

### EXCLUSIVE **Children in crossfire**

Manist attacks are expected to intensify in the run-up to a threatened strike 2-6 April. Western embassies have asked tourists to exercise caution, but stopped short of saving thry should cancel travel plans. Thebandh will directly affect 250,000 students who start their SLC



exams next week. Ma ists appear to have deliberately timed the strike to coincide with the exams. The government promises full security at consoli dated exam centres nationwide

Maoists to the mainstream. Editor freed Mulvankan editor Shvam Shrestha's nine-day ordeal in custody ended Tuesday. He and two fellow detainees were blindfolded, handcuffed and interrogated on their alleged links with Indian Maoists to news reports about civilian deaths in the counter-insurgency campaign. "At times we were mistreated and threatened," Shrestha told us. The editor of Sanghu, Gopal Budathoki, was At present all parliamentary parties and the palace are arrayed against the Maoists. also freed after 24 days in detention. At

least 30 journalists are still in custody. The Paris-based group, Reporters without Borders, said "The fight against shatter this unity. But the pro-change terrorism, however lawful, cannot justify juggernaut is now set to roll. Those like serious human rights violations, especially those involving press freedom." constitutional law expert Ganesh Raj

**COAS** appeal to media Chief of Army Staff General Prajwalla S Rana this week asked journalists report facts saving one confusing or false news is all that it takes to affect public trust, and morale in the army ranks.

Times



characterise the present debate over constitutional reforms. The country's crisis represents a failure of politicians, they say, not the constitution. But those in favour of reforms, and

suffice. Former speaker and architect of the this group now includes the entire resent constitution, Daman Nath spectrum of parliamentary parties, want to tinker with the constitution—all for Dhungana is from this school. He says "Every political party has its own agenda their own partisan interests. how are they ever going to agree? I The agenda for this debate is being set

believe the answer may lie in a Constitu from behind the scenes by the Maoists and ant Accombly, there doesn't coam to be their violent attempt to dismantle parliaany other alternative to end the mentary democracy. The Nepali Congress, bloodshed." UML, RPP and NSP all agree (and hope) The proposals for that constitutional reforms will set everyconstitutional change of thing right, and it may even bring the various political parties

The Nepali Congress appears desperate enough to believe in its own panaceas. But it may not be as easy as that, and constitu-tional changes at this time may actually have unforeseen consequences. The debate over constitutional reforms is expected to heat up in the coming weeks, and may be little more than a way for non-performing parliamentary parties to divert attention om their own shortcomings.

 Limit cabinet size to 25 The debate over constitutional change is upper house to 35 sure to pit everyone against each other, and

- of Chief Justice · Parliamentary hearings for confirming ambassadorships Sharma who oppose tinkering, are becoming voices in the wilderness. "I still say,
- show some patience and discipline in the conduct of democracy, and things will fall The main opposition UML, for its part, would like to have:

# Maoist olive branch?

### SARBARI MAJUMDAR IN CALCUTTA

Even if he was planning to meet Maoists, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba couldn't have possibly fit them in during his hectic schedule in Calcutta 23-24 March. A visit to Howrah, banquet by West Bengal Governor Viren J Shah, puja to the godddess Kali, tours of two museums, and the next morning a half-hour talk with chief minister Buddhadev Bhatacharya (see picture, right).

However, Indian intelligence sources tell us three top Maoist leaders had entered West Bergal during the week of the Deuba visit and were staying at a safe house in Siliguri. Chandra Prasad Gajurel, the central committee member in charge of internarelations, Mohan Baidya, the 60-something central committee member, and Top Bahadur Raimajhi, Maoist negotiator in the first round of talks, were there to see if they could meet Deuba and resume dialogue, sources said.

'It was the Maoists who were desperate to reopen talks with the government," one senior Nepali official accompanying the prime minister said. "The initiative came from them, not from Deuba."

He said Deuba was keen to get a consensus from other political leaders in Kathmandu before resuming talks. Initial Maoist feelers seem to have gone out while Deuba was in New Delhi, but the prime minister could not at such short notice change

his disarm-before-negotiation stance. A former Indian intelligence official and top expert on Maoists, Amiyo Kumar Samanta told us this was standard Maoist tactics: "Under military pressure, they would look for fresh talks and send out feelers, and when the government turns them down they spread the rumour they are not keen to meet them

advance to avoid disappo

Indian military analysts like Mai-Gen K K Ganguly feel Deuba may be waiting to see what kind of military help he can get from India, the United States and Britain so he can carry a bigger stick before talks resume. "If he gets something substantial without

strings attached, he will keep pursuing the military option," Ganguly told us. In the end, Deuba did sightseeing and seems to have hit it off well with Bhattacharya. Sources present at the meeting said both agreed about the common threat to Nenal and India from Manists and the need for a concerted offensive. Bhatacharya later told the press the alliance between Nepali Maoists and the Peoples War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre was a major threat for India. He alleged that Pakistani military intelligence was backing the group's to destabilise India's strategi Siliguri Corridor. "It is in our mutual interests to fight the Maoists," Bhattacharya said.



read like election manifestos. Many of the ideas do not need a change in the statutes to be imple mented, new legislation would do.

Here is a brief summary of the proposal the big parties have put up. The ruling Nepali Congress wants · Grant citizenship to all voters in the 1980 referendum Delineate more clearly the powers of the

Maoists, who say things have now got so bad that mere constitutional reform will not

Slash lower house size to 155, and

Public hearings to confirm appointment

Prime minister to form 15-member







election government An election government of all parties

tion of parliament Limit cabinet size to 10 percent of parliament membership Give the CIAA more fangs. Public hearings for appointments to all

A national government in periods

· No more legal ambiguity over dissolu-

ing

Politicians want change. Any change

constitutional bodies More power to local government units

· Special programs for dalits, janajatis and

in parliament

of crisis

interest. The NC's proposals are devised in a manner that would increase its chances of remaining in power, and the UML's to provide



1.6

Editorial

to say that the RPP wants members of the

ontest elections, and local body election

NSP's main plank is regional autonomy and

a resolution of the citizenship problem. Oh

The only thing everyone seems to agree

ves, the NSP also want Hindi to be the

on is that the prime minister should have

the power to seek a fresh mandate, and the

formation of some kind of neutral election

all the proposals, and keeping everyone

However pious the intentions for

constitutional reforms are made to sound.

almost every word in the party proposals

smack of some vested, short-term partisar

happy would be long and acrimonious

government. But agreeing and incorporating

national second language.

to be on non-party basis. The tarai-based

proposed election government not to

**Debriefing Deuba** 

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### Then there are those, including the (For translation of sneech see n3) nepalnews.com Q. Is it a good idea for Prime Minister Sher Bahadu

into place," he told us.





### FDITORIAI



s prime ministerial trips on. Sher Rahadur Deuha's travel to New Delhi and Calcutta last week can be classed as a lowintensity visit. There was nothing he and his entourage did there that couldn't have been accomplished in one of those quickturnarounds European prime ministers regularly make to a neighbour ing country for business lunches with their counterparts.

But our leaders have all the time in the world. Deuba went he talked, he inspected the artefacts at the Victoria Memorial, and he returned. Since we didn't expect anything major to happen, we were not too disappointed that nothing did. It's true the Indian media ignored the visit, but why are we surprised? Although the trip loomed large here, in India's scheme of things the prospect of Lagaan winning an Oscar was much more in their overall national interest.

Cutting through the diplomatic verbiage, the rhetorical speeches, and the predictable answers to predictable questions at press conferences, we get a glimmer of the reason why the Indians perhaps ignored the visit. Deuba's most important achievement was to get Indian federal and state officialdom to finally acknowledge that:

- a) Nepal has a serious Manist problem: its leaders have safe haven in Indian territory.
- the growth of a Maoist revolt in Nepal has serious

crossborder implications for the Indian states in an arc of instability from West Bengal to Andhra Pradesh. Lest this sudden sourt of Indian interest in our own dirty little war

raise evebrows back home. Deuba told just about everyone who cared to listen that there was absolutely no need for the Indian Arm to spring to our aid. However, he did accept an offer for unspecified hardware, training as well as an imminent visit by Indian Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani. And he tried to placate the Indians about the presence here of western counter-terrorism advisors and the purchase of non-Indian military gear. But with India now firmly in the US global war on terror saddle, this shouldn't have been as sensitive as it would have even a year ago.



evident before, it is quite open now that the Indians have a fairly good idea of the whereabouts of our comrades in Noida and Gonda. Otherwise why would they escort Messrs Gaiurel Raidva and Ravamaihi to Siliguri to coincide with the Deuba visit? Deuba claims that his Indian interlocutors assured him they would help to curb the activities of the Maoists in India. If they meant that, could Siliouri perhaps be a place to start? Just asking.

Meanwhile, back on the home front. Deuba returns to renewed efforts by party dissidents to unseat him. Which means he will now have to get back to devoting more time to curbing a possible mutiny rather than addressing the country's urgent governance crisis. He is also now under pressure to take seriously Prachanda's offer

of reonening talks Despite being personally doubtful of Maoist trustworthiness after being let down in November, there are now indications that the Magists mselves are hot about talking again. The political leadership seems to have regained the upperhand within the movement, and the action of the security forces is taking a toll on the morale and mobility of the militia.

The last time the Maoists came to talk last year, they used the three months to launch a campaign of extortion and intimidation in the countryside, they rearmed, regrouped and retrained to prepare to take on the army. You can understand Deuba's wariness, and why he is insisting that the Magiste law down their arms first. Douba's hawkish advisers have also told him the Maoists will settle for nothing less than total power, and they are just buying time again by pushing out an olive branch

If the talks resume, then it will be back to the minefield of constitutional reforms. However flawed, public opinion appears to be veering towards support of reforming the statutes as this is the only thing that will bring the Magists to the mainstream. However, it is important to remember that what is happening today in Nepal is not really a failure of the constitution but a failure of politicians to work honestly and effi-



ciently in the national interest. The constitutional debate may also be a red herring to divert debate from the real issues of governance, and lack of development. And ultimately it could narrow the discourse down to the nowers of the monarchy

The comrades, for their part, are using the fireworks in the run-up to and during their five-day bandh as a bargaining chip to force Deuba on talks. This will not work. What will work is Deuba being convinced that a resumption of talks will defuse threats from the Congress dissident factions and their unspoken alliance with the moderate left opposition. One thing everyone-the Mapists, the ruling party, the opposition.

the security forces-must respond to is growing public weariness with this senseless and wasteful war. There is a peace constituency out there, and political forces ignore it at their own peril.



# More of the same in Monterrey

The US offers more dough to poor countries to join its global war on terror. But will it help?

### remain the same on earlier loans. Nothing short

r Ram Sharan Mahat owes an begging bowl status to the Nepali explanation to the nation about what exactly he achieved by flying halfway across the globe to Monterrey's UN International Conference on Financing for Development during the middle of a national crisis and a cabinet moratorium on foreign travel. But considering our donor depend-

ency, attendance may have been mandatory Nepal's experience with the Other donors such as India, Russia

foreign aid has been no different and Britain worked together to fight their fear of Chinese influence from that of the other powerless countries that attended Monterrey. in the Himalayan Kingdom with Perhaps the first instance of foreign investment in infrastructure aid, if it can be called that, was the projects, but the unintended British grant of "an unconditional annual present of rupees ten lakhs ited largesse was the institutionalisation of a culture of dependto be paid in perpetuity" for the valuable help rendered by Nepal for ency. By the end of seventies, the four-and-a-half years during the country had lost the will to do First World War This was anything on its own. subsequently doubled when Nepalis The stated purpose of the

stance in 1960.

ought even more lovally for the Monterrey meet last week was British during the Second World altruistic: to double the \$50 billion War Since the country was Bana of foreign aid each year to halve poverty by 2015. The United property at that time, the money probably paid for their excesses here States, which was giving only 0.01 percent of its GDP as aid (com-

and abroad King Mahendra restored the pared with the UN recommended

0.7 percent), announced a doubling state by dispensing with the of aid by 2006-partly to offset institutions of democratic criticism in Monterrey. But post 9/ ernance. But what was really 11, aid is suddenly being prescribed baffling was his success in as an antidote to terrorism. There nersuading President Eisenhowe are loud hints emanating from the White House that the real intent of to bankroll his absolute rule with the pledge of \$15 million extra the Mexico summit was to seek vows of allegiance from the world commu-To be fair, the aid did partially nity for Globocop George W. The "International Monterrey pay for the literacy drive and the Fund" and the World Bank malaria eradication campaigns. dominated the show, and the final

Monterrey declaration was a sugarcoated version of the Washington Consensus. The new euphemism for privatisation is "battling corruption", globalisation will henceforth sequence of this largely unsolicbe known as "adopting solid economic practices", and the loss of economic sovereignty will now go inder the guise of "spending funds efficiently". With these conditions poor countries have been promised a little more dole, but to expect any meaningful change after these commitments would be to ignor the chasm between the developing and the developed world. The grip of rich countries over the world economy is so tight-fisted that the

more things change, the more they

Well-administered aid can indeed do wonders for the countries mired in the vicious circle of illiteracy, ill-health. poverty, lack of growth and the resulting soft state, as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan says. But constant meddling by the lords of poverty in policy formulation ends up having exactly the unlikely to work opposite effect.

In recent years, the focus of Heritage Foundation studied the Washington Consensus has World Bank and IMF data from shifted from humanitarian aid to countries that had received international trade and developinternational development loans ment loans. Poor countries were between 1980 and 1999, he made to borrow to pay for the discovered that "recipients are expensive projects they had more likely to be worse off after signed on to earlier. The drying the loans than they are to up of direct aid and an increase experience significant economic conditional loans from growth." Coming form the multilateral agencies inevitably bastion of conservatism, that led to the institutionalisation of self-indictment could be a gross corruption as the new elite from understatement, but it does the recipient countries was coindicate the enormity of the opted into the international problem at hand. So Monterrey turned out to suppliers' network. The journey has been be just another photo-op. Over

downhill ever since, with 50 heads of state and hundreds countries like Pakistan forced to of other lesser world leaders borrow even to pay the interest made pious pronouncements on

the problem of global poverty, and then dispersed after nearly a week of pomp. All we have at the of writing off all past loans can check the further pauperisation of the world's poor. Adminisend of it is a couple of solemn tering the IMF prescriptions vows from rich countries. Thus over last two decades has snake Dubyaman: "We must do aggravated the ills of poverty, more than just feel good about marginalisation and exclusion in what we are doing. We must do the developing world. More good." Amen. When Americans decide to do good, the rest of the world had better head for doses of the same potion are When Brett Schaefer of the the burrows.

Scepticism over the Monterrey meet is grounded in the reality of failed expectations. Despite the dazzlingly intelligent and glib arguments of development economists, global poverty hasn't decreased, and the inequa ity between the poor and the rich has in fact increased. Clearly, the emphasis now has to shift from free trade and development loans to humanitarian aid and institution building. Teaching a persor to fish is no doubt a worthwhile task, but no less important is to keep the fish alive until the new fisherfolk can catch fish by themselves

So, Dr Mahat. Tell us, how was the seafood?

"Who brought the nation to its present condition?" Translated excerpts of the hard-hitting speech delivered by Chief of Army Staff. Praiwalla SJB Rana, at the convocation of the command and staff training at the Tokha on Wednesday. Was the state of emergency declared because the army wanted it, or was it needed because of this grave threat to national security? Before debating this issue, we need to understand why the state of emergency was needed in the first place. In a country where there is a democracy, elected people's representatives and an elected majority government can the state of emergency be declared just because the army wants it? Do we accept direct terrorist attacks on the constitution, constitutional 0 government and government installations as a national crisis or not? If no Nepali

been deteriorating for the past few years, has now reached a Army is centred only in the district

We have heard even responsible people saving that the Royal Nepalese

who brought the nation to its present condition? Is this the creation of badgovernance, or is it something that the army has brought about?

headquarters and has been on the defensive. In a situation where, after the declaration of emergency, the army has been deployed nationwide, such

Government, and implementing its blinkered views are totally untrue assigned tasks. But are the elected It may not be possible for the Royal people's representatives also taking up their responsibilities in their constituer Nepalese Army to remain permanently in all areas it has reached, but the cies? Why are they not helping the clashes that have taken place in security forces in its campaign against different parts of the country prove that the allegations are baseless. What terrorists in their constituencies? needs to be kept in mind here is this:

unite to defeat the Maoists, we see confusion, political drift and power struggles for the leadership of parties Why are these selfish games of factional dominance being played out with

cally surface

can accent the killing of one Nepali by

stepped out to kill our own brothers and

sisters on its own accord? Is it right to

situation which is the result of 12 years

of political factors? Why was the advice

given by the army on matters of national

security not taken seriously and ignored If we look for answers to all these

questions, then the reality will automati

The Royal Nepalese Army has been

carrying out the orders of His Majesty's

At a time when all citizens need to

blame the Royal Nepalese Army, the

protector of national security, for a

another, do you think the army has

disregard for the work of the Royal are equally sensitive that innocent people Nepalese Army in support of the nation should not suffer any losses in the course and national security? Have all sectors of war, and we have given clear orders provided the expected support to the Royal Nepalese Army's effo

threat to national security and prestige. and I want to make the rank and file aware of the questions being raised all over about what the Royal Nepalese Army should be doing.

I would like to inform you that at is point, it is only the Right Honorable Prime Minister and some youthful ministers who have understood the seriousness of the threat to national security, and provided support to all security agencies.

It is an indisputable fact that the Royal Nepalese Army which has taken responsibility for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Nepal, has remained within the constitution and devoted itself to service of nation monarchy and people. But when the army abides by the constitution, it also works to protect it. What this means is that the Royal Nepalese Army will never engage in double talk. This fact should be understood by all.

There may be other reasons that the country has arrived at this critical juncture, but in the present context it is clear that the main factor is Maoist terrorism. In accordance with the constitution, the Royal Nepalese Arm has been deployed to achieve the national goal of eliminating terrorism. Crushing terrorism can be a long and difficult war. In this type of battle sometimes you may achieve your goal, but there will also be setbacks. We must not be distracted, we have to draw our lessons from them. We



working on development and infrastruc ture are stopping construction work Don't we have to ensure stability of the nation, ensure a sense of security to all citizens, and return the image of beautiful, peaceful Nepal? Despite difficulties arising from non-cooperat in a situation where soldiers of the Royal Nepalese Army are putting their lives on the line in the service of the nation, it is natural to expect you to bring out the facts and help raise the morale of the army

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A small, but confusing and false new item in the papers or a comment, can have a negative impact on the trust and confidence that we have earned from the Nepali people after a long and hard struggle. Human beings are sensitive, and it is natural for there to be differences between the beliefs and ideologies, but in this time of crisis it is necessary to keep

our differences on hold. At a time when global public opinion is standing up against terrorism, all of us Nepalis have to stand united in helping the Royal Nepalese Army complete its responsibilities. I extend that appeal to all respected journalists.

COWS OR DONKEYS? Your editorial ('Fraing the roof while the house is on fire;' #83) contributes to the debate on constitutional reform. The idea should be to elect peoples' representa- tives who are responsible and accountable to the people. Presently, most of them are not. Let the Madistis come forward and tell us why they want a constitutional assembly. How is this going to make MPs more account- able of the answer and the work of the more account- able of the answer and the more the state of the answer and the answer and the state and the answer and the state of the answer and the state and the answer and the answer and the state of the state of the state of the state of the state of the state of the second the state of the state of the state of the state of the second the state of the state of the state of the state of the rest of us. And then they invariably end up fighting each other. Krishna Prasad Bhatari used to say "you can't tim a donkey into a cow by washing if with maik".	They know a donkey when they see one. Hari Pokharel Taiwan CENDER AGENAD Cone important aspect of constitutional reform that got left out during editing my piece ('Why do we need constitutional reforms?' #84) is the reference to "gender-empow-emment through electoral equality". This is vitial for the socialisation of democracy are really meaningful to women at the grassroots where they reside. I suggested a system of electoral segregation where at the WDC level women chose two women and if they have the majority in the district level each policial party fields a male and female candidate, as a team for DDC/Municipality leadership. For real devolution, all taxes must be col-lected as price and semicipal to volve the rational parliamentary docrees by the WOC Tax Othe and email mantematic and email email email email email emails and female and female and female conditions.	50 percent for use by the District Treasury. It is also necessary to decentralise the judicary into district-based family courts, criminal courts, appeals courts and arbitration courts. Madhukar Rane Patan ALL CORRUPT I read your editorial (°41- 2-39, #85) which analyses to the our district of the supreme Court comes with its final report after six months, there will be no one who is clean. Will they all be pros- ecuted? If yes, then who is going to be left to lead the country's development? SUP Challs coloum ('In a sch stah fag) is nugatory, jejune and frangth with muddled	thinking. By ranting against hepails alleged soft state, Lal unwriting/a dvocates an authoritarian state. And, what is most galling, e still pontificates that change has to begin from the bottom. Since when have authoritarian states, those monstrosifies of top-down models stated to encourage bottom-up demo- cratic processes? There has to be another way out of our current political stalemate. More current political stalemate.	Lal. for the medicine you propose is as bad as the disease, if not worse. <i>Heera Shrestha</i> <i>Sydney</i> <b>ARMS ARE US</b> US Ambassador Mike Malinowski atter his wist to western Nepal ("Angry Americans," FaSI) drew parallels between the Maoists and the Shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining Path. Khmer Rouge and al- Gaeda. This may be indica- tion of the shining and the Maoist Theorem of the shining program designed to bolster the millitaries in several countries in Asia, including Nepal. But will such help be sufficient to enable the goverment to eliminate the Maoist threat? We needo- command training, helicop- ters, reconnaissance equip- manitanece personnel in large numbers, comparable	to what was supplied to Colombia and the Philip- pines. Only then will the Maoists no longer present the threat to the people of Negal. <b>Chandrakala Thapa</b> by email <b>TEARS OF LAUGHTER</b> Kunda Dioits column with the Shakespeare quotes ("Much ado about nothing new," æ55 moved me from laughter and that "I think our county sinks beneath the youtes ("Much beneath the yoke I weeps, it bleeds and each new day a gash is added to her wounds." <i>Hilary Dirlam</i> by email Doesn't Kunda Dixit have a say in the ads that appear next to his column? If so, can he call of the one that extols the imagined virtues of fair skin? That ad is offensive in a journal of your quality.







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NATION

FOLLOW UP

Free to be miserable



HEMLATA RAI IN KAILALI with the pride that he is a member of the school and sanitation and re looking up ir Srilanka, Not Cevlon, But drinking water development Srilanka in Nepal's Kailali committees in his neighbourhood. District, the former kamaiya

4 NATION

The Srilanka camp is a success rehabilitation camp. It looks like a story in an ocean of despair among new planned township, houses with freed kamaiyas in Nepal's southtin roofs in neat rows on either western plains. The Srilankans are sides of dusty alleys. Other houses the lucky ones who got parcels of are going up in empty plots, sweaty land registered in their names. They workers are making dhikaries got timber and tin to construct traditional mud containers to store their homes from the government and charity groups. Others are not food grains Chet Ram Chaudhary of so lucky-they are still languishing

Srilanka camp already has plenty to fill up his dhikaries. He was able to harvest more than five quintals of naddy last season in his land, and hopes that with complementing income from odd labour jobs, the grain will sustain his small family of three for the coming year. "I have enough to feed my family for present therefore, I afford to give my time for social works," he said

### HERE AND THERE

friend of mine once spent far too much time living in Kabul, long before Hamid Karzai, Tony Blair and fashionable concern about th Iong suffering-people of Afghanistan. He was head of the Interna-tional Committee of the Red Cross in Afghanistan. His was a thankless, endless task of feeding the hungry, helping prisoners of war and disseminat ing the tenets of the Geneva Convention to murderous warlords who breakfasted on fresh blood and hashish. This was around the time that an

American diplomat told me that Afghanistan "was off the screen, zero interest level." People like my ICRC friend and a few other brave souls were doins their best, but officialdom in Washington, London and most of Europe wasn't interested

I asked this fellow late one night, after far too many tins of Bulgarian beer, why he stayed, why he was so capable of dealing with all types of Afghans. from widows to warlords. His answer was a classic. and full of relevance for modern day Nepal where the risk of turning into 1990s Afghanistan can't be ignored.

"I am Swiss," said my friend, "I come from Appenzellerland-the most backward part of my country. We still haven't allowed women the right to vote in local elections. And sixty years ago, we were killing each other over cattle and women. We were having blood feuds, blockading each other and killing families in revenge. We were like the Taleban or any other Afghan warlord."

He went on to explain a pet theory, that the

fire to kamaiya huts to expel quatters. Since these former bonded labourers have no place to go, they just moved down the road to another plot at the edge of the jungle. Ragahi Chaudhary and 133 other families live in constant fear of another eviction. On 17 July 2000, the govern for settlement. ment outlawed the kamaiya system a perpetual bonded labour system. practiced mostly in five far-western arai districts of Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Kanchanpur and Dang. The government announcement mmediately and automatically

r of sudden eviction. "We are free, but our lives are their employers (kisans). not much better than what we used to have before leaving the kisan household," Ragahi Chaudhary told is from inside his hut at Bangai Phata in Bardiya. Last year the

in makeshift camps living in shacks

with plastic roofs on unregistered

government land and in constant

District Forest Office in Bardiya set

ended all the debt and labour obligations of kamaiyas who left Presently, former kamaiyas an living in 65 camps. Last year, the government distributed identity

ds to former kamaiyas—red cards for kamaiyas without any landholding and blue for those

owning some land. The governmen distributes rehabilitation support, including distribution of housing plots, on the basis of these identity cards. Official records show that more than 18,000 households have identity cards, of which 80 percent lacks sincerity. have already been distributed land

However, the non-governmen tal organisations involved in rehabilitation are not happy with the identification card system. The Backward Society Education (BASE), an NGÓ spearheading kamaiya rights says 2,600 house-holds of ex-Kamaiyas are left out of the identification process. BASE director Dilli Bahadur Chaudharv told

Nepalgunj this weekend. us the lack of government coordina The main problem is that tion is the reason for the orblem government departments don't The process requires kisans to coordinate their activities. In Kailali,

endorse kamaiyas before they can qualify for the identity cards. Many identified the areas for kamaiya kisan refused to identify their settlement, but the District Forest

former kamaiyas fearing compensa-Office refused to allow it. tion payments for bondage. In Banke some kamaiya families 'It's just a stunt." says Sindari were distributed land ownership Devi Chaudhary of Manahara in certificates without having a land to Kailali. "We are toys in the hands of a hypocrite government that Under secretary at the Ministry of Land Reform and Management Shankar Prasad Dhungana is aware that many ex-kamaiyas missed out in the list, and assures them his office will make amends "We need

Committee has promised them 3 katthas of land in Machhagadh village where they are staving in plastic tents since last two week Ramdev Chaudhary, leader of recently formed Liberated Kamaiya Unliftment Committee, draws only one conclusion: "The government just wants to weaken our collective for example, the Land Reform Office ovement. But we are determined

distributed land ownership certificates four months back that shows each family holds 5 katthas of land in Manau village. The Banke District Forest Office refused them the promised plots in Manau. Now the Land Distribution

Budhi Ram Tha

having a land to o

a cabinet decision to make it happen, but it is responsibility of the ex-kamaiyas to make their voic heard at the policymaking level," he said at a kamaiya conference in

own. We met Budhi Ram Tharu and 27 other households who were



Kumarigal, Guhyeswori, separate sewage entering the river from the Mitra Park and Gokarna areas and filters the water before releasing it into the river beyond Pashupati via an underground tunnel. Sludge, or sediment from the treated water, is pumped into drving beds, and the project hopes to sell or distribute it to the public as fertiliser. So far, an estimated Rs 500 million has been spent on the project "By the time we finish with this portion, it will cost a

little over Rs 600 million," says oroject manager Ram Deep Shah An initial survey by the commit tee indicates that cleaning the river up all the way to Chobar will cost Rs 7 billion. "Speaking from experience, if all goes well ir terms of funding and logistics, we can clean up the river all that way in two-and-a-half or three years says Poudel. "But at the present rate of progress, it could take twenty years."

They are already experiencing me hitches. The foam that rises from the treatment plant every morning is an indication of chemical pollutants from the 68 industries—garments, carpets, dyeing, and small handicraftsunstream "Chemical pollutants slow down the water treatment process. It slows down the growt of bacteria that help clean the water." Numerous letters have been despatched to the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies to monitor the use of chemicals, "But they are not reacting as quickly as we would like them to," explains Poudel. The term of the committee runs for just another three months, but members have recommended to the prime minister and the Ministry of Housing and Physical Planning to extend their term or set up another committee that will focus on cleaning up all the rivers in the Valley-the Bishnumati, Manohara, Tukuche, Hanumante, Dhobi Khola—and not just the Bagmati. "After coming so far, I don't think it's impossible," smiles Poudel, whos team has to work with the

concerned VDCs, DDCs, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, as well as the concerned ministries and the public. "If the government and the public want it to happen and everyone works towards that goal, it's not mpossible." But he also calls on civil society to help, to ensure that things go as planned. "If people like the Chaudhary Group, who have already expressed much concern about the state of the Bagmati, offer to clean up the area below Tilganga until Thapathali, I'd support

them all the way." ♦

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### On the box

There's no doubt about the plamour of television. But aren't politicians, enamoured with seeing themselves. on the idiot box, over reacting? The Nepali Congress Central Working Committee found it a serious offense that state-run Nepal Television did not show faces of their top leaders—Girija Prasad Koirala, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Sher Bahadur Deuba—while covering the CWC's most recent meeting. Information and Communication Minister Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta received a note from the CWC seeking an explanation (within three days) when the major Congress leaders didn't appear on the news bulletin. We don't blame Gupta, who may have a better understanding of just what people don't want to see. Now if only NC bosses reacted like that on other more pressing issues facing the nation.

### Govinda Mainali

Human Rights activists visiting Govinda Mainali at the Tokyo Detention Centre last week says he's doing well—except of course the ordeal of having to spend time in a foreign jail for a crime he did not commit. After a prolonged trial beginning in 1997, the Nepali migrant worker was sentenced to life imprisonment or 22 December 2000. He was charged of murdering Yasuko Watanabe. Shortly afterwards, Mainali was tried at the Tokyo District Court, but on 14 April, 2000, judge Toshikazu Obuchi had pronounced him not auity. Mainali was to be freed but the prosecutor filed an appeal and demanded the Tokyo High Court continue to detain him. The court complied with the request and in the trial that followed, even though there was no new evidence, the chief judge of the court Takagi Toshio, reversed the lower court's decision. Mainali was then sentenced to life imprisonment. This seemingly double-standard treatment meted out to a Nepali migrant worker whose only crime, if any, was over staying the visa permit, has galvanised many Japanese and Nepali nationals in Japan to form the "Justice for Govinda" group. They believe that Mainali is innocent and are fighting to create public opinion in favour of Mainali and to lobby for his fair trial and

### **Dental help**

Rotary International has given a grant to the National Dental Hospital to complete a maxillofacial center providing treatment for cleft palate, oral cancer care and accident trauma. This will be a free service for the noor. Experts have also recommended setting up a rural dental system in Nenal, which is not top heavy with the cost of traditional dental equipment and the need for centrally located clinics. But why you may ask

The food habits of Nepalis, from Nepalguni to Namche have changed and, among other things, that has resulted to an increase in dental diseases. That's what a WHO study conducted among children of the Khumbu region indicates. The shift from salt to sweet tea and soday betweet to a rise in dental diseases in remote mountain areas, where people usually don't have access to care. Even in Namche, where there is a well-equipped clinic, the dental standards are below those prescribed by the WHO. The study revealed very high decay levels, as well as the need for oral hygiene training and treatment for all children. "Very little exists in the way of research data on current decay and

gum disease levels," says David Geddes, dental surgeon and mountaineer, involved in the study. It was also clear that many cleft palate patients and oral cancer sufferers in Nepal were unable to access any treatment.

### Marathon men

Nepali runners dominated the recently concluded Annapurna Mandala Trail, which organisers say, is the "world's highest race". On 23 March, Dacchiri Sherpa, a Nepali living in Switzerland, raced his way to victory. The race, overing 320km over eight days, took 31 marathoners across rice paddy fields at 800m and up to a height of 5400m through the Thorong Pass, before descending to Dhampus, near Pokhara. Sherpa, currently considered one of the leading mountain runners in Europe, had a comfortable two-hour lead over Nar Bahadur Shah, winner of the previous two races around the Annapurna. Shah was followed by Sumba Sherpa, Babu Raja Shrestha and Pasang Sherpa.



A SPECIAL LOOK\* AT THE MAOIST WAR



No nation has a monopoly on barbarism and blood-letting. 

veneer of civility and modernity is paper-thin everywhere, that even the most advanced industrial societies can fall into bloody mayhem at a moments notice. And that all of our pasts are awash in backwardness, nasty behaviour, discrimination against women, the weak and the poor. "We're ust a generation into this modern age," my friend

opined, waving his tin of beer, "so I'm very much at home in Afghanistan.' To people from developing countries, Europe is a font of civilisation, a place where countries are oth economically successful and generous with

their own citizens and the global poor. It's a place that seldom puts a foot wrong and its experts, consultants and humanitarian workers flood the globe with good advice and cash, much as they ised to send conquering armies to colonise. Yet t's so easy to forget what a bloody, nasty place Furone was and how recently it was thus Even before the barbarism of the two World Wars, much of the continent was as my friend

describes his Swiss homeland—brimming with dir poor subsistence farmers alienated from the olitical and economic elite in their national apital, and ripe to heed the powerful message of deologues promising Utopia after the release of a river of blood. Sound familiar yet?

Italy only became a country in the late 1800s, dozens of princely states and duchies united under a doddering monarchy that only really began to prosper after tinkering with fascism and suffering grievous defeats in two major wars. Germany too came together around the same time and remains to this day an unevenly cohesive place, its länder or states competing with each other in telling the nastiest jokes about the people across the state line.

The French are far from unified: northerners, southerners, Basques, Alsatians, Occians and the Italians of the Riviera have no time for each other. And Switzerland? It barely has a head of state. Its 33 cantons, like Appenzellerland which eventually gave the women the vote a few years ago, are more sovereign and independent than most countries in the United Nations. Nor do the British or the Dutch escape this sort of scrutiny although they have hung together better than most.

So what's the lesson for Nepal in Europe's countless rifts and fault lines? Well, it's that national unity doesn't require a unified view of the nation. And that diverse ethnicities, language groups and landscapes can come together and forge prosperity, even after devastating wars and economic collapses. Look to Europe for many reasons, but don't see it as a land of pristine peace where all has been forever perfect and only wisdom bas served the common weal

Think of those cattle rustlers of Appenzellerland, now schooling the world's warlords in the most humane ways of war and helping the hungry at every turn. But don't drink Bulgarian beer. Take my word for it. ♦

Construction/ Rehabilitation Project, Poudel is still working to fight for our right. We'll keep struggling." ♦ hard to reinvigorate the river that runs through the Valley. ("A sewer runs through it," #39) But he, and every capital resident who's ever been felled by

now generates 750 cubic metres of solid waste every year. About 70 percent of this is disposed by gone unnoticed by people mourning their dead and taking ritual baths at the ghats of

recycled. But the rest is dumped on the banks of the river. The Bagmati is not just a sewer, but also a garbage dump.



the municipality in various landfills, and 5-10 percent is Pashupati. "It's been about six

The project initially acquired months, there has been clean just over 4.5 hectares of land in water in the ghats." says Poudel

long way to go—right up to Chobar. The Rehabilitation hands. Nearly six years after being appointed president of the Project's first and second phase High-Powered Committee for the cleaning up the river from Gokama Implementation and Monitoring to Tilganga, are complete. Daily laboratory readings of the Bagmati Area Sewage indicate that the pollution indicator, the biological oxygen demand (BOD) of the water, is at times even higher than the minimum acceptable standard. At the inlet it is 300 mg per litre, but after it is treated, it is 22 mg 40 mg per litre at the outletmeaning that one can bathe and wash in the water. The project even supplies drinking water to the Pashupati area. With a population that has surpassed 1.7 million, the Valley

One step at a time, the Valley's major

But, he acknowledges, there's still a

source of water is being cleaned up.

idur Prasad Poudel has a

nammoth task on his

t would take a full dose of hareorained idealism to believe that the impending law on regulating the activities of political parties would end the horse-trading that has saddled the country with so much cynicism. But the outlook may not be all that bad if you consider House of Penrecentative Speaker Taranath Ranabhat's sense of timing. He decided to forward the bil for the royal seal one day before the US Congress approved the biggest campaign-finance reform legislation in a generation.

Our bill, primarily aimed at preventing political parties from amassing unlimited amounts of mone

in contributions, had been languishing in the upper house for one-and-a-half vears after getting through the lower chamber. The 19th session of parliament couldn't consider the measure because the opposition parties wanted Girija Prasad Koirala to step down as prime minister first. When ruling-party and opposition MPs expanded their squabble to establish whether the

Lauda Air lease deal was sleazier tha the China South West accord, the bill plunged to new depths of uncertainty Asserting his prerogative to forward the measure to the palace without the elders' consent last week, Ranabhat took the moral high ground. By citing the failure of the upper house to abide by the constitutional responsibility to return a finance bill to the lower chamber within 15 days, the speaker obstructionism.

salient features

envisaged state funding of parties based

you then go on to advise us to take

"special precautionary measures while

velling during the period of war."

ale in which a jackal invites a long

shameless host the jackal laps up his

beaked stork to dinner and serves

I cannot help but recall the folk

reaffirmed the supremacy of representatives the people directly elect. You could easily get a sense of the urgency prevailing in the opposition camp as well. The UML's chief whip, Bharat

COMMENTARY

Dr Baburam Bhattarai, Namaste from Massachusetts, USA. I am an American citizen and a

frequent visitor and lover of "materially poor but spiritually rich" Nepal, as you so eloquenth put it. Your fax of March 15, 2002, was recently forwarded to me by a Nepali friend, and I would like to respond to your "invitation" to us food on flat plates. While the foreign tourists to visit Nepaleven though your communist party dinner, his guest remains hungry is waging a people's war against "a because his beak is useless in fascist monarchical state'

feeding itself. In the story, the stork What struck me immediately has his revenge, but that is irrelupon reading your fax were the evant right now. I must say that inherent contradictions in your your invitation is reminiscent of the invitation. While you declare hypocritical jackal. In a nation magnanimously, "Foreign tourists where guests are supposedly ire most welcome in the country and will be so in future as well "



chronic enronitis. 

**Funding fundamentals** 

Mohan Adhikary, said his party welon the votes they received in the last comed Ranabhat's decision, although he election. Sensing an imminent cash personally couldn't remember the bill's crunch, the smaller parties succeeded in deleting that provision from the version being sent to the palace. In doing so,

Sceptics always wondered how incumbents could seriously agree to they also returned the favour to the big dismantle a system that they have players. (Even if you can't win enough profited from. Conspiracy theorists votes to form the government, take pride believe the lower house simply egged on in your nuisance value.) the elders to sit on the bill in order to Once the bill is stamped into law, all avoid filibusters their constituents would recognised parties would have to submit ever have forgiven. As individuals less an annual report to the Election Combeholden to the influences of soft and mission, detailing their sources of income

and items of expenditure. They would hard money-at least in the public mind-upper house MPs stood a better also have to maintain a record of donachance of confronting allegations of tions of Rs 5,000 and more. The idea is to ensure that every central committee Now we understand why the Nepal meeting, tree plantation programme and Congress and the UML have been shadowy signature campaign is fully pampering the smaller parties all these accounted for. You can figure out what years. The original draft of the bill kind of opportunities this would create

**Reply to Baburam** 

"It is rude to invite guests with all sorts of conditions attached,"

lised by the arch-reactionary Shah-

ourtiers." Respected Doctor, how

country, seek shelter in hotels and

take buses (or fly) to enchanting

owns like Pokhara or Chitwan

They couldn't possibly take a boat.

since Nepal remains a land-locked

country, if my current world atlas is

accurate. While Indian tourists

(whom you also say you welcome

real possibility of walking into

with open arms) may entertain the

Nepal and lodging with relatives

are tourists to arrive in Nepal if

Rana family and their close

they are not to fly into your

for imaginative auditors.

Attempting to regulate the cash flow of political parties is noble, but it could mean the spread of

Advocates of the status quo waged a in hiding their party accounts, some-

and amounts. (By the way, he never

Things were okay until someone

offered its accounts for public scrutiny

flaunting their net worth are so zealous

If politicians who have no problem with

our cadre and the counter

government. But instead of

I believe Mao himself was most

explicit in not persecuting the

seasants and seeking their full

support in order to achieve the aim

of a revolutionary war. While every

wer flows from the barrel of a

gun," he or she conveniently forget:

enlightening rules he imposed upon

the revolutionary Red soldiers, such

as "no confiscation from peasants,"

nay for all articles numbered " "be

Your party and cadres are

ither winning the hearts and

minds of the Nepali people, nor the

international propaganda war when

they are accused of brutally

issassinating school teachers

urteous and helpful when you can.

revolutionary poseur is quick to

quote Mao's famous "Political

many of Mao's mundane but

trekking traik

realised that not a single party had

leadership.)

Kathmandu (and thus consider

their vacation as a pilgrimage).

western tourists are separated

from your lovely nation by yast

visit, I do not-in fact cannot-

afford the luxury of such extrava-

gant establishments because, you

see, my petit bourgeois purse is much too meagre. Like you, I want

my money to benefit the Nepalis

with whom I come into contact

and not flow back to the foreign

nations. So I stay in family-owned

lodges, hire local guides and porters

with surnames like Lama, Tamang,

Gurung, Sherpa, Gauchan, Thapa,

Biswakarma with the hone that the

wages I've paid them will help suppor

the family, send children to school and

or fly to various towns, and if by

extending your heartfelt welcome?

figure out what you have done with

And have you ever bothered to

your "peoples' war" to wreck the

tourism industry in Nepal and

therefore deprive hundreds of

thousands of porters, vegetable

doing this I've propped up the

he it. But then why bother

However, I must take the buses

ist monarchical state", then s

put dal-bhat on the table

Personally speaking, whenever I

oceans and seas

gallant struggle until the very end. If thing must be wrong. Around this time. omething isn't broken, why fix it? After some overworked functionaries in the all, the country has held three parties' treasury departments began arliamentary elections and two explaining how painful raising money ocal elections since the restoration could be. Some moneybags started of democracy 12 years ago. Moreoreminding us that since "donation" had a connotation of free will, "extortion" ver, all major parties have held provided a more accurate description of everal national and regional ventions, undergoing splits and the situation Those campaigning for political syntheses, sparing the people the transparency will have to be prepared tedium of having to go through

their profit-and-loss accounts for some naked truths. What happens to parties found to have contracted Leaders have been running parties with enronitis well before the US energy collections from businessmen and proceeds from fund-raising drives either giant gave a name to the disease? Bar from the centre of power or from the them from contesting the next election? periphery. One businessman recalls how Withhold MPs' paycheques for the first he had once assembled the entire UML full year of their term? Make leaders who have lost the election perform leadership in his second-floor office in a 1,826 hours of community service, at dark by-lane in the city centre. He nsists he's an equal opportunity the rate of an hour a day over the five benefactor. Name any big name in the year legislative term?

Critics of the bill have not lost ruling party and there's a good chance hope, though. It might take a while he'll give you a memorised summary of before the bill is sent to the palace. disbursements complete with dates, time Officials at the parliament secretariat forgets to mention how touched he was say they have to type the legislation. by the thriftiness of some of the leaders check for typos and give it another who form the core of today's Maoist thorough reading first. And, of cours we have to watch how things unfold in

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PUSKAR BHUSAI

Washington DC. Some opponents of the McCain-Feingold bill want to take their case to the Supreme Court before the ink on President George W Bush signature dries. ♦

> to death by torching a public bus or Sorry to say, but your revolution seems to be going the way of the Cultural Revolution circa 1960s when millions of Chinese peasants died of starvation, Stalin's gulags and the

myself included, actually agree with you that centuries of injustice exploitation, degradation and nequality, among other social evils prevalent in Nepal (as well as every other nation on earth), must end But I firmly part with you on the means of achieving that end. For you and your ilk. destruction and death are considered "collateral damage"—an inevitable and

> I want to assure you that I do financial and other clout to stay afloat. It is the small lodges, tea shops and porters who need us

more. Ultimately, I want to convince you that I am not just a fair-weather friend of Nepal but a friend for all seasons 🔶

Paul Bacon Massachusetts, USA

### NEPALL ECONOMY

### BIZ NE

### **Books out of balance**

There is a general slowdown in revenue collection across the board-excise has been the hardest hit due to the slowdown in the production and sale of goods in the domestic market Official figures for excise until mid-February show collection down by about 8 percent. The collection in Falgun was about Rs 2.20 billion, against the budgetary target of about Rs 4.87 billion. Likewise, there has also been a slowdown in the collection of Value Added Tax (VAT), which grew by about 3 percent in mid-February to Rs 7.64 billion. Going by the monthly average, even VAT will fall short of the Rs 14.75 billion projected by this year's budget. When the Finance Vinistry sits down to do its calculations near the end of the fiscal year, it may have a shortfall of Rs 6 billion compared to the budget estimate, sources tell us,

### Lower spread

Commercial banks have lowered the spread in the buying and selling rates of the greenback from Rs 0.75 to Rs 0.60 effective Friday. Banks began buying the dollar for Rs 77.35 and sold it for Rs 77.95 (Thursday's buying and selling rates were Rs 77.30 and Rs 78.05 respectively). For the nast 11 years banks in Nenal had kent a one-nercent margin between the two rates

### Two dates

If you're looking at what Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba achieved in New Delhi last week, here are two deadlines. One is June 2002 for finalising the Detailed Project Report for the Pancheswor Project, which was supposed to have been competed last year, and the other is to do the same with the rail operation agreement.

Nepal and India are to negotiate and finalise the rail operation agreement between Birguni and Raxaul to begin operations at the Inland Container Depot, which was ready early this year Deuba and his Indian counterpart Atal Behari Vaipavee have given officials until 23 June to get that done.

Nepal has already brought in Trans Nepal Freight Services to run two other ICDs at Biratnagar and Bhairahawa, which do not yet have rail connections. It has been unable to select a company to run the ICD at Birgunj, as it does not have a rail operation agreement with India.

### **Biometrics**

Having problems keeping up with the time sheets of your staff, or tired of dealing with customers complaining of forgotten passwords and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs)? Biometrics might be the solution to both, says the Microhard Institute of Technology (MIT), which recently began marketing the high-tech solution. For the uninitiated, biometrics allows using tracking technology to scan body parts such as irises or fingerprints for use as ID keys

### Garments

Prithivi Raj Ligal, vice chairman of the National Planning Commission, told garment producers this week that we cannot afford to lose the industry which earns Nepal the most money. But businessmen at the Annual General Meeting of the Garment Association of Nepal (GAN) were unimpressed. "Is there anything still left to be lost?" asked one, "I've lost everything." Ligal's speech and the business' response typify

INTERVIEW

the distance between policy makers and things on the ground, where industry estimates say that almost 80 percent of factories have closed shop. The industry, which is worth roughly Rs 10 billion in terms of investment, used to employ over 50,000 people before the slump began late last year. Now, few are bothering to count,

> hy natients from Nepal and South Asia that our hospital runs very efficiently and the service standards are excellent. That, I believe, is well worth the 10 percent premium, especially when your comfort and care are concerned

### What do Nepalis come here for mainly?

By and large, Nepalis are coming for speciality care, cardiology in particular. That said, we see a lot of patients coming for comprehensive health screenings and other out-natient services. I think that the Nenalis like the fact that this is a one-stop centre, and that we can provide outpatient, diagnostics, and inpatient care all under one roof. It is very time efficient

### Can Asian medical standards challenge western medical facilities?

That depends on the medical institution and the country. Bumrungrad, for example, is the first and only hospital in Asia that is accredited by the JCIA-a US-based hospital accreditation organisation-that measures our capabilities based on criteria used for US hospitals. Here, you will find American management, US- and UK-trained and board-certified physicians, a top to bottom quality control program, advanced equipment and a five-star facility. I think that Bumrungrad operates at levels that challenge western medical facilities, and that medical standards in Asia, on the whole, are improving.

### Does South Asia provide a large enough market for you to think of venturing here? What is the market in Nepal like? South Asia is a very large and important market for us in terms of patients seen and treated. As far as "ventures" are concerned, we are

quite active regionally developing medical exchange programs, but much less focused on building or co-venturing on building satellite facilities. We have medical programs active in Bangladesh. Sri Lanka and the Maldives As for Nepal, we are currently working with the National Heart Center (SGNHC) to further develop their capabilities in invasive cardiology. In fact, a team from SGNHC is training with us right now.

image as a regulator that is changed the pinch.

arthabeed@vahoo.com

promoters have used the loans for , rather more personal purposes than is normal, leaving little for the banks to recover. The central bank has been disappointing in its role as policeman, not surprising, perhaps, when one remembers that the Nepal Rastra Bank is also an arm of the government, headed by a government nominee. When no other government agency behaves in the national interest, why should the central bank, even if millions of dollars are being pumped into it in the hope of giving it teeth?

performing assets-the value of

ompany assets is shrinking, and

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ECONOMIC SENSE

aving just read the about the

the Calcutta papers, the Beed

thought it best, for reasons of

the relations between our two

countries, but discuss more

pertinent issues at home

national pride and self-confidence.

not to delve into matters relating to

We all know this by now: the

French banking company Crédit

Agricole wants to pull out of Nepal

Indosuez Bank. That decision was

left to the court and power politics,

but though a ruling has been passed

Agricole to exit, we all know about

the slips between the cup and the

lin. No doubt the French firm will

not rest in peace until it sees the money—in France. The Nepal

Rastra Bank has also ensured that

Limited quit for reasons known to

all, asked the chairman of a private

bank to step down, and dissolved

the board of the Lumbini Bank.

The consultants who are to take

over management of the Rastriva

Banijva Bank are just waiting for

Development Bank has problems as

do rural banks. It seems as if other

problem, banking is also set to be

staple news hounds can rely on.

The first spate of reforms

the right moment to arrive.

Meanwhile the Agriculture

than a certain other pressing

the directors of Nepal Bank

that is supposed to allow Crédit

visit to India of the Nepali visit to India of the 1 we minister on page 5 of

**Bank(ruptcy) woes** 

Forget about propping up the economy without a strong banking sector

opened by people already in

at any time With lay norms

interest

usiness and, what's more, allowed

ndividuals and promoter groups to

be involved in more than one bank

regarding ownership, management

and governance, banks became a

business that thrived on conflict of

means of securitisation, banks

Which is why the Beed believes we are now in such a state that to understand the banking system here at all we need to focus on the chances of survival of not just private banks, but also the regula tor. Banks should be given leeway to merge and amalgamate, to mak operations more efficient and

productive. For banking companies to be viable in the long run, we need economies of scale. Quantit Regarding collateral as the only not only quality. The central bank should live up to its role as regulator, if it issues guidelines, i eds to ensure that they are adhered to. It needs to facilitate decision-making, and develop an

> The banking sector provide vitally-needed infrastructure for business trade and commerce. If it weakens, the entire economy feels

Readers can post their views at

resulted in a mushrooming of banks and financial institutions, but set tives also vying for that pie, out no adequate legislative and everyone's slice is getting smaller regulative framework for them to Competition is increasing, but its work within. One may argue that only effect is that margins are the financial sector is difficult to shrinking, putting pressure on the regulate even in developed nations bottom line but consider this in the Nepali The other matter plaguing the context. We allowed banks to be banking sector is the issue of non-

treated the problems of cash-flow and business strength as secondary Project finance is still a distant reality, and funding in a venture capital mode, impossible. Banks have targeted the limited business of funding against mortgages. But with development banks, finance companies and finance co-opera-

proactive. The way it handled the vestment of Indosuez points to a lot of things that need to be

"What people recognise is good value for health care." How much potential does imedical tourismî have in Thailand? A lot. As millions of tourists are coming to Thailand each year, they are becoming more aware of what the country has to offer. One of the things they are noticing is the very high standard of medicine and service available at Bumrungrad Hospital, and how reasonable the costs are when compared to medical treatment in their own countries. Last year we treated 217,000 international patients coming from over 150 different countries in all specialities of medicine ranging from laser eye surgery to oper

### heart surgery to check ups. What people recognise is value, and if they can travel here for eye laser surgery and get a seven-day holiday for the cost of reatment alone in their home country, then that is an attractive offer But why should, for instance, an oil sheik choose to come to

Bumrungrad, rather than go to the United States? While our hospital offers all the amenities and medical services that an oil sheik would want, the fact is our business is not focused on wooing the super rich. On the contrary, we are much more focused on serving patients looking for an alternative to medical treatment in their home country. Patients from the US and Europe come to Bumrungrad, because we can provide medical services at a fraction of what they would spend at home. Patients from southeast Asia and South Asia choose Bumrungrad because we deliver speciality medicine at prices that are 50 percent cheaper than Singapore. Patients from the Middle East come pecause of the speed and service.

### Where do your other major clients come from and what is the most sought-after service?

Our top five nationalities are: American, Japanese, British, Chinese and Bangladeshi. Because this group is so diverse, it is difficult to give one procedure or speciality that patients are coming for. On the whole, Bumrungrad is a centre for speciality medicine—cardiology, cancer neurosurgery, neonatology-and is recognised as a regional referral centre for trauma and complex cases. But we are also the family doctor for tens of thousands of families, who have come to trust us to provide high quality care for their everyday medical needs.



# Increasingly, Nepalis in need of medical treatment are going not to India, but to Thailand, combining check-ups or surgery with tourism and shopping. Nepali Times spoke to Ruben Toral, director of international programs at Bumrungrad Medical Center in Bangkok

Nepali Times: How do your services and prices for Nepalis compare with treatment in India?

Ruben Toral: For most Nepalis seeking medical treatment overseas India has traditionally been the destination of choice based largely on price and proximity. Based on my experience and talking to patients who know both systems. I believe that we offer a better package than India when comparing price, service, guality and facility. In general, we will be 10 percent more expensive than an Indian hospital like Apollo or Escorts, but our service standards and facilities are far superior. I am often told

by PAUL BACON farmers, lodge-owners, taxi drivers, and guides of their jobs? Or was burning innocent people and children mutilating the wounded and the dead. that your intention all along: to wreck the economy so you can come to power quicker? Your bandhs have in fact begun

to alienate and damage those very people you wish to liberate. The Khmer Rouge.

asants, the proletariat and the petit bourgeoisie are caught between threats and extortion of The irony is that many people insurgency operations of the army, police and other branches of the

alleviating their suffering, your upporters are augmenting it. Your militia are carrying out plunder, mayhem and murder of petty teashop owners, and families who run lodges and guest houses along the necessary process in achieving the

aims of the glorious revolution. And to ask you to renounce violence is surely like asking a bhiksu to anction violence.

plan to visit Nepal again and again and we request others to do so too. For we believe that now more than ever, Nepal needs us urgently. After all, the star hotels and wellconnected agencies have enough

teenagers? Who do they talk to about their innermost concerns? To whom do Nepali adolescents turn to when they want to learn about sex? Is the information they

get correct and useful?

this group."

oursociety

29 MARCH - 4 APRIL 2002 NEPALI TIMES



HEMLATA RAI ost Nepali teenagers turn to friends rather than family members or teachers to talk about their private problems and share innermost thoughts Parents are too squeamish to talk about sex. teachers are bound by taboos, and Nepali youngsters have nowhere to turn to except their peers.

More than 80 percent of the teenagers in the nationwide survey conducted by UNICEF last year said they turned to their friends when they needed information on sexual matters. Only 10 percent approached their teachers, 10 percent of the girls said they talked to their sisters about these things. Parents came way down in the list only 3.5 percent talked to their mothers, and even fewer, 1.4 percent asked their dads.

The survey showed teenagers worry mainly about having enough money, about their education. about getting a job, and they have lots of questions about love and marriage. Respondents in the survey were boys and girls between 12-18 years, and 22 percent of boys had already had sex, half of them with multiple partners. Only nine percent of the girls had sex, and

among them 14 percent had got pregnant. The teenagers all had questions about sex and marriage. out sexually-transmitted disease about pregnancy, mastrubation and homosexuality. But they did not have a reliable and responsible source of information.

and emails every week, and the questions range form marriage, careers, friendship, pregnancy, extra-marital sex, and even inces and rape. Listeners in remote corners of Nepal have formed ove 100 "listeners clubs" where youngsters gather around their hortwaye radio sets on Saturdays at 3:30 PM to listen to the programme which carries an answering session.

Now they do. Nepali teenagers have the one-hour radio programme, Sathi Sanga Man Ka ura (Intimate conversation with friends) which is broadcast weekly on Radio Nepal and seven urban FM stations around the country and is already a runaway success An indication of the popularity and success of the programme is the deluge of letters the production letter writers are protected, they

team gets from all over Nepal. find it easy to share secrets with Sathi is produced for a target audience of teenagers, but there are eries from young adults and even Sangita Budathoki, Devendra 30-something women and men. Shrestha and Bineeta Shrestha. Barely ten months after starting. The production team meets at Sathi is already getting 200 letters its office in Pulchowk every week

the radio dramas. ertaining but informative radio drama, songs, and a half-hour letter

"Nepali youth are never encouraged to talk about sex, and they have little access to information. They worry, and have no one to turn to," says 24-year-old Sushma Shrestha, the leader of the Sathi production team. The audience is encouraged to write about problems, which are discussed on air in the hope that it will benefit others with the same problems Since the identities of the

unpredictable consequences on Sushma's team which also includes the male ego.) Bhaskar Gyawali, Toya Ghimire, There was a letter from a 19ear-old college student from

to wade through hundreds of letters, mostly written in pages tor out of exercise books, picking out the most relevant ones which would benefit the maximum numbers of listeners with similar problems. The studio work is done at Radio Nepal which has a separate team to produce Last week, Bhaskar, Toya,

Sangita and Sushma sat around the not be rash or vengeful—all advice that would also apply to the daily

listeners all over Nepal. When a particularly poignant Syangja with the familiar problem of not wanting to get married to a boy the parents had chosen for letter is read out, team members her. She writes that she is not look downcast and shake their ready to get married, and asks for heads. There is a long silence befor advice on how she should tackle the suggestions start coming in to her parents. (Sathi's advice: she help someone turn their life around. needs to try to convince her There is an attempt not to get too parents that she is not yet ready to emotionally involved with the et married, but she also needs to problems of letter-writers to be understand why her parents are in rational and cool-headed. Which is such a hurry and develop her own also their advice: to find empathy. counter-arguments.) to exhort youngsters to be strong,

The production team discusses self-confident and mature, to each problem in detail, trying to analyse a problem and think ahear come up with the most helpful, to see if the solution is fair to all concerned, confront the real issue, most appropriate answers, and options least likely to exacerbate problems for the letter writer. All those around the table agree on the answers, list the points that have to be made. They try not to be prescriptive, or offer specific uggestions. More often than not. the answers try to tell letter writers to analyse their own feelings, look into the consequences of their actions, try to solve problems and

ith a differenc

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why others act the way they do The sessions are intense, the team members let off steam by cracking jokes and laugh at some of

their own problems. The team gets help from life-skills experts from UNICEF who help co-produce the program. "It's a program for young people produced by young people says Toya, who at 27 is the oldest

dilemmas of thousands of other

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of the producers "You really need content, it's not what we say hut how we say it. The content should to be a teenager to retain their nterest on the program, and not be overtly vulgar, otherwise we have no objection to sober although I am already in my twenties. I am spiritually analysis of even issues like the youngest of member of masturbation or homosexuality

someone I can

Says one of the producers, It is not only the radio Sangita Budathoki: "Before we listeners who are relearning started Saathi, I never imagined truths about sex. The member Nepalis had sex at such a young age. This means they are vulner of the production team of Sathi have themselves come able because of the dangers of face-to-face with society's unprotected sex." There are more than 33,500 Nepalis who hypocrisies and double standards. They were have HIV, and AIDS is going to shocked, for instance, too be the number one killer of see how much issues like Nepalis in the 15-49 age group homosexuality, are swept by the year 2010. Nearly 60 percent of people under the carpet, and how

with HIV are under 30 and nearly prevalent incest actually is 0 percent adolescents. A Family But the team has to Health International (FHI) study tread a fine line. State-owned Radio conducted among 800 vouths Nepal has its own norms that it reveals more than 71 percent of can't overstep. The programme is a them had their first sexual encounters before age of 19. complete departure from the usual fare on Radio Nepal. "From the feedback there is Despite awareness of condom use and safe sex practices.

tremendous and unprecedented Nepali youths are still having response," says Rajendra Sharma of unprotected sex, according to Radio Nepal. "We are not censoring the FHI survey.



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sex." explains Bhaskar

and its combination with

tees the spread of HIV and

the general population.

infections like Hepatitis B into

line of defence," says UNICEF's

Wing Sie Cheng, who oversees th

Saathi project "Our objective is

to teach Nepali youth about life

skills, the set of core abilities that

enable young people deal with the

demands and challenges of

"Communications is the first

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The weekly meeting to select letters Nepali youth are concerned listeners and responses. At the Nepal studio, Sushma Shresth with Bhaskar Gyawali, Toya G and alert. they want to achieve something in life, but they don't her colleagues have too many people to counsel them or give them guidance on personal, private matters. They everyday life." UNICEE identifies are confused and frustrated, and ten interdependent skills like self-

turn to drugs and unprotected awareness, communication. interpersonal relationships It is the dramatic rise in decision making and problem injecting drug use in urban centres solving as the life skills. The survey of teenagers showed that unprotected sex that is most more than 90 percent of Nepali worrying. One recent survey puts teenagers had a clear goal in life the number at anywhere up to and they could articulate their 60.000 and they are in the 16-25 biggest worries and fears. By teaching life skills as a age bracket. More than half of them are already HIV positive, generic everyday ability, Cheng and many of those have multiple savs listeners will be groomed to sex partners. This almost guaranbe emotionally independent.

confident and able to tackle other problems in life. "These are learnable skills, and these skills make huge differences on how you perceive yourself and your attitude towards life " savs Bineeta Shrestha who says producing Sathi has helped her become more focused and less confused about her own priorities Bhaskar says he learnt to cope

with his emotions. Sangita says she Sathi Sanga Man Ka Kura learnt self-awareness and gained is broadcast every Saturdecision making abilities, while day 3:30-4:30 PM on Radio Foya thinks he's more positive lepal national network on about life and now realises that medium wave and haring problems with others can help find a better solution. chortwayo It ic Says Cheng: "In a very short rebroadcast during the week on the following FM time. Sathi has become one of the stations: HBC 94 FM most popular youth programmes Kathmandu, Hits FM 92.1 on radio, we hope to build on Kathmandu, Classic FM this." A television version of the 100 Kathmandu, Kosi FM programme, called "Catmandu" 93.4 in Biratnagar, Lumbin and broadcast every Saturday on FM 96.8 in Butwal Nepal TV has also been launched. This Nepali edu-Annapurna FM 93.4 Pokhara, and tainment by radio is unique even Swargadwari FM 102.8 in by international standards, and is Dang. already being talked about as an initiative comparable to South Catmandu is broadcast on African television's highly-rated Saturdays at 7:00-7:30 PM Soul City, In future, Sathi Sanga on Nepal Television. Man Ka Kura hones to be even more interactive and more

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responsive to more listeners also

in rural areas. 🔶

po over in Singapore and enjoy endless fun in he trapical. Rore Boat Tour and he renormed Singapore Zoo. no myl USSI: you will network a njots accommodatori. White transe, volit get a complicating. Rever-of-the-day limited rides on the SIA Hop-on tous, a visit to one of hour. The Cafele Bean K Tea Latt plus getat discussion of nin and a singer state of the same state of

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table, taking turns reading their choice of letters to the others. They ranged from a cry of help from a 21-year-old woman who had kept the secret of being raped by a relative when she was ten, and had finally mustered the courage to write to Sathi. She wants to know whether she should tell her husband if she gets married. (The team first commended her on her inner strength and moral courage, then weighed her pros and cons of telling her future husband. asking her to be careful about the LEXMARK



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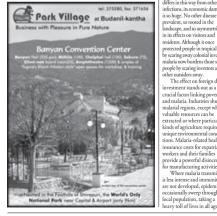
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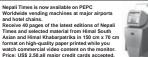


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29 MARCH - 4 APRIL 2002 NEPALI TIMES



## Malaria has a relatively mild effect on local populations. But it can devastate national economies.

groups. Such outbreaks are explosive, affecting the entire population in mere weeks. In urban areas, where indigenous workers tend to lack immunity to malaria, occasional episodes of the disease result in reduced productivity. This further contributes to the reluctance of foreign companies to invest in malaria-ridden regions, despite otherwise low labour costs. Ill health due to malaria also

residents. Although it once directly reduces household protected people in tropical areas income by incapacitating by scaring away colonial invaders, workers, causing lost work time nalaria now burdens those same time lost for child-care, impaired people by scaring investors and cognitive development, and other outsiders away adverse effects during pregnancy The effect on foreign direct resulting in low birth weight and producing physical disabilities. ivestment stands out as a crucial factor linking poverty Malaria further obstructs travel and malaria. Industries shun industrial activities, commerce malarial regions, except where and tourism. Indeed, malaria's valuable resources can be effect on tourism is important extracted or where particular because of tourism's role in bringing foreign exchange to kinds of agriculture require developing countries. unique environmental condi-

ANDREW SPIELMAN AN

AWASH TEKI FHAIMANOT

performance are interrelated. Infant mortality,

ealth and economic

child mortality, and life

expectancy are all correlated

with rising income. In four

random countries in which the

average annual income ranged.

in 1990, from \$660, to \$1,727.

to \$3,795, to \$11,422, infant

mortality ranged from 114, to

66, to 34, to nine (per thou-

sand) As income doubles infant survival tends to rise

proportionately, a trend

health and of wealth

impede development in

of workers in their most

millions of children. This

combined effect will damage

societies for generations. while

discouraging investment today.

s more insidious, particularly

where transmission is most

intense. In contrast to HIV

AIDS, young children rather

than working adults are most

people become ill with malaria

each year, causing 1.5 million

children. Children who survive

malaria develop into relatively

immune adults. But visitors to

a malaria-infested country,

because they lack this immu-

nity, share the risks borne by

Precisely because malaria

infections, its economic damage

is so huge. No other disease is so

andscape, and so asymmetrical

differs in this way from other

prevalent, so rooted in the

ocal children

and hotel chains.

deaths, most of them small

affected Some 300 million

Malaria's economic impact

reflected in other measures of

Different health conditions

haracteristic ways, HIV/AIDS

for example, destroys the lives

productive years and orphans

tions. Malaria-related health Malaria not only inhibits insurance costs for expatriate foreign investment, but also vorkers and their families contributes to the "brain drain" provide a powerful disincentive of local talent by inhibiting r manufacturing activities Where malaria transmission s less intense and immunities are not developed, epidemics occasionally sweep through the local population, taking a

people from returning home after prolonged stays abroad. Thus, people who go abroad for advanced education fear the loss of the partial immunity they once enjoyed and tend to find work heavy toll of lives in all age elsewhere, rather than return hom

> address the economic ones Anti-malaria efforts traditionally focus on distributing nsecticide-treated bed-nets and drugs to vulnerable residents of a

region Although human lives This is likely to be most true for can be saved by this kind of those who acquire families abroad because their children are likely to assistance to the "poorest of the poor," efforts to promote become ill when they return to their parent's homelands. economic development might All in all, the vast bulk of more effectively focus on other malaria's weight falls on devel modes of intervention, such as oping countries, particularly environmental management, those in sub-Saharan Africa, and housing improvement, applications of residual insecticide, and efforts against the mosquievidence of a reciprocal relationship with poverty has become increasingly evident. Malaria toes that transmit the infection. causes poverty, while poverty These kinds of intervencauses malaria-far more than tions, seeking to reduce the other diseases. By all calculaforce of transmission, aim at tions, the burdens imposed by the creation of an environment malaria on economic growth are that is likely to serve as an huge. In countries where "engine of economic growth." transmission is intense, income They target communities rather than individuals and should be tend to be a third less than in other countries. Growth is supported by public investreduced by 1.3 percent annually ment. In particular, in addition and the total economic costs of to individual life-saving efforts, malaria add up to about 1 strategies should be imple-

mented to reduce the risk of percent of annual GDP. No other human condition appears infection in port cities and to result in such a disjunction other centres of economic between its (relatively mild) activity direct effects on local As the applicability of a populations and its total effect vaccine-based approach to on national economies. malaria has not yet been The link between poverty demonstrated what anti-malaris and malaria suggests that subefforts must above all strive to achieve is a balance between Saharan countries cannot develop economically unless interventions designed to produo something is done about the immediate health benefits and disease. But fighting malaria also those that might eliminate poses particular problems malaria as an obstacle to because so much of the disease' economic development. ♦

economic burden is indirect (Project Syndicate threatening the lives of non-(Andrew Spielman is professor immune visitors to endemic sites. In fact, anti-malaria of medicine and tropical public measures undertaken to address health at the Center for health goals may not fully International Development and School of Public Health at Harvard University Awash Teklehaimanot manages th Malaria and Human Affairs Program at the same centre )

WORLD

MARWAAN MACAN-MARKAR

river's lower basin

COMMENT



over the past 10 years, backed by

multilateral financial institution

Another emerging flashpoint is the Chinese initiative to rid the

Mekong of islets mid-stream to allow

easier mutes for commercial navigation

Thailand Laosand Burma China ha

already cleared its section of the river

to enable big vessels to travel through

its waters war round but Thailand

Burma and Laos haven't. Thus far,

essels could only reach until Laos

from China but the Chinese can no

that it agreed on last year with

BANCKOK The six south and Asia countries which share the waters of the Mekong risk being swept into a regional conflict if their governments ignore the flash points that have surfaced and do not coordinate actions affecting the river, experts here say. A potential trigger is the irregular flow of the Mekong, which experts at a discussion on Water and Conflict las Friday marking World Water Day said was due to both natural factor and man-made 'development' in countries unstream of the river. including dam development by Chipa "Unless we have a mechanism to regulate water use and support and develop it, we are bound to witness conflicts among countries that share the river," said Joern Kristensen, chief executive officer of the Mekong River Commission (MRC), an inter

governmental body that manages the upstream are not members of the The most troubling period for the Phnom-Penh based commission lower Mekong countries—Cambodia Over 50 million people depend Vietnam, Thailand and Laos, is the upon the Mekong and its tributarie annual dry season MRC research for food, water, transport and other shows that from November through aspects of their daily lives. "The river's May, the flow of the 4,400-km nnual flood-drought cycles are Mekong, which comes down from the essential for the substantial productio of food crops on the floodplains and Tibetan plateau to Vietnam and out to the South China Sea, is reduced to along the banks during the dry 2 000 cubic metres of flowing water season " saws a brief by the US-based per second. During the Juneternational Rivers Network. Yet September monsoon it flows at Mekong River experts like author and 50,000 cubic metres per second filmmaker Stove Van Beek armie that Communities dependent on the there is more than the regular shift in Mekong downstream, such as those in weather that has led to countries like Vietnam are affected the most by any Vietnam suffering from a drop in the changes in the river, such as when the dekong's water level. "In 1997, the Chinese closed down the river for four days to enable work on a dam, thus river's natural flow drops during the dry season to allow the intrusion of salt water, which destroys the land set stopping the flow of large quantities of for agricultural use by the Vietnamese fresh water into the Mekong delta," revealed Van Beek. "The Vietnamese along the riverbanks. Thailand,

### by MORGAN TSVANGIRAI Defeated, but defiant

The price of freedom is high, but the tide of political change is irreversible. .....

three million votes tallied. The official results do not reflect the true will of Zimbabweans and are illegitimate in the eyes of the people. Zimbabwe's people have been cheated of their right to freely and democratically elect a president of their choice. The election results are a political issue, and the contest must be resolved politically. Food and fuel are in short supply, jobs are vanishing, inflation is over 100 percent

I am saddened because Mugabe's regime remains intent on defying the eople's will. Whatever happens I, as the people's loval servant, am with them all the way. The government may arrest me. I was arrested for treason before the election. At worst, they may even wish to kill me. But they cannot destroy the spirit of the people to reclaim their rights and power. The power to achieve democratic change is in our hands. We may have moments of fear in the days ahead, but we must not let despair overwhelm us. The tide of political change is irreversible. We must be prepared to pay a high price for our freedom. Presiden Mugabe and his cronies are afraid of the people and they may do anything to kill

Lonly ask that the people of Zimbabwe remain strong and carry on Among ordinary Zimbabweans walk heroes—heroes who waited hours and hours to w heroes who refused to be turned away. These are the heroes of the new Zimbabw whose voices must be heard around the world. We have travelled a barsh road to achieve democratic change. Rarely have a people faced such brutality whil retaining such gracious couberance. I realise Zimbabweans are impatient. I understand why. But they must wait peacefully for the political process to unfold. They will not let this election stand but they won't succumb to Mugabe's provocative traps and resort to violence either. Zimbabweans want change— constitutional. leval and levitimate. They will obtain it in spite of all the obstacles

We know we are not alone. It appears in the majority of African states, whenever you have elections, you have irregularities, fraud, cheating. There's always a crisis of elections in Africa. Governments across this continent lack sincerity when it is time to give people the right to choose. But those who wish otherwise can take hope. Zimbabwe's struggle is not over. We have time to tally the lessons of our experience for Africa, and the world. 

(Project Syndicate)

(Morgan Tsvangirai is the leader of Zimbabwe's opposition Movement for Democratic Change and was its candidate for president in last month's election )

29 MARCH - 4 APRIL 2002 NEPALI TIMES

### Anti-Muslim

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . GENEVA - A new UN study highlights a wave of anti-Islamic and anti-Arab reactions in Australia, Canada, the US and several EU countries after 11 September. The report, drawn up by UN Special Rapporteur Maurice Glèlè Ahanhanzo, documents hundreds of incidents of racism, discrimination, violence, vandalism, xenophobia and othe forms of intolerance against Muslims that occurred in those countries in the last few months of 2001. Presented last week at the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the report also examines incidents of anti-Semitism, violence by extreme right groups, the situation of the Roma-better known as gypsies-and racial hatred expressed (ips)

### Small world, big problems

SAN JOSE - The economic globalisation process has hurt more than a billion people, says Jeffrey Sachs, professor of international trade at Harvard University and adviser to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. After attending the Monterrey conference on financing for development. Sachs led a conference last week in Costa Rica at the Alliance for Global Sustainability (AGS), an international organisation of university and business leaders in favour of development and the environment. Globalisation, he argued, has not reached certain social groups, and has created counterproductive effects, as in Afghanistan, Burkina Fasc and Guatemala. One-fifth of the planet's population lives in absolute poverty, there are countries "on the verge of environmental collanse" and negative international forces have arisen, like terrorism, global crimes and money laundering. Agronomist Julio Berdegué, of the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), stressed that noverty isn't due to lack of wealth, but inadequate distribution. Sachs added that globalisation does create some benefits, noting the deceleration of population growth, the explosion of new technologies, and increasing population in urban centres, which facilitates access to nublic services (JPS)

### The new tourists

BERLIN - China and India will be the new powerhouses of the global tourist industry over the next 40 years, say experts. The two nations could change the face of the world's tourism market, Peter de Jong, president and chief executive of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (Pata), told travel operators here at the world tourism fair ITB March 16-20. "They will drive tourism over the next four decades and anyone who wants a share of the market needs to be there now." The sheer number of Chinese and Indian consumers in a total population of more than two billion means that as these two countries developed stronger economies they would inevitably want to holiday abroad Nearby regions such as South Fast Asia would benefit first as consumers travelled to neighbouring countries. But longer-term destinations worldwide would then benefit. De Jong said, (IPS)



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### that if the election were not handled properly, the fallout in the country and throughout southern Africa would be serious. Despite the shadows of war and terrorism, I called for a fair and free election. Zimbabwe got terrorism.

In the two years leading up to the presidential vote, Zimbabweans were subjected to severe intimidation, barassment and fear, part of a broader program of state-sponsored terrorism by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). ZANU terrorism was conducted by rogue elements among the veterans of Zimbabwe's two-decade-old war of independence

as well as by government militiamen and youth, all actively aided by the police. This intimidation and violence meant that my party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) could not reach the electorate in large parts of the countryside. The government of President Mugabe, my opponent, effectively disenfranchised hundreds of thousands of urban voters, particularly in the capital Harare and in Chitungwiza city. Because of an inadequate number of polling stations, I believe in Harare and Chitungwiza alone over 360,000 people stoo in line but couldn't cast their ballot. Mugabe's militia also prevented the MDC from placing polling agents in 52 percent of rural polling stations. By the end of voting, our party had no observers at six out of 10 rural stations. Effectively, Mugabe's supporters could have their way there. We are compiling a comprehen sive list of the polling stations where ZANU supporters had solitary control. A pattern has emerged even at this early stage: these polling stations recorded the highest number of voters for Mugabe.

In light of the evidence, I cannot accept the results in which Robert Mugabe, the sitting president, was declared a winner this month with 56 percent of the

Cambodia and Laos share the Mekong's lower river basin and are MRC members. China and Burma

Mekong have emerged as a major vorry, say experts, environmentalist and activists, and a potential source of conflict. It has announced plans to build 37 dams along its portion of the Mekong, affirmed Van Beek. Construction of two dams have already been commissioned. China's nush for more dams will exacerbate the problems faced by communities lownstream needing water during the dry sesson since it is the only country mong the six Mekong countries that has a glacial belt. "The Mekong is fed from two sources the monsoon mins and the glaciers from China," Van Beek explained. "During the dry season the glaciers melting in China feed the river, ensuring its natural flow. That's why the dams in China are troubling "The IRN says the planned Chinese dams will add to the more than 100 large dams that have been proposed in the Mekong basin

travel further southwards and seek to build 14 ports to facilitate greater economic activity in the region But already complaints are trickling out of Laos about the impact of the Chines actions on communities that depend on the Mekong for their livelihood, particularly fishing communities. The Mekong also flows to Cambodi: claimed losses of \$100,000 a day." China's plans for its parts of the and Vietnam. If the clearance plans pose problems for countries down eam, we have to reconsider it.": aotian diplomat said in the Bangkok

Post daily last week. Cambodia Vietnam, and activists in northern hailand are also concerned about the dredging, saying fewer reefs could change the flow of water into their ountries, posing problems for rming and other activities. There is no full mechanism for ordination of Mekong developnent plans by all six countries, China and Burma out of the

commission. Kristensen sugges that the involvement of regional groups-like the ASEAN dialogue with countries such as China, nstitutions like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank and the UN-would give coordination on Mekong matters a big hoost (IPS)

## 'Writers don't carry guns'

### Gunaraj Luitel in Kantipur, 26 March

Are the security forces fighting the Maoists or journalists? Why are they finding it necessary to fight journalists? Especially at a time when the press has been very critical of the inhuman activities of the Maoists, Besides, it was the Ś press that first pointed out the Talibanisation of the Maoists when they began to force schools to shut down. These instances show that the security forces don't need to attack the press to fight the Maoists. It was the press supported the

emergncy... Who should the security forces he targeting in such a situation, the press or the Maoists? If Shyam Shreetha (editor of Mulyankan) was arrested because

they thought him to be a Maoist, then it shows their lack of information and analysis. Shrestha was one of the most vocal opponents of 'militarisation' within the Maoist party. He advocated that overstressing militarisation and under stressing 'mass uprising' would result in losses. If he was arrested for having Maoist contacts, then it was government that requested him to set up contact (in the context of the talks). He had tried to mediate

Be it Shvam Shrestha, Gopal Budhathoki, Naravan Sharma or anyone by any other name, the government as not been able to give a convincing reason why over 75 journalists have been arrested. It is not right to oppress any one with a pen irrespective of his or her ideology. Today's need is to get guns out of the hands of those that are carrying them, not taking away pens from writers and journalists. It was during similar hot dry days of Chaitra (in 1990) that we had the People's Movement, which granted one and all right to harbour the ideology of choice... Is it right to accuse anyone with a certain ideology of being a terrorist on the basis of thier beliefs?

Hopelessness is gradually setting in. Everyday soldiers carrying pens are being arrested, and are held incommunicado. Irrespective of whether that is Om Sharma, Govinda Acharya or Manrishi Dhital, all of them are largely those that work with words. They have no relation with the gun. It could be that they believe that guns can also help bring change. Some may believe that progress can take place through through violence; others by other means. People have different convictions. But there's no danger to democracy from those that don't carry guns.

Those pens weep every time there is bloodshed in some remote village, caused by either the Maoists or the security forces. Reading these tears, sometimes the Maoists may be happy and sometimes the security forces. Irrespective of which side is happy, there is only one truth, the pen continuously weeps, reporting facts. The pen is only a means to make the voiceless heard... ...In the end, it is the people holding the pen that become victims.

of explosives, say, like the one placed at the Gorkhapatra. It is the weak that are attacked. Common people are being killed almost daily, sometimes for being "informants" and at other times for being "terrorists."... Of course the Maoists also made a group of journalists captives when they visited Rolpa for reporting last year. On both side we can see a trend-extend a 'red carpet' when things are suited to them and threaten (journalists) when the situation is not conducive.

Why fear words? The pen only shows the way out of the dark. It only helps you to overcome your bad deeds. If you want to enjoy the darkness, then there is little to say ... Even if journalists write about your wrongs and corruption (and you don't like it), there is legal redress available. But truth cannot be buried by jailing the messengers.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

You don't fight a sparrow with a cannon. You have to face the problem head on.



Prakash Weekly, 18 March



On constitutional amendment

I don't agree that you cannot

amend the constitution during an

emergency. We are trying to do jus

I don't see a possibility of an

mmediate change. Whoever will

better; he has to be more proactive

come, will come from the Nepali

Congress, Prime Minister Sher

For nine months (starting end

December 2000] he headed the

commission that was responsible f

finding a way to resolve the Maoist

problem, and he then went on to

become prime minister. But the

freedom during the ceasefire (July

November 2001), that is why the

country is in this position today.

Deuba even used to say, "Prachance

is a very intelligent person ... " and

on one day he freed 66 rebels from

that to resolve the political

11 years we're tried out the

constitution

happened and the total losses were nearly \$80 billion. The terrorist attacks shook the entire insurance world and played havoc with The aftershocks of 11 September were felt half a world away in Nepal, with a dramatic increase in insurance premium. Karmacharva, who is now with Neco Insurance, estimates that rates are going to increase even more. The Nepal Bank Limited

and the Rastriva Baniiva Bank used to pay up to Rs 1.4 million in premium every year, they now pay Rs 5 million. Things here have been made worse by the Maoist insurgency.

stalemate. You should not view The cost of insurance in Nepal has e up seven times. That in turn with suspicion the demands of the opposition parties to evaluate the has affected civil aviation the most Insurers who used to calculate war or terrorist-related risk as 0.01 On change of leadership: percent of the value of the aircraft, w use a seven percent formula.

When the Maoists started attacking helicopters, the premium load on helicopter operators has Bahadur Deuba has to perform suddenly shot up. So far the Maoists have destroyed or damaged helicopters belonging to Air Ananya, Asian Airlines and the Royal Nepal Army. Airlines have received a double whammy: premiums have gone up, but turnover has plummeted. They are therefore looking for re-insurance, Maoists were given too much and here they are drifting away from expensive European re-insurers who charge up to seven percent premium, towards African and Indian ones who take half that Fishtail Air received prompt reimbursement from its Indian reinsurer after a helicopter went down in Rara lake last November, and this has encouraged other

jail. The result: the attacks on Dang, Solu and Syangja. The Maoists have repeatedly tricked him. On having a referendum: I don't see the need for a operators to shift away from the Europeans. Says Deep Prakash eferendum [to bring the Maoists Pandey of Everest Insurance: "We into the mainstream]. The people are simple and don't understand

ends

what constitutional amendments mean. They neither know what a general of the corporation, although the NTC is making Constituent Assembly is, nor what type of constitution is best suited for us. The people will listen and do what the political parties say. That is why the matter of been informed. It is extremely amending the constitution should be left to the politicians and intellectuals Violent means to political changed. "After the Nepal

We carried the guns that the Maoists are now carrying in the 1950s. But we didn't kill ordinary people. When we faced the forces of the Ranas, some died on both



interesting. Officially India from the to 02. From now on, code numbers will also be unified for each very beginning has opposed the spread of terrorism in Nepal. But media, development region. "We are preparing to not use telephone directed by the same institution seem umbers beginning with 2 or 3 in to have a very different opinion. They the Valley, only those with have refused to term the Maoists wai 4,5,6,7," Pradhan added. Accordas a terrorist activity. Some articles, ng to him when changing ments and editorials published in Lalitpur's current numbers, all of the media supporting the South Block bear testimony to this fact. Even the which begin with 5, the same digit will be added in front. This means democrats and progressive minds there seem to share this opinion. It has become clear that the Maoists are actively trying to

there will be two 5s in front, and if the numbers begin with 6 there will be two 6s in front and if it begins with 4 two 4s. For numbers prevent Indian intervention in their currently beginning with 2 or 3, so called people's war. Those in the NTC will make its plans public charge in India probably look at the shortly, but insists that customers Maoist overtures as an opportunity will not experience any trouble. because they still have not been able to cash in on the gains to be However according to Sugat Ratna Kansakar, assistant director made from a conflict in Nepal

(which has been their mindset). There are no possibilities that the prime minister has been able to preparations to change the digits. the international authority on hange this thinking. telecommunications has not ye The Maoists may have been able to nurture their ideology, important that such changes be organisation, and strategic mov logged with the international body ments from India but their final victory is impossible. Their only because of the obvious confusion that can arise when numbers are victory, if at all, will be the weakening of Nepali nationalism Telecommunications Authority ha



and democracy. The prime minister and his party Nepali Congress is also fuelling this development. The solution to the Maoist problem lies within us Maoists roots will wither and die if the common people fed up with politics are reinforced and motivated about their sovereign power. For this it is essential to look down not up. .What do the people want Constitutional reform, a new constitution, coalition government, or a land reform? The answers to these questions must be sought

from the people. This is seriously

lacking at the present.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

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to be spent on publicity and

awareness, and only after that

comes the technical part. All

ogether, it will take at least a

The last time telephone

mbers were changed—from four

digits to five in the Valley and from

Officials at the NTC claim that the

five to six outside\_was in 1982

corporation has had to distribute

Dakshinkali area due to increasi

higher than 6 as mobile service

providers were in need of new

umbers. Giving the example of

Sundhara to explain why the digits

on telephone numbers have to be

all the lines from 220 to 259 have

been distributed. The Chhauni

numbers up to 270. Due to this,

exchange has already done the

the Sundhara exchange faces

difficulty to distribute more

telephones. Likewise, the Naxa

exchange has already distributed

numbers from 410 to 449, and lines

starting from 450 have been given

to Indravani VDC, resulting in

Ask the people

Narayan Dhakal in *Dhristi* 

The current, deepening crisis, is

definitely Nepal's problem. There

can never be a military solution to

the problem. Nor can the problem

be resolved with the assistance

we're expecting from the neigh-

mind the traditional Nepal-India

relationship. Policies of the South

Block regarding this issue are

bouring country because keeping in

problems for Naxal

26 march

creased, officials said, "At presen

demand, even though it was decided

not to begin numbers with any digit

ines starting with 7 in the

ar." says Pradhan

what the Maoists are doing

The news of corruption that

appears in the newspapers daily is

shameful. There are charges agains

estigating the allegations. If the

are found guilty the party will take

strong action against them... If

people want to earn money they

business or set up an industry. A

political party is not the place for

that...disciplinary action will be

taken against those who cross the

**Dial more digits** 

demand, the Nepal Telecommuni-

ations Corporation (NTC) has

decided to add a seventh digit to

the six-digit numbers already in us

in the Valley and add a sixth one

to the five-digit numbers used in

increasing the digits in telephone numbers for the last eight years,

but actual studies about how this

ago, says Bhagatman Singh

Pradhan, director of operations

and maintenance. "We are already

in the final stage of the process. As

soon as we get the go ahead form

We are told that the current

numbers will be kept the same, and

front. Asked if this might not cause

confusion. Pradhan said consumers

will be given adequate information

beforehand. The code number of

the Valley will also change from 01

the NTC we will start." he said

an extra digit will be added in

could be done only began two year

areas outside the Valley.

There has been talk of

Acting on rapidly increasing

line

should leave the party and begin a

some [ministers] in the party's

disciplinary committee. We are

On corrupt ministers:

### NEPALITERATURE

## The Harsh Beauty of Rural Nepal Tirtha Shrestha and cutting down others in their

once cried, "Look at all these fields, think of the work put into cultivating them. So much suffering! I don't like villages at all!" This was not a typical response to the breathtaking vista before us: but then my friend was not a typical tourist to Ghandruk, which is, let us face it, the Thamel of the hills. She was born in a village in Nepal, and had grown up doing the backbreak ing work of fetching water, collecting dung, gathering firewood, weeding the fields, and performing the other chores that make life in the village so arduous. She could not look beyond the hardship of rural life to appreciate the beauty of the land. Tirtha Shrestha brings to his poems a similar recognition of the harshness of rural life. He writes not just of poverty, but of the dreams, desires, aspirations of those who live in Nepal's villages and small towns. But though he cannot ignore the suffering of

rekking to Ghandruk, a friend

The first poem below is an

The girls who cut grass were cutting grass



the coroses of flowers

is smiling

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your address.

and the new moon's night

The sorrow of lost innocence

becomes an agreeable song

on the corrugated tin roof

The cracked mask of

rocks back and forth waving the branches of laughter To one side the moon covers its face with a shawl and weeps

> A resident of Pokhara, Shrestha has written uncentimentally about his home in the next noem below

### KASKI

Machhapuchhre himal won't finish from getting sold The Phewa lake won't empty because of lines and hooks No matter how well the gandharba singers sing Pokhara doesn't know how to sing Pokhara doesn't know how to

smile The moons don't revel in cloaking themselves in

THE WOMEN AT THE the half portion of adolescence gone abroad WATER TAP Unfulfilled vouthfulness The women at the water tan bends into the crevasse of the are more frolicsome than water Seti river their lips move more rapidly and sings an off-tune song than the liquid lins Itinerant vendors of water look for their own lives



skinned In the final noam below. Shreeth returns to the theme of women theme that he writes about with an empathy rarely witnessed in

today's male writers and poets

songs of dissatisfaction Sometimes they become more licentious than the crests and ripples of water Sometimes they appear more peaceable than a pool

> The women at the water tap are most of all like water They mostly spend their time murmuring like water

These poems are translated from Shrestha's 2001 collection Jindagiko Kurukshetrabaata.





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They didn't realise as they cut grass as they cut down others they were cutting through adoles conco Reaching the top of the hill they stopped cutting grass stopped cutting down others asthered a few stones and fixed their time which had petrified like stone They made offerings to it they prayed to it Their efforts to stop time stood at the top of the hill accepting pravers Time flew like clouds with the hill The next poem presents a portrait of Sindhupalchok district in the form of a menacing image SINDHUPALCHOK A corrugated tin roof is decked above

TIME AND THE HILL

people, he does acknowledge the splendour of the land as well. There is a fine interplay of romance and social criticism in his best poems. astute observation of adolescent girls, a more sensitive portraval than many of our women poets. make

### EXHIBITION

The Wild Tribes Of Ethiopia American photographer Robert Studzinski, Park Gallery, Pulchowk until 31 March, 10AM-6PM, except Saturdays, 522307 Prints by Noriko Saito, Japan. On show at the Siddharth Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 18-31

March, 11AM-6PM except Saturdays, Lives and Work of Nepalese Children Exhibition of the work of Nepali child photographers. 28

March - 13 April, Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal. 220735 Made in Janakour: A Mithila Yatra Three-day art camp with seven Nepali artists and three Indian

artists. 26-30 March. Exhibition at the Janakpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries. For details contact Siddharth Art Gallery, 411122.

### EVENTS

Celebrating Womanhood Fashion show depicting the different stages in the life of a woman, conceptualised and choreographed by Shrijana Singh Yonjan. 31 March. 6.30PM, Hyatt Regency. Tickets Rs 1500 with dinner. Rs 2500 per couple. Contact 419974 10AM-5PM for further information. Aspects of Jain Thought and Practice Talk by Professor Javandra Soni.

Marburg University. 1 April, 4PM, Royal Nepal Academy, Kamaladi. Organised by the South Asia Institute Heidelberg University/Kathmandu and the Royal Nepal Academy.

 Easter Market Handcrafted products by patients of the Shanti Sewa Griha, Pashupati. 29-31 March, Mike's Breakfast, Naxal.

 Tea and Talk Program American Artists Influenced by the Art and Culture of South Asia, and Vice Versa by Kathryn Myers. University of Connecticut. 29 March. 4.30PM. American Centre Auditorium. Gyaneswor. Organised by the Fulbright Alumni Association of Nepal.

Rally for Peace From Bhadrakali Temple via Shahid Gate-Bir Hospital- Jamal- Tindhara Pathshala-Trichandra College-Ratnapark-Old Bus Park and ending at Bhadrakali. 29 March, 3.45PM-5PM. Parliamentarians are also invited.

Nepali classical dance and folk music at Hotel Vajra. Dances of Hindu and Buddhist gods Tuesdays and Fridays, 7PM onwards, the Great Pagoda Hall. Ticket and tea Rs 400. Nepali folk tunes. Wednesdays and Saturdays, 6.30PM onwards, hotel restaurant. Hotel Vajra. 271545 \* Friends of Bagmati Concerned individuals aiming to revive the waterways of Kathmandu Valley. For details email friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com

 Sitar and Tabla Concert 30 March, Saturday, 6.30PM by Steven Landsberg and Raveen Shrestha. Rs 250 with tea. Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre, Kamaladi, Ganesthan, 221875.

Sounds of Spring Everything from rock, classical, iazz, funk, fusion, blues, Latin iazz, big band. R&B, Nepali folk, salsa, and contemporary Nepali music. Rs 1,500 per head including dinner, -- March, Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 273999

 The Nuns Welfare Foundation of Nepal Third annual evening of Tibetan chants and more with An Chaving Doma. Manase on flute and others. 7 April 6 PM. Patan Museum Café. Tickets Rs 600 at Dragonfly at Mike's Breakfast, and Patan Museum Café. For details email nwf@choying.com. Live Jazz Music An evening with Cadenza and Afro Dizzy Act at the newly opened stone paved Summit Hotel Courtvard, 29 March 6.30PM-10PM. The Summit Hotel, 521810

### DRING

 Saturday Live Buffet with unlimited draught beer and live music by the Rusty Nails. The Fun Café. Radisson Hotel, 11.30AM-2.30PM, Saturdays. 411818

\* The Best of Ghar-E-Kabab Celebrating 20 years of Ghar-e-Kabab with all the bestsellers. 50 percent of F&B during lunch. 20 percent off during dinner, two lucky tables only pay the price from 20. years ago. Until 4 April, Hotel de l'Annapurna. 221711

 Easter Specials Chocolate bunnies, Easter eggs, cookies, cakes and savouries at The Patisserie, Soaltee Crowne Plaza. Until 31 March. 273999

The new Roadhouse Café Redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. Original Mediterranean specialities, with wood-fired pizzas to return shortly. The Roadhouse Café, Thamel. Taste of Beijing Roast duck and other Chinese meat, fish and vegetarian delicacies. Beijing Roast

Duck Restaurant, Birendra International Convention Centre. 468589

Missed the Holi Sekuwa? Regular Sekuwa begins next week, until then ceremonial Nenali cuisine at Krishnarpan Restaurant, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488

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

Rhaktanur artisans Laiana Restaurant Lazimnat 413874 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 &

Yeti 248999 Barbecue lunch with complementary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children. Saturdays at

the Godavari Village Resort, Rs 650 per head plus tax. 560675

### GETAWAYS

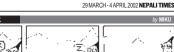
Get ready for summer Ayurvedic massage at Club Oasis, two massages free with every two. Finish with fresh juices, smoothies, flavoured yoghurt and fruit ice cream at the Terrace. Hotel Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234

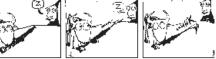
 Bardiya's Best Four nights and three days, jungle activities, transfers and meals including dikhri (steamed rice dumplings) with jungle sauces and spicy coriander chutney, \$120. Jungle Base Camp, Roval Bardiva National Park, 061-31691

Escape to the peace and harmony of Dwarika's Hotel. Several packages available. 479488

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







### BOOKWORN

Tibetan Lives: Three Himalayan Autobiographies Peter Richardus, ed. Curzon Press, London, 1998 libetar Re 5 310 

In the early 20th century, missionaries, scholars, traders and coldiers from China, Pussia and Britain employed local staff to assist in their dealings with Tibetanas, and these employees were in the vanguard of Tibet's encounters with the outside world. The autobiographies of three who served on the periphery of the imperial system-Phun-tshogs Lung-rtogs, sKar-ma Sum-dhon Paul and Ts'an-chih Chen offer valuable ethnographic, sociological, and historicoreligious data and provide valuable insights into this intermediary class.

Mañjusrîmitra, Primordial Experience: An Introduction to rDzogs-chen Meditation Namkhai Norbu and Kennard Lipman, trans. Shambhala Publications, Boston, 1983

Rs 1 460 6 The first English translation of one of Tibetan Buddhism's most revered texts, part of the 2 rDzogs-chen or Ati yoga tradition, the state of pure and total presence. Namkhai Norbu compares it with other systems through an examination of the notion of bodhicitta, and examines key philosophical questions about the relation of Ati yoga to Buddhist Idealism

The Way to Shambhala: A Search or the Mythical Kingdom Beyond the Himalayas Edwin Bernhaum Shambhala Publications Boston 1980/2001

and the meditation practice linked with this text.

Rs 1 380

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speaker.

Drawing on Tibetan and Sanskrit texts, interview with lamas in Nepal and India, and his own travels in the Himalaya, Bernbaum examines the legend of Shambala, where a line of enlightened kings is said to guard the highest wisdom for when all spiritual values will be lost in war and destruction. He shows how the myth symbolises an inner, spiritual journey to enlightenment, inspired by the actual terrain of the Himalaya

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

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nished spacious house in quiet al area near UN complex suitable for mily. Contact 521024.	K-Too! Beer and Steakhouse not the "longest", "highest", "first" or any other superlative. Just a relaxed, easy-going bar and restaurant with the				
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Daily	2045-2115	BBC नेपाली सेवा
Daily	2245-2300	BBC नेपाली सेवा

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ARTS

### extravaganza promises new surprises.

It began in 1998 with 1974AD launching their new album Samihi Baschu amongst a crowd that would otherwise never have had the chance to attend a 1974AD concert.

Counted as one of the top rock bands in the country 1974AD couldn't have asked for a better beginning for their hit number Samjhi Baschu from the same album. The following year, old timer Deep Shrestha made an extraordinary comeback performing old hits like Kati Kamjore Rahecha Bhagya. It placed Deep Shrestha back on track with those who had written the veteran crooner off.

stands and appreciates it." In 2000 the young flutist Manose Singh along with the renowned classical vocalist Gurudev Kamat charmed the audience to quiet

appreciation and then prolonged applause. By this time Sounds of term it meant that we would also ing had already become known a profit from it," recalls Sonny Shrestha. one of the leading acts of the year in





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THUNDERBOLT: A stupendous flash of fat lightning comes down or Kathmandu on Tuesday evening in this photo captured by Min Bairacharya from the Himalmedia offices in Patan with his Sony digital camera



ROW OF RINPOCHES: The Tengboche Rinpoche, recipient of the TO DO Tourism Award at a peace prayer session at Boudha on Tuesday



IT'S AN HONOUR: Renchin Yonian presenting drum sticks belonging to her late husband. Gopal Yonian, to Cadenza's Navin Chhetri during a jazz concert at Patan Museum on 20 March.

The on stage performance is also being co-ordinated by Little Star. who told us: "Our ultimate aim is to show that we are capable of putting up an international class act, provider we have the equipment for it. People have this general concept that nothing done in Nepal can be high quality. We are trying to prove this wrong and are preparing for this from all aspects," Sunim Tamang agrees





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## 

musical performance in Nepal, much anticipated and prepared with enthusiasm to the last details by the organisers. But just as organisers wer

preparing for the fourth Sounds of Spring in 2001, the royal massacre struck and all plans had to be laid off for a year. This year however the musical extravaganza is back on with added touches. Although Hits FM has pulled off from this year's show, Soaltee is going at it alone. To fill in the studio Little Star Records owned and managed by Little Star Shrestha will be arranging all technical aspects of the program

which includes the latest intelligent lights, sounds and camera.

1974AD, Deep Shrestha, Gurudev Kamat, Manose Singh and Navin Bhattarai have in common besides all of them being musicians? They've all performed at the annual selective musical extravaganza Sounds of Spring. Hosted by the Soaltee Crowne

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY







"Sounds of Spring is a milestone in Nepali music every year," says Soaltee's Sunim Tamang. "It revives and brings forth old and new talents to a selective audience that under-

Plaza, the annual event has been the

launching pad of many a career. Tomorrow's performence promises to be no different When the idea was first conceptualised in early 1998 by Nirakar Yakthumba, the bassist of the rock band 1974AD and the former

Managing Director of Hits FM Sonny Shrestha, it was to bring Nepali musicians to the limelight. "It was like



and Rajen Gurung. While renowr guitarists Patrick Wilson and son

Dariel will be performing Hotel California and Roshni Singh and

Priscilla Lama will be doing cover varrions by Alanis Morissatta and Cranberries, Little Star will also be performing a Joe Satriani piece. New introductions to the industr will be drummer Nilchil Tuladha and keyboardist Pabit Maharian. A quarter of the show will be dedicated to Nepali music and the

MERCANTILE

a mix of traditional to modern rock, fusion, and Latin. But the thing to watch out for are the lights. "We will be using a total of 65,000 watts for the lighting system which will include intelligent and crazy lights. Kathmandu has not seen thi before," says Little Star. Look out for the special effects accompanyir Pink Floyd classic Shine on Your

Crazy Diamond Little Star (that is his real name) has international experience having arranged for concerts by tabala maestro Zakir Hussein. and British folk musician Donovan Leach 🔶

16

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s we go into another week of celebrating our prehistoric festivals and rituals with wild abandon, it is important to bear in mind the importance of conserving Nepal's cultural health, wealth and happiness. Yes, many of our age-old customs are in danger of being dragged into the limbo of forgotten things right before our wide-open eyes in broad daylight. Pretty soon, the only customs we have left will be the one at Tribhuvan International Airport.

Look, for instance, at our national past-time of partaking of a noon nap at Tundikhel. There used to be a time when Tundikhel was so jam-packed with our snoozing ancestors that it was standing room only. Latecomers had to move to Sano Tundikhel. and even that got pretty full up on some lazy winter afternoons. But today, you'd be lucky if you saw

even one person dozing there. The relentless march

of time, the modern consumer culture, a creeping materialism and the rat race of our stressful lifestyle have all contributed to making this glorious practice extinct, and the nation is a whole lot poorer for it. No more can we render ourselves unconscious during daylight hours and forget the mundane cares and travails of our rugged passage through world history

But all is not lost. Lately, we have started seeing some conserva



manetal spectra

annat clotere

of national siesta. They have been caught napping at their desks at the Ministry of Rest and Recreation. The public has been requested not to create any street disturbances in the coming week, which may wake these sedated bureau cats up from deep slumber Shhh

On this Holi Week, we must also take a solemn oath to resuscitate another fun-filled festival which is also in danger of going the way of the woolly. mammoth. We cannot bear the thought of not being able to be stoned out of our minds and lob lolas at damsels on the sidewalks, and see them totally soaked from head to toe in Bagmati water. Hahahahahaha! (Blood-curdling laughter.) So fun.

If, god forbid, Holi disappears we will no longer be able to dab war paint on our faces and prowl eighbourhood streets ambushing innocent passersby and rubbing cadmium-rich red vermilion powder into their eve sockets. Harharhar-de-harhar! (Boisterous chortle and guffaw.) So laugh-

able, var

However, it is my sad duty to bring to my mirthful readers' notice that these fun and games, who had been sold by her these magnificent customs may when she was 12. She soon be a thing of the past. They are now under threat from an administration notification that miscreants infected." The visit inlted creating a nuisance will be Rajbhandari out of her nabbed on the spot on a strict first-come-first serve basis so comfortable existence

that no untoward incident takes of selling their blood. Renu remembers thinking: "Here I am an educated doctor,

society had invested in me. But I felt useless. I am giving of women to do things nothing back to society. themselves. Renu was haunted by the torture, mental and physical suffering the girl i Nagarkot had been through in her young life. Two months passed in a fit of depression and trospection, when Renu's hushand



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### NEPALI SOCIET Kenu pets to WO enu Rajbhandari was a encouraged her to do somealso in the domestic violence

thing about the problem. She was determined to change the Hospital ten years ago. AIDS was just beginning to focus of her work. She took off show itself in Nepal, and to Nuwakot, where she spent health professionals emtwo months visiting the village ployed at the central health of Ghyangphedi collecting as much information as she could laboratory would get excited about trafficking. "I had no idea whenever they came across a new case. "At that time we about the issue, I had no were just interested in organisation, no funding, I was numbers." Renu recalls. just driven by emotion. All that was soon to Today, the Women's change. HIV spread dramati-Rehabilitation Centre cally, and is now poised to (WOREC) which Renu set up become the biggest killer of in 1991 is among many voung Nepalis. And for Renu. groups in Nepal addressing there was the shocking women's health as a human realisation that behind the right. Gender discrimination in statistics were searing Nepali society is taking its toll on women's health, and is at personal tragedies. Ten years ago, the young doctor the root of evils like trafficking. went on a field visit to Asked about the recently Nuwakot and came face-topassed Women's Bill, Renu feels it is still going for welfare. face with the disease. "She was a 19-vear-old dalit girl whereas Nepali women need their basic human rights uncle to a Bombay brothel ensured and laws implemented properly, "The patriarmanaged to escape after six chal notion of the state is years, but not after being

medical officer at Teku

strongly evident in the bill, and because the girl accused her

sion is a positive step, but is overtly politicised and doesn't have teeth. But Renu has managed to sink her own teeth into the problem with WOREC's work in 11 districts around the country. Some 200,000 women in Udaypur, Siraha, Morang, Sindhupalchok, Mustang benefit from the

organisation's work. The Maoist insurgency has affected activities in some districts, but WOREC's women-centred health programmes continue in others. Barefoot gynaecologists teach women about their bodies, how to take care of themselves, about nutrition

bill presently being dis-

cussed," she says, and is

status of Nepali women.

formed Women's Commis-

Renu thinks the newly-

doubtful they will change the

The group runs community mediation centres where trained paralegals look into cases ignored by the police as well as shelters for trafficked women in the border town of Janakpur. Renu practices what she preaches; she is avoiding the welfare approach trying to get cooperatives