my ears. Today during exercise. I felt a sensation of nausea too. I don't know what it may be due to-low blood pressure. High colour in my urine is however, disappearing. I have sent for my regular medicines for stomach trouble and colitis and also for a doctor.

The day was cloudy. I put on the heater and lay indoors. Couldn't concentrate in reading. Spent most of the day in bed. Nothing interest ing. I wanted to do some washing; but the day being cloudy and the water being ice-cold, and my mood being what it is. I just threw dirty clothes into the corner.

I used to be impatient with those who, the moment they are thrown into prison, would be nanicky or extremely anxious. I can now symnathise with them. Sushila has a dread for prison. It is a healthy dread. I am today full of warmth for Sushila and others who are in Indian jail Bhim Bahadur and others in Nepal's jails. I can now understand the psychological trauma that Chakra suffered during the short period he was in Purnea and Bhagalpur. In 1947, Biku used to

weep openly and cry out long moans of depression while he was with us in the Nakkhu Detention Camp, It was, perhaps necessary that I should have none through the present distressing period and felt so weak so

that I could put myself in the position of the

in various prisons, both in India and Nepal, I

large number of our comrades who are rotting

8-14 MARCH 2002 NEPALITIMES 13

am drawn closer to them. As I lay lazily in my bed, I began to think about Nepal and my people. What is their fate? I have hitched my wagon to their destiny. If it has a future. I too have one. This identification with the fate of the country (bombastic presumptuousness?) sustains me. After all, I came voluntarily to Kathmandu to place mysell at the disposal of a dictator. This was a

country according to my light. From GM's home, a toaster, a bottle of achar and a pair of shoes and Mailpos-Suruwal for him came. Learnt that PL is in prison. He had come to Kathmandu after seeing us at Patna a day earlier, i.e. on the 29th of December. He was arrested at the

voluntary risk I took in the interest of the

Voices for peace

he's been blacklisted in Burma, he was recently labelled a supporter of the

"People's War" for speaking with a rebel. Together their efforts saved a remote hill tribe in the Thailand-Burma border from forceful displacement from what had been their land for centuries.

They say they're nothing more than ordinary tourists, but what makes performers Julia and Tony so special is that political borders do not stop them from spreading the message of universal humanity Politics and ideologies do not matter to them, what does is the suffering of the people and the unity of all people, whether from the consumer-driven North or the poverty-ridden South.

They are in Kathmandu now with their creative outfit Maitreys Productions and Julia's one-woman show TrYbe, a fusion of provocative, original songs, film projections



stories of nine lives across borders. Addressing issues of womentrafficking, human rights and umanity's urgent need to believe in all things good, this solo actioncabaret aims at stimulating consciences and raising awareness about Third World' issues. So what else is new, you ask. Unlike similar shows, TrYbe doesn't just preach about things, it sends out a message—that the power of one is sometimes all it takes to influence the future of humanity.

For the past 12 years Julia, once an original Phantom of the Opera cast member and a former Young Australian of the Year semi-finalist

at Soaltee Crowne Plaza

and producing shows which communicate human concerns to mainstream audiences. Her anthem Free Burma brought her to sing at the Hague Appeal for Peace and the International Peace Asia Concert in Bangkok Tony is a human rights campaigner, event organiser, and an original member of the Peace Asia committee, which draws different

cultures together through music

programs and exhibitions to inspire

Julia and Tony have been in Nepal for six months-they came as tourists and stayed on to lobby for the rights of the poor and underprivileged. Last December they

racial harmony

organised the first World Freedon Festival in Sarangkot near Pokhara to promote world peace and harmony. The festival featured international artists dedicated to human rights, anti-racism and equality, but it was the exhibitions of local community groups enhancing grassroots awareness and encouraging ultural exchange with foreign visitors that had the greatest impact.

This time around they've chosen Kathmandu as the venue for two days of music (including Robin 'n Looza), performance and film tional Women's Day, Alongside th show, organisations such as KFFP. Gift for Aid and Maiti Nepal will put up stalls for exhibition. "We hope we can raise some money for charities, but this is also about stirring the general public here into action," says Julia. ♦

(For more information, see



Call 543333, 523845 in Kathmandu; 32387 in Biratnaga

32705 in Pokhara; 23848 in Nepalgunj

at China Garden

Great Value Lunches

International Buffet for Rs. 700/- nett

Buy One Get One Special Lunch

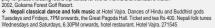


Talantad, Eastermala, Nepal Tel.: 977-3-273999, 272303 Ferrando 977-3-272205. E-mail: proceephanthology com. op Philindra mallen om

. Inside out Selection of images portraying life on the streets of Nepal, its hardships adn pleasures taken by ten Pokhara street youths. Presented by the Child Welfare Scheme Nepal at the Fewa Park Restaurant, Lakeside, Pokhara until end-March, 61-20793

❖ Voices for Peace A live music & multi-media experience featuring Australian show Julia & TrYbe on both days and Robin 'n Looza on 9 March. Includes screenings of Dinesh Deokota's film A Rough Cut on the Life & Times of Lachuman Magar, and Nomads of the Himalayas, Rs 200 per show, dinner and show Rs 400, available at the Bamboo Club and The Last Resort. 8 and 9 March, 5PM on at the new Hot Pot Restaurant & Bar, Thamel, 425111

Shangri-La Open Golf Tournament 150 golfers from every walk of life play for prizes including round trip tickets for two to Vienna and Mumbai. 9 March



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

Hit the Roof Live band at the Solash Bar & Grill every Friday, Radisson Hotel.

* Tantra Nite Tantric cocktails and live music, prizes for psychedelic costumes. 11 March, 6 PM onwards, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234

. Classic teas Thirty teas including all Dilmah Tea's herbals, greens, blacks and Oolongs. Also Ilam, Darjeeling, Makaibari and more. The Coffee Shop, Hotel de l'Annapurna.

Celebrating women with guitar tunes and 50 percent discount for women. Stupa View Restaurant

Swims, Salads & Siesta Includes lavish buffet, complimentary shuttle to lakeside, free use of jacuzzi, swimming pool, pool table, table tennis, big screen movies, Saturdays and Sunday, Rs 550 per person, 50 percent off for children at the Shangri-La Village. 61-22122/23700

* Charcoalz Buffet with grilled delicacies from around the world, glass of lager, live music and strawberries with cream. Non-vegetarians Rs 595 and vegetarians Rs 495, tax included. Poolside. Yak &

. 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

San Miguel Brunch Lavish Saturday buffet at The Fun Café, Radisson Hotel. 411818

 Oriental lunchtime Special lunch menu, Rs 350 per head everyday 12 noon-3PM, China Garden, Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 273999

. International Women's Day Women get 30 percent off on all a la carte menus only on 8 March. Dwarika's Hotel Call 479488

Thai festival 11AM onwards at the Summit Hotel 11AM-4.30PM at the Patan Museum Café. Until 10

The Big Breakfast A hearty farmer's breakfast, plain, nutritious food, all-time favourites. Daily until 11AM, the Café. Hvatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234

Lunch, tea and dinner European and American cuisine with fine wines. La'Soon Restaurant and

Vinotheque, Pulchowk, 535290 Newari Bhoj Traditional snacks, drinks and meals, outdoors or indoor, in a restaurant designed by

Bhaktapur artisans. Lajana Restaurant. Lazimpat. 413874

 Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant, 425510 Tukche Thakali Kitchen Buckwheat, barley, bean, and dried meat specialties. Also brunch with porridge and pancakes, all raw material from Tukche village. Darbar Marg.

. Barbecue lunch with complementary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children. Saturdays at the Godavari Village Resort, Rs 650 per head, 560675

 Shivaratri Package Overnight on 12 February at Dwarika's Hotel, right by the celebrations, \$125 per couple, includes dinner and a guided tour of Pashupatinath. 479488

* Rhododendron Getaway at the Horseshoe Resort in Mude, three hours from Kathmandu. Two days of rhododendron walks in forests, package tours at \$30 per day, all meals and sauna included. Email resort@horshoe.wlink.com.np

* Destination Bardia All-inclusive package to Jungle BASe Camp, Royal Bardia National Park, with four days and three nights, one-way Kathmandu/Bardia flight, \$195 per head. Email junglebasecamp@yahoo.com or ring Going Places Travels, 251400. www.geocities.com/junglebasecamp

 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, Jomsom Mountain Resort, salesiom@mail.com.np.or.imr@soi.wlink.com.np. 496110

* 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.

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



by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Spring really is here. The satellite image shows a moderately strong high-pressure system over the Himalaya and the north Ganga plain, but it will disappear early next week, giving way to the westerly fronts over Iran and Afghanistan. This will mean a few instances of light rain including on Shivaratri day, in keeping with tradition. The afternoons will be warm, breezy and sunny, and finally the night time temperatures will move into the double digits.











An Unexpected Light: Travels in Afghanistan Jason Ellio

Picador, London, 1999

Winner of the Thomas Cook/ Daily Telegraph travel Book Award, this already classic book is a tour de force of travel and memory: vividly evocative, courageous, empathetic and self-aware. Elliot, who has been compared to TE Lawrence, travelled in some of the world's most extreme circumstances and writes bout it by decorously arranging history, politics, his own experiences and intelligent analysis

Reflections on Exile and other literary and cultural essays Edward W Said Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2001

Rs 792 Written over three decades, these essays give rare insight into the formation of a critic and development of an intellectual vocation. They cover a wide range of topics—from the heroics of Tarzan and the machismo of Ernest Hemingway to the shades of difference that divide Alexandria and Cairo. Said also reconsiders writers and artists such as Giambattista Vico, Raymond Williams, Antonio Gramsci and



Re 312

PEASE

Why Men Don't Listen & Women Can't Read Maps Allan and Barbara Pease injul Publishing House, Bhopal, 2001

The controversial book that suggests that though of the same species, men and women live in different worlds, in part because their brains perceive things in different ways and their chemical make-up is radically different. The authors say they focus on different things, talk and listen differently and have very varied abilities with understanding space-all of which has an impact on love, sexuality and



Rs 130 A tale of animals living with humans who, with their petty foibles and political culture, are on a path to destruction. The animals in their turn show that taking turns to be master of the jungle can be beneficial to all. The seven-year cycle in which the elephant, hare, monkey, boar, stag, thino and tiger are Lords of the Jungle one after the earth leads to an eco-friendly world



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

CLASSIFIED

Semi-furnished spacious house in quiet residential area near UN complex suitable for foreign family. Contact 521024.

Reflexology! The therapist applies alternating pressure to the feet. It reduces stress, promotes relaxation and good health. Email buddhasfeet@vahoo.com or ring 410735

Stupa View and Restaurant & Terrace at Baudhanath Stupa. Well-appointed restaurant and terraces with views of stupa and Himalayas. International vegetarian specialties, pizza from clay oven, ice cream, soft quitar tunes on Fridays. Saturdays, Sundays from 5PM on. Special events on full moon. Open daily 11AM-8.30PM. 480262. 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 133013

HMB Mountain Biking Have your bike serviced or repaired by HMB's Professional Mechanics at the HMB Workshop, Riding gear, accessories and parts available. Second hand bikes bought/sold/hired. New and reconditioned mountain bikes for sale. Himalayan Mountain Bikes—Tours and Expeditions. 437437

Donate old refrigerators and air-conditioners to start-up entrepreneurs who want to use them to teach renair and maintenance skills to students. Page 9682-415

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

BBC on FM 102.4

Mon-Fri	0615-0645	BBC World Today
Sat	0615-0645	BBC Science in Action
Sun	0615-0645	BBC Agenda
Daily	2045-2115	BBC नेपाली सेवा
Dailv	2245-2300	BBC नेपाली सेवा



Radio Sagarmatha

P.O. Box 6958, Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal Tel: ++977-1-545680, 545681 Fax: ++ 977-1- 530227 E-mail: radio@radiosagarmatha.org www.radiosagarmatha.org

Children of Shiva

Santaneswor Mahadev.

whose blessings were sometimes

forms. People came regardless, and

they continue to do so, even though

he isn't around anymore to act as

the go-between between them and

important that they thank

his entire day in the temple

rumoured to take rather carnal

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

t is hard to keep up with a halfman, half-woman protector, destroyer, and a manifestation of the energy that rules the world Given that there are 108 important Shiva shrines (and probably half-amillion secondary ones), it's no surprise that people often miss out

them, right here in the Valley. It might be the bumpy halfhour ride, followed by the steep 15minute climb that deters people from visiting the Santaneswor Mahadev, which is second in importance only to Pashupatinath. the official protector of the nation But those who make the effort to get to the tiny red-drenched temple in Ihaniwarasi, near Thaiba Lalitnur come away feeling peaceful and truly blessed. Of course, you have to watch the thoughts that cross your mind when you're there, because Santaneswor is the deity that watches over people who cannot have children. So if you aren't ready yet for a small, squalling, prune-faced



at its best. Why go trekking, when from this vantage point you can one moment look up to views of mountains from the Annapurna to the Jugal, and the next, direct your gaze down to the little villages and erraces dotting this idyllic part of the Valley. And perhaps this is another reason couples anxious

about their future without children find that coming here gives them some measure of solace. For as long back as the oldest

Valley residents can remember, this pilgrimage has been made by eople from near and far, usually twice. Until a few years ago, a major draw was the Santaneswor Baba,

different places. Just as Guhveswori in Kathmandu and Kamakhya in Assam, India, are said to be formed from rather more intimate parts of Sati, Santaneswor Mahadev is the temple that arose

the good lord. "I have seen hunwhen her upper lip fell to the dreds of couples coming and asking ground here. for a child in my lifetime. They Others talk of how always come back with their six Kamadhenu, the cow that fulfils all month child for the paasni, the ricewishes, made Iharuwarasi and Godavari her regular haunts to feeding ceremony, because it is dispense free milk-after all, the Santaneswor," says 67-year-old supreme lord can only bathe in Shiva Shrestha, the bhajan master of pure milk. The eternal milk source is represented here by a small the temple, who, after he recorded his devotional songs, now spends stream of water below the boulder in the sanctum sanctorum. Locals The stories explaining how the swear the cow is responsible for

temple came into being are as this little rivulet that never dries numerous as the names of Shiva himself. Hindu holy texts such as the Swasthani talk of how Shiva was flanked by two similar, smaller carrying the body of his dear, dead hills and the entire area is the stuff wife Sati around the world, when of legends, temples and pilgrimage. The name of the place, haruwarasi, for instance, comes from the story of the Jhara people who once lived here. No on knows where they went, or if the

Be careful what crosses your mind at

present-day locals are their descendants. Some disagree with this version, saving that the nighty Pandava Bhimsen, followed by his army, was chasing the evil Kitchak Given Rhimsen's enormous appetite and incredible trength, his 'army' was more an army of porters carrying food. some of which they lost along the way. The grain they spilt here gave rise to the three hillocks. There are many stories about the numerous temples near by, from the Naudhara the shrine of the goddess Pulchowki in Godavari, to Bajrabarahi in Chapagaun to the west, and Nawadurga in Thecho. But this homage to the God of Unborn Children is more

than most, for the stories and the vistas it offers.

Sure, it is hard to get to, but the pure and pious locals are doing all they can to make the pilgrimage easier. They recently organised a raised Rs 1.6 million for temple development, which sounds a little scary, but there is nothing to fear-no luridly painted subshrines or souvenir stalls playing inny music and selling religious kitsch. A good deal of the mone was spent on building the grave road that leads to the base of the temple, some to establish a trust and the rest to build a communit hall in the temple complex. And Krishna Bahadur KC, a teacher at Kitini Higher Secondary School and long-time patron and philanthropist loyal to the temple, hopes this will serve as an example to other religious monuments. "We can account for every rupee donated to the temple. We hope this will be an example to the entire nation," he says. There's more to be done. The ommunity is trying to raise money to build steps leading to the temple, as the steep trail can be dangerous when it rains. If this wonderfully benign manifestation

of Shiva appeals to you, you can

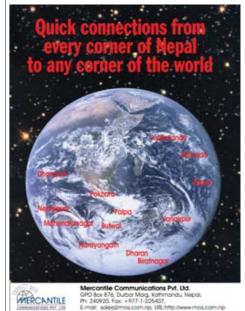
donate Rs 650 to build one step,

and have your name engraved on it



BIR GANESH MAN: A movie about the life and times of late Congress leader Ganesh Man Singh being shot in Basantpur on Monday, 25 February.







8-14 MARCH 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

here is nothing like an all-expenses paid horriday to get to know your fellow travellers in the great journey of life. I am, of course, referring to people who sit next to you on planes. This is one of the aspects of our ongoing sojourn here on Planet Earth that passengers have absolutely no control over. It is fated.

You can request a window seat on the left side so you catch a view of Mt Everest, you can book a bulkhead aisle seat a month before your flight so you can slip unnoticed into the First Class toilet to splash some cologne, but you can't tell the airline that you don't want to sit next to anyone whose armpit can be detected from the cockpit.

In fact body odour on airliners is emerging in recent years as the single most hazardous aspect of air travel to and from Tribhuvan International Aerodrome (Mission Statement: "Taking of the photography in, above, or under TIA is strictly prohibited Monday-Friday from 10AM-5PM and national holidays"). There are now stern security measures in force at TIA which require about 670 passengers to stand

in a room measuring 3 m x 4 m for two hours while waiting for flights so that only the most determined travelers will As a result of all this beefed up security, an average of 3,500

incendiary devices like lighters and 26,800 sharp objects like toothpicks are confiscated daily from potential terrorists just before they get on the plane. However, it is my duty to draw to the attention of the Ministry of Uncivil Aviation that no one is keeping track of malodorous passengers wearing socks in advanced stages of fermentation posing a hazard to sensitive on board avionics. (Flight Attendant: "Ladies and gentlemen, the use of laptop computers, mobile phones, CD players and taking off one's shoes during takeoff and landing is strictly prohib ited. Anyone found violating this rule will be defenestrated after the plane reaches its cruising altitude of 35,000 ft).

People sitting next to you on planes can be divided into several taxonomical categories

- . Heavy-weight lifters. These passengers have more carry-on luggage than checked-in luggage and will occupy the over-head lockers (known in some airlines as "oval-head rockers") all the way from seat 31-38 so that there is absolutely no room for your orchids (known in some airlines as "all kids"). The thing to remember if you are seated next to a Heavy-weight Lifter is to wear a helmet while seated so that an item dropping out of the oval-head rocker doesn't ive vou a skull fracture.
- Recliners. This is a passenger sitting in the seat in front of you who will insist on reclining his seat so that his head lies on your lap for the duration of the flight. An effective antidote to recliners is to carry out a flanking manoeuvre by carefully pouring some Bloody
- Movers and Shakers. You are on the aisle and the mover and shaker next to you begins to display symptoms of what at first glance looks like an advanced case of dropsy. But all is not lost, sitting next to this guy all you have to do is lean on him to get a free thigh massage.
- Alcoholics Synonymous. Also known in some airline circles as "imbibers" they will guzzle beer, singing gazals on the morning shuttle to Delhi after taking two straight ones with their breakfast.
- Babes. No such luck. No one even remotely eligible for being shortlisted as Miss Photogenic will ever sit next to me. Babes are miniature versions of Movers and Shakers whose sole purpose on the fright is to wail non-stop while over the Indo-Gangetic Plain.
- . Yakkers. That's me. Never sit next to me on a flight. I'll talk to you nonstop until you ask the flight attendant to give you another seat. Which was the idea, anyway. •



"New political alignm and much more

NEPALI SOCIETY

n some Saturdays in a Kathmandu bar that shall remain unnamed, a tall, glamorous woman sings heart-stopping jazz like she's been doing it all her life. She hasn't. After a 25-year sabbatical, Vidhea Shrestha returned to her lifelong passion in 2000, when she sang in a local music festival on the prodding of Kathmandu jazzman Chris Masand. Vidhea says she got involved because "this is such a unique musical genre, I felt it could contribute

will listen to any period, any composer or singer, but she does Holliday, and contemporary have her favourites and most vocalist Cassandra Wilson. days wakes up to John Coltrane's tenor sax and going on to Miles o Kathmandu's culture." Davis' trumpet. As for who her classic that Cassandra Wilson "Pop rock already has a vocal influbrought back to life a decade ago. large following here," she ences are. While she brings a Western explains. "Jazz is new. It's nusical tradition to Kathmandu more akin to eastern classical through her sizzling performmusic, with it's improvisational Vidhea's forte. While performing, she bursts

throws Nepali words in. At a time most female singers

aspire to Mariah Carey-style diva

hood, Vidhea is refreshing for taking on a musical form that may

not have instant appeal. But then,

jazz is in her blood, as she grew

grandfather who loved the old

school performers. Vidhea herself

up under the influence of a

ances, Vidhea is also committee to introducing Nepali culture to westerners through her work at Sojourn Nepal, an experiential program designed to immerse young Western students in Nepali life. Students live with a Nepali family, take language classes, and delve Kathmandu holds through apprenticeships or volunteer work. There couldn't be a more suitable person to be someone's first introduction to Nepal. Vidhea

only in Nepal and Tibet, but also you've heard her perform, it is also not surprising: "Two Europe and the United States. women—though I sing nothing like them." she laughs modestly. She's which makes it easy for her to relate to the perspectives of her western students. And it talking about the late, great Billie shows-a number of Sojourn students decide to stay on Vidhea's best rendition is always longer, come back, or devote of Strange Fruit, the Lady Day themselves to research in Nepal

Vidhea calls herself an "incorrigible optimist" who wants to get the most out of life—she's also a bookworm, intrepid trekker, art and photography enthusiast, and has, to top it all an encyclopaedic knowledge of the culture, architecture and religion of the region. Her mism doesn't hurt either. Although the Soiourn Nepal program was suspended last year due to the royal massacre and the increasingly devastating Maoist attacks, Vidhea is still helping individual students come to Nepal. "Now more than ever cross-cultural and experiential learning is essential," she says. And she's still singing, bringing east and west a little bit closer.



CDO Regd No. 194/056/57 Lalitpur, Central Region Postal Regd. No. 04/058/59