



**VNEPALI** 



upted as soon as Deuba got back. Deuba was cornered, and ran out of options. On the one hand, the army brass was

and he calls Deuba a dangerous deviant who is insistent that it needed a state of emergency for intent on handing over the reigns to a palaceits counter-insurgency operations, and on the army combine. Deuba's supporters see Koirala other his Congress rivals and the leftist as an ambitious dictator not satisfied with just opposition saw an extension of the emergency being party president, and wants to be prime as a path towards martial rule. In the end, the party had to do what it

Pressure had been building up among Koirala's cronies for a final showdown, and the had to do: it suspended Deuba's party membership and Koirala asked the remainsight of Deuba being feted at the White House ing members of hisjumbo cabinet to resign. and 10 Downing St earlier this month seems to have been too much to bear. The quarrel But Deuba has also got what he wanted: another six months as prime minister

whether or not he holds the elections as till November. scheduled on 13 November. Furthermore, Congress sacks Deuba and his supporters, and Deuba formalises a split. with parliament dissolved, the army can get · UML goes into elections allied with the a new three-month emergency without rump Congress under Koirala under a pro-

democracy platform. three hours to formalise the decision to go for A compact caretaker government announces an extension of the emergency, restricting campaigning by opponents to pull off a elections. Technically that would have involved a cabinet meeting to make a recommendation to King Gyanendra, Musharraf-type poll. Maoists try to muddy the waters by allying rushing the paperwork to the palace for the royal seal-all in time for the 11pm with anti-Deuba forces to further their newscast on Radio Nepal. republican agenda while escalating the level of violence before elections.

What has surprised many insiders is not to much that the decision was taken, but the speed at which it was done. And the entire process was so hush-hush that even Deuba's close cabinet colleagues were not taken into confidence

party meeting. According to sources present, Chief of Army Staff Prajwalla S Rana told "He may have had this option in mind, but because of its very nature only very close party leaders that the emergency extension wa supporters were told," a Deuba aide told us needed to keep up the momentum against the By press time Thursday evening resignations Maoists and without it, there might be had come from Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat, Education Minister Amod Upadhyay setbacks. On Wednesday he told the Nepali daily, Himalaya Times, "The Royal Nepal and Women and Social Welfare Minister Army does not get into politics, it only Rajendra Kharel. Mahat told reporters: "I don't think responds to the national interest. We will first let the politics play itself out."

elections can be held, and the political situation will be very uncertain." Kharel, once a staunch Deuba supporter, said: "We have doubts about the future of democracy itself." Meanwhile, the main opposition was in a huddle all day. The UML standing committee

saw this as a result of Congress infighting, and said it hadn't yet decided whether to accent the elections. The unlikely allies in this ire Koirala and UML leader Madhav Prasad Nepal, brought together by their common suspicions about Deuba's anti-democratic motives. Political analysts see several scenarios

The Congress won a majority in May 1999. But infighting brought the average life expectancy of a prime minister to less than a year. Deuba came to office in July. 2001, as the third Congress prime ministe since May 1999. His government was the 12th in 12 years. ♦

All scenarios point to one outcome: mon

invited the police and army brass to an all-

instability in the country. On return from his US-UK trip, Deuba

Editorial p2 A similar path **Pitamber Sharma** p3 An emergency for the Maoists



Things may finally change at the Buddha birthplace. For the better.





**BINOD BHATTARAI** 

n the face of it, the sudden dissolution of parliament and the call for mid-term polls in November was just the latest outcome in the clash between Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his nemesis within the ruling Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Kojrala

the eye. Koirala has tried to portray this as an epic battle between democrats and demagogues, EXCLUSIVE

# **Roval visits**

King Gyanendra will make two goodwill visits to neighbouring countries after coming out of mourning on 1 June, a source close to the royal palace said. The six-day India visit is slated for the third week of June, followed soon after with a China trin The India visit is finalised down to the dates, and will be announced after the dates for the king's China visit are confirmed.



r Internet Poll #36. To vote go to: www.n O. Do you think Prachanda is serious about peace KANAK MANI DIXIT in LUMBINI Lumbini is Buddhism's equivalent to Bethlehem or Mecca, but it has been more of a weeping wall for pilgrims and devotees. Decades of disinterest in distant Kathmandu have maintained this nativity site of Sakyamuni Siddhartha Gautam as a monument to

neglect and prevarication. All that may be about to change. When the 60-year-old Mayadevi temple structure—the white box with the pipal tree-was pulled down in the early 1990s and the hallowed ground beneath it excavated, it seemed the final desecration. Since the dig was completed in 1996, the site has remained closed to the public, and the excavations covered by tarp and tin. But suddenly, there are heartening developments. The Lumbini Garden is today a hive of construction activity, and the nativity site is set to open to visitors within a couple of months. A part of the new structure is ready for the ancient Mayadevi statue to be re-consecrated on 26 May, Buddha Jayanti. The completed structure will display the excavated ruins of the temple complex put up in the 3<sup>st</sup> century BC, which includes the historical "marker stone" said to pinpoint the spot where Mayadevi gave birth to her illustrious son (an event the ancient statue commemorates). There have been enough reasons in the past decades to give up on Lumbini. The

main trouble lies with Kathmandu's party-centric political establishment, uncaring bureaucracy, and demanding Buddhist groups fighting for control of the Lumbin Development Trust (LDT) and its dollar-and-yen potential. The terrain has become more complex as the sectarian interest in Lumbini extends beyond Kathmandu Valley Buddhists to include hill and high-mountain Buddhists of Nepal. Added to all this is the unhanniness of the Muslim locals who nonulate the Lumbini area, who feel left out in the rush to cash in on Lumbini's tourism and pilgrim potential. Go to 🖒 p15



by luxury coach.

Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 252995/228288/221774/244956/246685



minister again. But there seems to be more here than meets

### EDITORIAL



# A SIMILAR PATH

nce more, we are made to pay for the tiny minds and large egos of our politicians Once more the nation is held hostage by their myopia. The dissolution of parliament, the November elections are just outer manifestations of inlighting in the ruling party. We can only hope that by making this desperate move to save his own skin, Prime Minister Deuba has inadvertently done the one thing that could bring the Moaist leadership to the mainstream. But will the underground comrades grab this chance? One of the lessons Nepal can take from Peru is that if you want to fight an insurgency, you have to first put your political house in order. You can't have political parties clawing at each ament while the security forces try to fight a guerrilla war.

Nepal's Manists are travelling the well-trodden path of the Peruvian revolutionaries The parallels between these antipodal uprisings are striking. Their remote and rugged altiplano is our mid-west. Peru and Nepal have similar populations of disenfranchised. marginalised ethnic groups and capital-centric elites who have shown breathtaking disregard for the hardships and misery of fellow-citizens. When revolutionaries took up arms to capitalise on this bitterness, the state in both Peru and Nepal came down hard. But responses designed to nip the rebellion in the bud had the opposite effect: the atrocities of the Peruvian security forces in Avacucho in the mid-1980s had narallels with human rights violations that accompanied Operation Romeo and Operation Kilo Sierra in the mid-west in 1996-98.

For anyone who wanted to predict that this country was going the way of Peru, the writing was quite literally on the wall. Back in 1993, the streets of Kathmandu were painted over with blood-red graffiti proclaiming solidarity with the Peruvian struggle, and when Sendero Luminoso leader Abimael Guzman was caught that year there were "Release Comrade Gonzalo!" slogans emblazoned across the country.

Our comrades have followed the Shining Path model to the letter, even cleverly naming their doctrine the Prachanda Path by playing on the Nepali word "path". (Of course, the Peruvians were such purists, they didn't want to start a personality cult by naming their revolution after a leader.) But there is no doubt about it: both revolutions essentially follow the paths of destruction. The aim is to destroy the presence of govern ment and symbols of its oppression through devastating slaughters that spread panic and demoralisation through the sheer shock of brutality.

The core of the ideology in both cases is therefore to play on the psychological impact of violence and mayhem so that people, in the end, lose faith in government, in the economy, and, to cut a long story short, in everything "old". By their own admission, the comrades in Peru and Nepal both like to say that they don't believe in the "old", and if any residue of the "old" is allowed to remain, it will undermine the "new".

The panic and anarchy feeds on itself, and Peru came close to Year Zero. The security forces had been chased away from large parts of the country, and the strangula tion of the capital from the countryside had begun. It was in fact while the Shining Path guerrillas were on the verge of advancing into Lima that an intelligence breakthrough led to the arrest of Abimael Guzman.

The difference between the Shining Path and Nepali Maoists is that our comrades have contested elections and served in parliamentary parties. Some of them have even been members of parliament. They could go back if the conditions are right, and elections in six months may be just the thing. To be sure, they will first have to live down and atone for the mayhem that they have unleashed. But more brutal rebel movements have been known to join the political mainstream in other countries.

In Peru, the government reacted late, but it got its act together with a multi-proposed r-insurgency strategy that employed a classic "shield" and "sword" approach. shield was a grassroots development programme that aggressively redressed past neglect. The sword used military pressure and effective intelligence to go after hardcore cadre while sparing the followers. It would be counterproductive to make the people suffer. That's what worked with the Shining Path. Can it be made to work with Prachanda's Path'

Buddhists in Nepal has, according to the latest census, more than doubled in the last ten years. For an official Hindu kingdom, even one that boasts an entire administrative zone named after the Enlightened One, the sudden jump to ten percent is somewhat perplexing. After all, Buddhists haven't run an peressive conversion campaign, nor has there een a huge influx of Buddhist refugees into the country. The reason behind the rise must then be simple: emboldened by democracy, many no longer feel the need to hide their non-

STATE OF THE STATE

Hindu identity. Buddhism and Hinduism have evolved encretically here. Having appropriated Lord Buddha as just another avatar of Vishnu, the Hindu orthodoxy here looks approv-

mber of people who call themselves

ngly upon Vajrayana Buddhisn anakpur, the birthplace of Sita, doesn't ring a bell in the assemblies of the global elite But the moment Nepalis mention that Lord Buddha was in fact born in what is now Nepal (and not what is now India) they often succeed in getting the attention of everyor present anywhere in the orld. The Buddhais a badge of honour for many symbol-starved Nepalis. Convenience is another

factor that makes Nepalis accept Buddhism with relative ease. Nepalis abroad sometimes pretend to be Buddhist in order to prove their 'non-Indian' identity. Nepali nedical students in Pakistan have been known to pass themselves off as

Buddhist, just so they don't get hassled The fascination of the Nepali power elite with the Buddha and his birthplace is on display in the excesses of the Lumbini Development Trust, where a new set of bosses

LETTERS

After the advent of the Maoist

insurgency the morality of truth

takes over after every change of government at Singha Darbar. Ever since former UN Secretary General U Thant wept on a visit to Lumbini in 1967, and King Mahendra recognised the importance of those precious drops of tears,

Rana, Nandida Rai, Manisha

Kapoor, Bharati Shah

However, the frantic pace of construction hides Dalai Lama is, after all, not just the spiritual, the fact that the implementation of the but also the temporal, head of Tibetans in infamous "Master Plan" has been dragging on exile. But there is really no need for the for years. We overestimated the desire of Lumbini Development Trust to follow suit international Buddhists to donate generously to Lumbini won't grab the attention of the nake Lumbini a world landmark. And despite world as long as it insists on keeping the the stewardship of highly-placed individualsmost illustrious of Buddhists off its soil. the present king himself used to chair the Sure, the Chinese are touchy about him, but Lumbini Development Trust-the organisation the Dalai Lama is considered a reincarnation has failed to attract the generosity of the world of the Buddha by most followers (some of Buddhist community them high-flying Hollywood stars, we might add) and he has won the Nobel Peace Prize In his Lumbini Chakea hypothesis architect Shankar Nath Rimal argues that the Lumbini Garden contains symbolic representations of

The prince of peace

pilgrimage site.

the place has been sold to the world as a

After a long-drawn controversy, the temple

of Mayadevi is finally being built at Lumbini.

The Buddha is all things to all people.

Besides the usual accusations of cronvism and nepotism that continue to undermine the efficiency of the Trust, the rapid turnover of its key personnel in the last twelve years has also a factor in its stagnation. But quite apart from all these factors, keeping the Dalai Lama away from Lumbini is probably what has really prevented the project from taking off It seems absurd, but the Lumbini Development Trust has made no effort to date

primarily with the management of the Trust But that doesn't mean that His Holiness shouldn't make his own efforts. There are other countries in the world whe

Buddhists have welcomed the Dalai Lama even if their governments were less than keen. Maybe Nepal's 2.3 million Buddhists also have a say in this? Chinese dignitaries on official visits to Nepal now ve Lumbini on their itinerary, so the Chinese government may someday see that it is in its own long-term interest to allow the Buddha's most eminen contemporary disciple to visit the place of his birth too? •

An emergency for the Maoists an imminent reimposition of the to get the Dalai Lama to visit the birthplace choices: continue on their path of retrogres of I ord Buddha, Fear of rubbing the sion, or join hands with other democratic Chinese the wrong way may have prompted

NATION

COMMENT

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N.

by CK LAL

our government to exercise restraint-the

almost all the important event

of the Buddha's life. Rimal

the Buddha's mortal

been buried at

Buddhists.

further posits that a part of

remains might also hav

Lumbini If that can be

proven, the place will

significance for devou

The responsibility

take on even more

for inviting the Dalai

Lama to Lumbini lies

forces to defend and build on the achieve ments of the people's movement of 1990 The choice is an urgent one. At the heart of every insurgency and rebellion is the goal of putting the legitimacy of the powers-that-be on trial. And so it has been with the Maoist "People's War". The Maoists' justification for the insurgency is derived from the failure of the government, and indeed the political system, in addressing the basic economic

disadvantaged. This strategy played a major role in the relatively strong support and consequent expansion of Maoist influence in rural Nepal. Despite the murder of political opponents, of extortion, and an increasing militaristic tendency the movement spread rapidly. In other words, development or the lack of it provided the raison d'etre for the People's War. Or so it seemed. However, since the ratification of the emergency by parliament in February the main target of Maoist destruction has

by email

fer the dissolution of parliament and The Maoists now have to decide which side they are on: the side of destruction or the side of democracy.

> omestic and foreign, to close ranks. No wonder, Nepal is fast becoming an "interesting" place, interesting enough to be a playground for foreigners. Nepal has

ment infrastructure may not have been serving the dispossessed directly, but the problem is not with infrastructure, the problem is with its reach among the poor and the conditions for its use. be there for all to see, including A school, a health centre, a university, the Manists ommunity buildings and offices, roads and

bridges, electricity, drinking water, homes for the destitute and the helpless are institutions and facilities that are needed in drawing parallels with Afghanistan. That is all societies, no matter who calls the shots. the distance we have travelled from the They may not be development per se, but vibrant democracy we were some years age they are essential and inseparable components of it. And these facilities are not created by a magic wand overnight, there is Physical liquidation of individuals is not an a cost to it and invariably it is the public that has to foot the bill. In the case of alternative to the battle of ideas. To refuse Nepal, quite simply, the destruction of reason and dialogue as a basis for the development infrastructure is a deliberate creation of the objective conditions for act of pushing the country further into the progressive social and economic change is to hands of the donors, and of course, India. It is also an open invitation and a call intent of all dictators (ideologies notwith-standing) is the same. The only alternative for all defenders of the status quo, both

dialogue again, but the ball is in their court. By a few chosen unilateral actions such as a declared total and unconditional stop to all acts of destruction of developent infrastructure, and a ceasefire for a fixed duration, the Maoists can still regain the credibility they forfeited. Their response to the elections in November wil be carefully watched. Will they create the trust for a peaceful resolution to the present crisis and pave the way for negotiating a future for Nepal in which they will be partners? An

extension or re-imposition of the emergency could strengthen the hands of the rces of retrogression and status-quo. The last six months of the emergency have clearly shown that it is neither conducive nor desirable to a political resolution of the crisis. A democracy under sustained received more powerful dignitaries in the emergency can very well seal its last six months of the emergency than in own fate. its last 12 years as a democratic state. The moderate left political parties Surely, the message on the wall should

proverb says it all when the vultures roam

Militarisation is not a substitute for the

politicisation of the people. Terror cannot

e a means to make people "sovereign"

nurture totalitarian dictatorship. And the

treatment

FAR FROM HOME

I SPY

informed consent and starting

Dr Sudhamshu

there must be a carcass. Some are already

lost the opportunity in the past by not showing a pro-active policy and programmatic response to the Maoists The truth is indeed ugly. A blunt Nepali actions. They helped strengthen the hands of the forces of the status quo by agreeing to re-impose the emergency three months ago. To support the reimposition of the emergency, irrespective of how Maoists respond to their call, would be suicidal

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to democracy is an accountable democ

history are condemned to repeat it

racy, nothing less. Those who ignore this

Ever since they suddenly walked out

from negotiations in November to stag

that ill-conceived attack on Gorahi, the

political credibility of the Maoists hit a

ew low. They have made an effort at a

by PITAMBER SHARMA

The government insists that the security forces are making major gains. The Maoists insist that they are not losing. The truth surely lies somewhere between We only know one thing for sure: at the rate of one thousand Nepalis killed every month, the only losers and the ones truly bereaved are the Nepali people. The question simply is: who dares own the Nepali people? ♦

and China, and this in a highly

secret that Nepal has always

sensitive zone, it is an open

# I FARNING TO COUNT

MORAL ITY Hemlata Rai's "Counting on This is not the time to do re-Nepal" (#94) was interesting. It search on the Maoists to see is good to learn that the 2001 ensus will soon be out. Many new facts are shown through this census, but the most intriguing thing is that ethnic and language counting revealed dramatically more than the actual numbers. This may be due to the fact that the respondents did not understand what they were being asked. Therefore, as language names they gave names of clan or place instead of the actual name of their ethnic group or anguage. Complications arise from the differences in the aming of ethnic identity and inquage name-an ethnically "Rai" person speaks a langua distinct from another person who is ethnically the same. Teipuri or Gangai, on the other and, speak the same language as the Rajibansi. But they want their own ethnic identity. Thus they claim to speak "Tejpuri" or "Gangai". A scientific language linguistic survey should be conducted by an authoritative body as soon as possible to determine accurate numbers of languages and ethnic groups in Nepal IS Toba, Kathmandu

has taken a back seat. The rebels low they evolved, or whether o not they are true followers of the who were once lauded by the Great Helmsman ("Maoism in a people for social reformation have nost-Mao world." Puskar now plummeted to the abvss of Gautam #93) The present satanic acts. They have lost all situation in Nepal is the outcome humanity and ethics, they have of various things, such as lack of none beyond common sense and political commitment, no sense of inleashed a sadistic barbarism or their motherland. Can't the soresponsibility, misquided professionals, corruption, mismanage alled great minds like Dr Baburan ment and most of all lack of Bhattarai stand apart from the destructive bunch of anarchists values and confidence as a nation. It's a shame that the that have hijacked the revolution? You can exploit the emotion of the credibility of our nation is fading and that we are no longer in a ignorant and destitute population nd urge them to act at gunpoint. osition to decide our own But you will only succeed in Many say the Maoist revoludestroying everything. You cannot ion has its roots in corruption heal a society after you have torn and poverty. I have my doubts, It its fabric to shreds. KP Poudel, by email started because of our lack of We strongly condemn the sense of values and selfishness We don't have to follow Mao to terrorist attack on Sanskrit ackle poverty and corruption, in University. These terrorists are no fact Mao may not be the right different from the Taleban who person to follow as his own destroyed the Buddha statutes in country has abandoned his Afghanistan. The recent attack by ideas. It is a classic example of Maoist terrorists is a cruel attack how immature and mentally not only on the university, but on straitjacketed we are as citizen: Hinduism as well. We hope the so much so that we are ready to Vepali government will take action destroy our own lives and lives against the perpetrators. of our children in a fit of pique at Kamala, Rita Rana, our present politicians Subhash Giri, Prativa KC. iSameerî IISA

Reema Gurung, USA Reading about golf (Fore!, #94) was like a soothing spa for the tattered soul of an overseas Nepali, Today, I am not going to bother or worry about the Maoists or the number of incoming tourists I am simply going to indulge myself in the pleasure of playing colf vicariously at the Gokarna Club in faraway Nepal. The eventuality of golf tourism n Nepal is unquestionable Kathmandu can be the Thailand of golf for South Asia, particularly India where the golf population is leapfrogging. South-east Asia has plenty of first rate golf courses but Kathmandu and particularly courses like Gokarna have an edge over these countries in that

almost all courses in ASEAN countries are tropical in environment and landscape, but Kathmandu and Pokhara provide cool and comfortable weather condition as well as the magnificent Himalayan backdrop. As a recreational golf player, I oot hundred percent satisfaction shooting the white ball at the

Gokarna Club. The green is on pa Barbara Gurung, Chandra with any first-rate course, the

fairway is well-maintained, the of trekking by walking the entire ambience is unique, the food is course. It's a win-win situation excellent, and most of all the staf I am improving my game by are helpful and polite. You are acticing hard, and can't wait to playing an international-standard be there soon Jai Nepal! Jai Golf golf course and yet by the time ìOmar daiî, Taipei, Taiwar you finish the 18th hole you have I'm writing to thank you for probably experienced the flora the article on golf it was wellwritten and being an avid golfer, and fauna of a small-scale national park and don't forget that liked it very much. I think you could you have also accomplished a day have devoted some more space to



the problems young professional colfers in Nepal face-there is only one tournament that they can play in the whole year round and they cannot afford to even play in India as they do not get any financial aid from the overnment or from husiness houses. I'm an amateur golfer myself and I feel for these talented young pros. Tenzing aka Tiger Oops

> of golf in Nepal. It just might help open a few eyes among the authorities concerned to the word 'golf'. Golf isn't only a sport, but an integral part of the tourism business. This is understood all over the world except in Nepal. Golf by itself will never make money. It is more like a bait to entice the tourist to spend more money while visiting a country. Tourism isn't just Mt Everest and Phewa Tal. Nepal has the best of everything: the scene the weather and the costs related to building a proper championship layout: it has land and labour. The government has land, why can't it identify proper plots of land for golf course development and invite private investors in joint ventures? Gol does not need prime land it needs adequate land. Golf in

Thank you for the coverage

country. It is true that Nepali elite is 1 the treatment as "informed equally to blame, and even Mr Lal may be guilty of taking some consulting fees and selling his Sonny Shrestha, by email soul for a fancy car, but the fact is that at least he has the courage to own up to his sins. I salute Mr Lal for his courage in exposing the annoying (Letters, #92). The very people who support the reader apparently harbours a alitzy lifestyle of people of his ilk. grudge against CK Lal, how else Dr Naravan Khatri. could he fail to see the point M Lal has so powerfully made? ("Do our hanners still wave?" State of INFORMED CONSENT the state, #90.) Every Nepali This letter is in response to owes more than Rs 8.000 to the Informed consent" (Letters, #93), Telling the patients that your Development Bank and most of survival is 50-50, that too at point this money has flowed back to blank as stated in an earlier lette

Pokhara by Jvoti Lohani (Letters, #91) is not informed consent. The Bumrungrad Hospital says it was

explaining the potential outcome of

compulsory obligation to be carried out by physicians or surgeons. It is better to take mission of the patient's famil before explaining the whole truth

about the disease and outcome of the treatment when there is less chance of survival. Patients lready suffering from a debilitat ng disease are vulnerable to the



position to make the valid decisio

amily members need to be

consulted before obtaining

consent", but it also requires that

ermission be obtained from the

atient is not in a position to give

out any treatment procedures of

research Explaining the outcor

of any treatment is only the

valid permission) before carrying

atient or patient party (if the



lations to Shree Bhakta Khanal for his gripping story ("I didn't know they were spies." #89). This is explicit verification of the allegation that Nepal was a safe haven for spies. The situation is no different now Crouched uncomfortably betwe two nuclear superpowers. India

volved in making a mess of this country. We must safeguard our Suresh Lohani, Kathmandu your newspaper, one of the best recently particularly enjoyed CK Lal's "Peace in our time" and Daniel Lak's "All things considered" (#93), Congratulations,

Rainh Tavior Washington DC, USA

objective was to out-legitimise the government in the public eye, been so bent on de-legitimising itself? Develop-Nepal is considered a rich man's game. That's plain wrong. If it were true, why aren't all the politicians play

serve and the message these acts convey to the public at large Why has a rebellion whose avowed

SOUL SEARCHING

The letter from Paschim is

World Bank and the Asian

fees or profits. Electricity,

western countries as consulting

telephone and water charges

have gone up and even govern

ment education now comes with

user fees. All of this has been

done to please the donors

who think that they own this

turned to infrastructure. Telecommunication towers, airports, community-built hydro power plants were destroyed. Nearly a thousand VDC offices, hundreds of

These acts of wanton and brutal destruction are not isolated neither can they be dismissed as instances of indiscipline within the Maoist ranks. Had it been, the Maoist leadership would have repudiated them and disasso ciated itself from such recklessness. Clearly, the destruction of development has been a deliberate act to score political points. What is incomprehens ble in this madness is the purpose they



nergency, the Maoists have two

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NATION

# Seeing neither forests nor trees



better business in the boom, and

worried that unless they can

new edition of the British magazine Granta is always cause for

A celebration. Founded in Cambridge in 1982 by runcing and Buford, Granta ploughs its own furrow, mixing fact, fiction, elebration. Founded in Cambridge in 1982 by American Bill

reportage and opinion in a seamless, usually thematic whole four

times each year. Issue number 77, fresh from my post box, is even

Canadian and a native Hawaiian to ponder the role of America in

influential, powerful and wealthy nation that has ever existed. A

rainbow of opinion and anecdote about matters American arcs from

the beginning to the end of the book. Dubliner Fintan O'Toole gives

the unique perspective of an Irishman raised in the austere 1960s.

relates the sad tale of a sister ejected from assisted housing for poor

about Washington as the capital of a rogue state that flouts interna-

of English, Lu Gusun, discovers the counterculture America in San

switch, predictably, is between the president's legs. Professor Lu-

raised on reverence for authority and having met Reagan personally-

A liberal Israeli, Haim Chertok, stoutly defends the role of the

United States-where he was born-in keeping his new land afloat in

a sea of hostility and violence. Chertok's voice is precious and rare

these days, for he admits in print the mistakes made all around in his

sad region, but asserts that America is fundamental to eventual peace

in that cauldron of history and anger. A heartfelt contribution from

Palestinian Raja Shahedah reveals that the city of Ramallah-now

is horrified and embarrassed for his hosts and the president

surrounded by a doctored photo of then President Reagan, the actual

Francisco in the 1980s when a light switch in his friend's flat is

British playwright and champagne socialist, Harold Pinter, rants

enforce uniform regulations on

felling, or at least run awareness

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA in MANANG ocal entrepreneurs in Manang could never have imagined their luck would run out so fast. Until just last year, this remote district bounded by Thorung-La. Tibet and the high Himalaya was one of the most trekked areas of Nepal. And almost every resident of every village along the trekking route was building a lodge or

 $4_{\text{NATION}}$ 

expanding their teahouse, in anticipation of even more visitor Many natives of Manang settled in Kathmandu, Pokhara and overseas were even moving back, sensing

HERE AND THERE

more thought-provoking than usual.

immigrants again and again.

building hotels and homes. tices, Manang will rapidly But Manang has seen trekkers lose its richest natural resource. ACAP officials say the mushdrop by 40 percent this year. And that isn't the only loss the area has rooming of new lodges and had to bear-in the last decade this teahouses in Manang and other trans-Himalayan valley has lost over areas in the Annapurna region last 10 percent of its lush forest cover. year was unprecedented. "Never in large part due to the wave of before have so many structures been construction to be ready for what built in these areas in one year," an locals hoped would be increasing numbers of tourists. Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) officials, as well as some locals, are

programs about safe logging wooden plank. Pasang Lama, chairman of the

ACAP employee told us. There are no official records to quantify the increase, but locals say that every village on the trekking route saw at least half-a-dozen new lodges built, and there wasn't any tourist accommodation that did not go in

for a renovation or expansion. Given the cost of transporting other construction materials to this remote part of the Annapurnas, most people build structures of wood and stone along traditional lines, paving Rs 50-100 for a tree. and Rs 5 for a seven foot-long

Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC) at Chame. Manang district's headquarters, says houses that will be built. The problem is that in the the construction boom is also in part due to the return of locals district, especially in Upper formerly living abroad and in Manang, logging has never been a different parts of Nepal. "After they

Management Committee in even elsewhere are returning to their homes, some of them lured by the prospect of a tourism boom," explains Lama. The local population of Manang has now reached over 10.000, an increase of almost 50 percent in the last decade. "Each new family in the region exerts extra pressure on the natural resources such as timber for the many new

"Outside" administration has virtually no chance of influencing the local community, we were tole "That is why the organisation finds cause for concern or debate. ACAP regulations. There are many



The US has some things going for it: its ability to transcend failure, and its



capital of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority-has more native sons and daughters in America than remain behind. Shahedah compares the British and Israeli occupation of the West Bank by looking at the type of road each occupier built; the British, he says, built narrow, cheap, windy roads that followed contours and cupped ancient sites in their curves; the Israelis used American money to punch four-lane highways from their territory to Jewish settlements, security ever-present. Yet the writer—Palestinian and Ramallan to the core—says American oodness and optimism may yet tip the balance for peace in the Middle East. I wonder if Shahedah and Chertok have ever met to compare notes on the United States.

Perhaps the most interesting thought of all comes from Canadian Michael Ignatieff who writes of America as "the only country whose

citizenship is an act of faith, the only country whose promises to itself continue to command the faith of people like me, who are not its citizens." Ignatieff begins his essay at an anti-Vietnam war rally in 1972, in the middle of one of the most turbulent periods in modern American history. It was a time when it seemed the colossus was on the ropes. The conflict in South-east Asia was going badly, hearts and minds at home were uncertain despite having re-elected Richard Nixon Still to come were the carpet-hombing of Cambodia and the Watergate revelations of rot at the very heart of the White House, the uncertain Carter years, the Iranian hostage scandal and finally, Ronald Reagan.

What's most remarkable in America, for me and many of these writers, is that failure is usually little more than reinvention. Go bankrupt, get a court order, and start a new business next week. Get caught with your hand in the till, go to jail, pay your debt then renew your life's work. The foreign writers—all from societies where failure is more final-are in awe of this trait of American-ness. Some protest against it, most-rightfully see it as America's greatest achievement, the ability to transcend failure.

In these troubled times, it's clear that America is far more important to all of us, everywhere, than she ever was before. Her culture, economy and military might have doubled and trebled their influence in my lifetime and will do so again. This collection of essays could just be the start of a global exercise in accountability by those of us who are not America's citizens, but who live in its shadow and reflected light. The democracy that Washington has raised to high art demands accountability, checks and balances, not just within the superpower, but beyond its borders. Who knows? Perhaps one day they'll even give us the vote. ♦



instances of bad decisions made possibility of smuggling into Tibet by us," said a young resident of the when they heard about the growing illegal timber for salt bartering in Manang Village Development Committee, who did not want to the Langtang and Manaslu areas, be named. "There are still no which have relatively easier access to Tibet. A similar, but far worse, Forest User Groups in the upper belt of Manang, like there are in situation exists in Humla, where the lower part," the ACAP official told us. "The fate of the forests illegally logged timber is traded in Tibet via Taklakot for food and depends on the whims of the person alcohol. (See "Nepali timber to who has been entrusted to look Tibet," #17.) Ganga Bahadur after them." In keeping with tradition, Thapa, executive officer of the permission to fell trees can still be KMNTC insists that all trees felled in Manang are for domestic obtained by making an offering of chhang and a khada to the "autho consumption. Unfortunately, that, combined ity" The District Forest Office has no say, and logging is on the rise.

with the in slump tourism doesn't The lack of uniform laws shows mean that the logging will slow in the forest-some areas have what down anytime soon. People are still appears to be healthy tree cover, building, hoping for better times. other hillsides are denuded and

bare. Take the case of Pisang village, where the forest is thicker than that around other villages in Upper Manang. So far. The village administrators have already given out some pockets of the forest on contract to neighbouring villages. Manang village itself is increasingly dependent on this contract for its timber needs these days. Even smaller plants are feeling the ill-effects of mis-managed smothering the undergrowth. The Manang forests contain a significant portion of the over 1,200 species of plants found in ACAP, including 40 varieties of orchids and 10 types of

home to many endangered animal species, such as the red panda and possibly the snow leopard. Our informant in Manang who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that even if control over felling were to follow the old norms, outside agencies could do a lot better in

terms of raising awareness about better logging practices. "When the laziness to carry a single log results in the death of so many smaller plants, the least we could get is proper education on these issues Executives of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, which manages

ACAP, say that while things are bad in Manang, the loss of forest cover isn't as swift or extensive as it would be if northern Manang's border with Tibet were easier to cross. Both ACAP and police

officials at Chame investigated the Mandala House

Larry sportments of Conductions Prime Manhator's Rd. Hairwards. P.3.0xx 020, Nov.

### price of timber and trees. Such control mechanism haven't been very effective yet, however, "That's why we are trying to come up with new, strict rules," says CAMC's Lama. If the new regulation can be implemented, no logging will be allowed for the construction of hotel and lodges in Manang VDC for the next 10 years. "We will implement similar ideas in other villages gradually." Lama says hopefully.

opulation benefits directly fron

The CAMC is trying to regulat

the construction of new tourist accommodation.

egging, issuing permits in som

places, and trying to work with

ndigenous ways of authorising

felling in others, such as fixing the

Any regulation, no matter how "Everyone is keen on running a well thought-out and inclusive, will otel these days," says Lama. Even find it tough going against the before last year's flurry of building traditional ways in which natural activity, upper Manang had 700 resources have been used in this tight-knit community. In the beds to cater to a maximum of 200 meantime, conservationists sugges tourists at any given time. There are now more than 100 lodges and that the ACAP needs to start teahouses in Manang district, which evaluating the impact of its work. gets around 12,000 trekkers They fear that Manang may prove annually. In Manang village alone, to be an unexceptional case in the there are 20 lodges, some boasting Annapurna, just more dramatic. "It as many as 50 rooms, often with a is high time they did an impact deluxe room option. Narendra study," says Dr Chandra Gurung Lama, the officer in charge of Country Director of the World ACAP's Manang office, says Wildife Fund- Nepal. "ACAP has "Everyone with a little bit of money been working in the area for 15 feels they must invest in the hotel years, it is time they assessed the industry," Ironically, assessments of state of the natural resources now. the tourism industry in Manang say and compared it with what it was back then " that only 10 percent of the

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

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# Pokhara's problem

Garbage isn't a problem peculiar to Kathmandu. A recent survey of the lake city of Pokhara revealed that the city council has been disposing 58 tons of garbage everyday-by tossing it over the Seti river bridge in the city centre due to lack of a proper dump site. Waste generated by the local hospitals, most of it toxic, has made matters worse. Phewa lake, for its part, is breeding an alarming amount of coliform, due to the sewage and garbage from surrounding hotels and restaurants dumped into it. The survey, by Martin Chautari and the Pokhara Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says that Pokhara's environmental problems, which include the illegal settling of land are numerous and growing.

# More on Everest

It's been another record-breaking eason on Everest this spring. Fifty four climbers, including 24 highaltitude Sherpas made their way to the top of the world's highest nountain after a much-anticipated break in the weather the morning of 16 May. Among the climbers were Tashi Wangchuk Sherpa, grandson of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, who became the first to scale the mountain on 29 May, 1953 with Edmund Hillary, On the same day Susan and Phil Ershler, became the first married



couple to climb the highest mountains in seven continents and Nepal's Appa Sherpa maintained his record of the most ascents on Everest, after summiting Sagarmatha for the 12th time. There were quite a few women on top, too, Namche resident Pemba Doma Sharpa became the second Nepali woman to climb Everest from both the north and south sides, after she summited the mountain from the south side this spring, two years after her climb from Tibet in 2000. An all-American women's team fell 200 feet short of the summit, but another American climber, Ellen Miller ascended, becoming the first American woman to climb the mountain rom Tibet and Nepal. The spring also saw the ascent of Tamae Watanabe, 63, the oldest woman to climb Everest. A native of Yokohama, Watanabe broke the record a 50-year-old Polish woman set in 2000. A retired office worker. Watanahe has two other Himalavan giants under her belt-Dhaulagiri I and Gasherbrum II.

# Break for NRNs

Now that the government is planning special visa provisions for nonresident Nepalis, as are available to non-resident Indians, expatriated Nepalis around the world may feel more inclined to visit their motherland. A recent cabinet meeting decided that NRNs deserved special visas that allow them to stay in the country for a longer period without straining their visa-fee budgets. The idea is to boost the national economy by attracting NRN investment in industry, tourism, and nydropower. Government officials say non-resident Nepali students will have to pay \$50 for a year, while others will pay \$100 a year. The entry visa will be issued from Nepali embassies and consulates around the world. About 100,000 NRNs who hold foreign passports are expected to benefit from the change in visa provisions.

# The cost of advice

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's nearly two dozen advisors are costing the state close to Rs 400,000 a month. Figures in the Royal Gazette released Monday show that thirteen of Deuba's senior advisors receive a total of Rs 75 1400 a month from the government for fuel expenses alone. Three of the prime minister's top advisors-Prakash Sharan Mahat, Baldey Bohara and Gyanendra Karki-receive Rs 16 000 each in salaries, Rs 15,000 each in housing expenses and Rs 9,000 each for 200 litres of fuel. Two other advisors receive Rs 15,600 each in salaries and Rs 12 000 each for housing expenses. Lower down the advisor pole, two specialists get Rs 14,000 each in salaries. Six of the prime minister's assistant advisors are paid Rs 10.500 each in salaries and the equivalent of 80 litres of fuel from the government. There are additional navments, such as Rs 1,000 each to senior advisors for their elephone expenses. The salaries and perks were decided on by the council of ministers at a meeting in mid-February. The same meeting decided that seven branch officers and two computer officers appointed by the prime minister would receive a salary of Rs 7,500 each.

# Army website

Anyone interested in the history, current news, and pictures of the Nepali army can access the information from the army's new website, royalnepalesearmy.com .The site provides daily press updates on the emergency and security situation. It also features pictures of Maoist leaders wanted by security forces. The website can also be accessed on rna mil no

# logging. After the trees are felled, the logs, instead of being carried away, are simply rolled downhill, rhododendron. The forests are also

# **Re-inventing America**

insistence on accountability.



saw no more prospects in business overseas, locals who'd migrated

village under its purview, but says it is difficult to implement new logging-control mechanisms in this area, where traditional practices are still dominant. In many villages, the responsibility for managing the entire common forest lies with a single person, contradicting every

Tourism is down in Manang.

but tree-cutting hasn't stopped.

conservation tenet of ACAP



has formed a Conservation Area

# W PUSKAR BHUSAL

# **Defensive imperialism**

Foreign aid is an investment in a secure future, not philanthropy.

B warn us of how Nepal was turning into another Afghanistan, Bosnia or Cambodia, we find ourselves learning the ABCs of life in the post-modern world Britain is scheduled to host an international meeting next month on ways of helping Nepal meet its security and development requirements. It's unclear where we stand in the classification of strained-fragile-failingfailed states. But the fact that an international meeting is being convened suggests we are on dangerous ground.

fore our politicians could properly

How a people internationally acclaimed for their fierce fighting skills could have avoided violence at home for so long always baffled many. It's still hard, though, to accept that the commanders of the global war on terrorism see us as a potential haven for hate mongers from both hemispheres. With Nepal's modern political history smouldering in the wreckage of misplaced hopes and broken promises, distance probably allows a more dispassionate probe.

Although we emerged as a unified entity a full 120 years after the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia gave birth to the modern state, our openess was predicated on a covenant similar to that of the Europeans. In return for freedom from fear, from want, from internal and external conflict, and greater liberty in our personal lives, Nepalis agreed to follow the decrees of the state. Our part of the deal also required us to pledge our time, energy, resources, and even lives to the service of the nation. Over the centu-

ries, we saw many states fail because they

couldn't prevent external appression and

subjugation. We dodged that historical

trend only to face the malaise within

For a country that owed its political awakening to two world wars and a civil disobedience campaign that demolished the South Asian edifice of the British Empire, Nepal's ambivalence on the road to modernisation was perhaps natural. From malaria eradication to market liberalisation our Cold War trajectory was a little slipshod but nonetheless stirring. Multiparty politics took a backseat, but, then, we weren't the exception in the grand assembly of nations that refused to officially take sides in the superpower rivalry. Instead, we drew up a new compact under which the

fed on itself.

state offered us assurances of often petrifying predictability in exchange for enforced silence. Amid a perpetual struggle to establish its legitimacy, the partyless state set targets that sounded too good to be true. In the claustrophobic conditions of those decades, discontent A population that felt doubly duped easily succumbed to the euphoria that

patience. It was difficult for a people eeking a better life to focus exclusively on comes with getting too much of something creating a new constitution and holding too soon. Freed from the state's subjugation new elections, but they endured. Twelve in 1990, we believed the fusion of liberalism years later, the people are stuck with the and capitalism would make conflict same set of complaints. The political

irrational and, by logical extension

the rigorous circumstances of exile,

irrelevant. The new leadership, trained in

incarceration and subterraneous existence,

down public expectations so soon. Instead,

they came up with another covenant. The

price of tomorrow's prosperity was today's

FOLLOW UP

recognised the political perils of playing

leadership, for its part, has started apologising for its lack of vision. In a culture that has always exalted authority, this is no mean achievement.

Since 11 September, 2001, those who oversaw the emergence of a new world disorder have had ample time to compare notes. In George W Bush's war on terrorsm, countries like Nepal find themselves caught in Al Gore's axis of evil: poverty and ignorance: disease and environmental disorder; corruption and political oppression. Foreign aid has regained respectability on the international agenda. But since it is an investment in a secure future, the rules of philanthropy don't apply. Countries that promote open markets, respect human and political rights, and aggressively combat orruption can qualify for more international help.

Nepal could easily have been on the mind of Robert Cooper, the foreign olicy guru of British Prime Minister Fony Blair, when he made his case for a 'new imperialism". While poverty doesn't cause terrorism, it can lead to hopelessness and despair in states where governments fail to fulfil the basic needs of the neonle. These nations become havens for terror. When the terrain is treacherous, every cave and crevasse is a potential refuge for radicalism. If they become too dangerous for established states to tolerate. Cooper argues, it is possible to imagine a defensive imperialism that aims to bring order and organisation but which rests today on the voluntary principle. A new era has produced a new compact, complete with a new set of apprehensions. ♦

# FCONOMY

# BIZ

# **Television tales**

Two newly-licensed broadcasters are gearing up to get on the airwaves. The Image Channel says it plans to be on your television screens by Dasain (15 October), starting with two-three hours of broadcasting a day and slowly growing to seven hours daily. Kantipur Television is looking at a premiering date towards the

end of the year. Kantipur says it is looking at a lead time of 8-10 months before beginning its broadcasts. Image Channel Metro TV, which has been broadcasting on airtime leased from Nepal Television for the last four years, says it will have Rs 100 million as authorised capital (including investments already made). KTV has an authorised capital of Rs 500 million and several co-financiers, including successful Nenali entrepreneurs in Russia and the former Soviet republics. KTV, which is owned by Kantipur, the largest FM broadcaster and newspaper group, says it will go national over three years.

# Rupee dives further

The Nepali Rupee took another beating at the end of last week, as the Indian Rupee slid down the exchange board. The dollar now costs Nepalis Rs 0.25 more. The dollar traded for Rs 78.35 all through last week, but was Rs 78.60 on Friday, when the Indian Rupee-US dollar exchange rate slipped to \$1:Irs 49.08, an all-time low

# Copper blues

Vegetable ghiu producers say they are already producing just half of what they were last year. But producers of copper goods say they have it even worse. The copper industry says more than half of its establishments have shut down, leaving about 2,000 people without jobs. There used to be 46 copperrelated undertakings before Nepal and India agreed to fix export quotas while renewing the trade treaty earlier this year. Under the new regulations, only 7,500 metric tons of copper goods can be exported to India duty free

# Avros retire

Necon Air says it has decided to perman retire all its fuel-guzzling Avro (BAE48) aircraft, which used to be the mainstay of its fleet, the airline will now rely entirely on ATR 42s and Beechcraft 1900s. Necon flies two ATRs (right) and one Beech. The company says it will add another to its fleet next month. The last of four

Avros was ferried by Necon crew to Johannesburg this month.

# Housing boom

Construction is big business in the country these days. Consumer housing is the fastest growing segment of the-industry estimates say about Rs 2 billion has been invested in consumer housing in the past two years. If market trends are anything to go by, more money is destined to flow that way, and there might soon be more than the current eight major players in the market. The home schemes now in the market are largely apartment complexes, although some builders also offer stand-alone homes. Banks and finance companies have joined the business, giving it added impetus. Apartment and home prices range from Rs 700.000 on the low end, to a high of Rs 5.2 million.



Taxman cometh. Not

until we learn the art of implementation.

ECONOMIC SENSE

ast choice.

is not the first day of the Nepali

financial year, but of the Gregorian calendar. Then again, perhaps we

houldn't expect any semblance of

ormalcy from a law that not only

sembles an epic in Sanskritised

of an Act detailing its rules and

Vepali, but is still awaiting the arrival

vulations There are controversies

ore raging, and plenty of post-

ortem seminars and workshops. One

of the arguments being repeatedly and

orcefully made in some quarters is

that the law was no choice of Nepalis

ut imposed on us by consultants

hoice, many say, perhaps Nepal vould do without such a law.

Income tax has been one re-

ehind the complete stagnation of

lepali business, another sign of how

one wants to do anything profes-

ionally in this country. The very idea

of transparency in this arena is

udicrous because taxpayers aren't

given any incentives, and find that

unded by bi-lateral agencies. Given a

Income Tax law was made effective. It's strange that the effective date of the law working with tax officials, aided by tax pimps in the garb of consultants, vields better results. The Beed will not even get into how many large investment opportunities have been lost because few outsiders want to deal with this sticky matter

"Strengthening" income tax laws won't help. Nothing will

As for the new law, it is an attempt to do something, anything And it shows. It hits individual taxpayers the hardest, as there is now absolutely no incentive to save. This country desperately needs more savings, and the general expectation was that we'd get better incentives to save, whether for housing or pension funds. But the new law seems to function on just the opposite principle. With insurance premium and other savings schemes now taxable, the fate of life insurance panies and allied agencies is also up in the air.

divested. Does that weigh on your mind?

conceivable media channels the government warned people of dire squences and even drew un lists of defaulters. But the threats and fingerwagging died down with such great despatch, one can understand the frustration of those who did declare their wealth. Our lawmakers need to realise, to guide their own behaviour and that of others, that law-abiding, transparent actions are driven by incentive, not just goodwill. There is no point constantly

revising the laws. The number of raxpayers will not increase, and nor will collection, until we can properly implement at least one of our umerous Acts The ray administer tion is in tatters, same as this benighted country's political admini tration. A lot remains to be done, and everyone knows it cannot be done. So here's something truly radical: scrap income tax in Nepal. At least busines can stop wasting its time trying to pla that silly old game, and get on with the business of business.

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get away with illegal actions all the

needn't pay taxes, as the money is

for expenditures, has also become

something of a set piece. The nays

are right. The government's so-called voluntary declaration scheme, VDIS,

did little more than allow defaulters t

bleach their black money. Through all

ime'. The other argument, that one

simply used to fund jumbo cabinets

wanted advisors and unaccounted

63

44

Readers can post their views at arthabeed@yahoo.com

The SCB essentially focuses on emerging-markets-we have operations in

50 countries in Africa, Middle East, South and East Asia, We understand

the intricacies of emerging markets and have tested policies and proce-

dures that take the conditions in these markets into account. Nepal is an emerging market and therefore poses both the challenges and opportuni-

ties that are inherent in such markets. Our commitment to Nepal can be

determined by the fact that we have 13 points of representation in the

country already and the fact that we are upgrading our entire hardware,

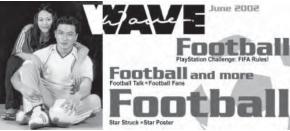
network and software platforms. We're investing over Rs 330 million in this

project, which is surely an indication about the bank's view about doing

This Beed is being inundated

with bitter questions along the lines of why bother about Income Tax, people

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It's everywhere

Freedom of speech/ press, that is. Even on radio.

t's official and legal. The provisions of the Nepali constitution do, in fact, allow private radio stations to disseminate news from independent sources. In January 2001, the Ministry of Information and Communication issued a notice to all private radio stations saying that it was illegal for them to broadcast independent news and current affairs. The notice claimed that the stations had been circumventing this clause of the FM license by reading a selection of daily papers without checking the facts The full text of a July 2001 Supreme Court decision, relea month, rules that the government has no right to restrict news and

information flow on independent radio stations, and media activists say this could change the way the private television stations that have been issued licenses this month will handle news when they come on air. A three-member team of Supreme Court judges came to the decision

while looking into a lawsuit filed by lawyer Madhav Kumar Basnet challenging the legality of the January 2001 directive from the Ministry of Information and Communication. The government notice claimed that FM radio stations were "undermining democracy through their broadcasts, and directed them to seek news only from "official" sources and retransmit only materials from the state-run broadcaster. The directive also maintained that the government would have the final say over whether or not certain materia could go on air.

The decision says that the constitutional guarantees to the press are also applicable to other forms of media, radio in particular, although the government continues to interpret them as being applicable only to the print media. The same decision also questions an established government practice of appointing an official as director of the board of any private radio station, saying this was a form of censorship, as the government appointee could single-handedly overturn or alter any decision.

"It is an historic decision that could influence the operation of television and other forms of media." says ecstatic media activist Raghu Mainali. "It will influence how we deal with journalistic freedoms, irrespective of the medium " adds Mainali, coordinator Community Radio Support Centre at the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEEEJ)

To date, the government has licensed 25 FM stations (including FM 100), of which about 20 broadcast currently. Among them six are non-profit stations, including Radio Sagarmatha and Metro FM in Kathmandu. ♦



Anil Shah is Chief Operating Officer and head of the consumer banking operations of Standard Chartered Bank. Nepali Times spoke to him about the bank's recent efforts to sell consumer loans, and its long-term outlook on doing business in Nepal.

Nepali Times: Your bank has begun to aggressively market different consumer finance products, including home loans. Does that mean you're running out of other investment options?

Anil Shah: We are starting a new chapter in our approach to banking by enhancing service delivery to customers, and that explains the new products and services. We have launched "Xtra Banking" at our Kantipath pranch. It will now be open 365 days a year, and banking hours there have

"We are here to stay." -Anil Shah. Standard Chartered Bank One of the first joint venture banks to set up shop in Nepal has already

been extended up to 7PM on weekdays and from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM on weekends and holidays. We've also added four more ATM machines, which brings us up to nine. On the asset side, we have launched the home loans, plement auto loans and credit cards. All this has been done to further enhance the customer's experience of banking with us.

### Other banks also offer these loans, why should they come especially to Standard Chartered?

That is correct, other banks offer the same products, but there are some features of ours that benefit the customers more. For instance, our credit card is a true credit card-at the end of the month you have a choice of paying just 5 percent of the total amount outstanding in your account, or the entire outstanding amount or any amount within that range. This gives customers flexibility in payments. Our auto loans have an interest of 11 percent, which along with the five-year loan tenure and up to 80 percent financing we provide, also provides the customer maximum flexibility. Our home loans stand far above similar products in the market—you get 10 percent interest, repayment within 15 years, loan amounts ranging from Rs 300,000 to Rs 7.5 million and financing of up to 70 percent. It isn't enough for us to just be part of the market, it is essential for us to be leaders in every product and service that we provide. Our dedication to customer service was recently recognised by the Federation of Nenalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), which awarded us a Commendation for Customer Satisfaction and Relationship.

# What is behind your recent push in consumer banking, rather than

traditional corporate banking? Globally, the Standard Chartered Bank views consumer banking as a major contributor to overall revenues. In keeping with, and taking into consideration, our local market, we are stressing consumer banking here too. If you look at the banking industry today, you will quickly realise that in the corporate arena there are many banks and limited customers. Add to this the fact that the number of corporates is increasing at only a marginal rate, and you realise that the potential for growth is limited. Even though the consumer banking side is far less developed, it still offers many opportuni-ties, all of which we are looking at. With our international experience and range of products and services in consumer banking, we have the unique advantage of knowing how to pick those that would be most suitable to meet our customers needs. With this focus on consumer banking the individual consumer will get access to an array of financial products, which until recently were not available in our marke

### business here. Yes we have economic problems and most definitely all institutions will have to tighten their belts and keep a very close eye on cost lines to get through these trying times. But for us emerging markets are our home and we are here to stay. How would you explain the contribution a bank like the SCB can make

to the Nepali economy? This is a question that we get asked often. We look at our contribution from the point of view of our stakeholders-shareholders, customers, regulators and staff. In the case of shareholders, if an investor had nurchased 100 shares during the initial issue in 1987, it would have cost him Rs 6,000 Today be would have 675 shares worth Rs 1,012,500 (at a share price of Rs. 1,500), in addition to which he'd also have received dividends of Rs 2,42,650. I think that type of return on investment is exceptional any

From the point of view of the customer, we look at the fact that we have helped bring international standard banking products and procedures to Nepal. In international trade we have provided our customers the opportu-nity to give their customers, in turn, the confidence of dealing with a recognised global bank. We have provided about 40,000 depositors with a greater level of service, security and satisfaction. Besides we also pay taxes to the exchequer and for the last seven years have consistently beer amongst the highest taxpavers in the country, a fact that was recognised by the government recently. In addition to this we have always taken pride in the recognition that we receive from the Nepal Rastra Bank for the high international standards that we bring to the market in terms of compliance customer service and operational and credit risk management. In employ ment terms, our bank is a preferred employer, because we have a perform ance-oriented culture. Simply put, if you perform you will be rewarded.

KOREA APAN

1.87 m, 75 kg

ing qualifying campaign.

Rivaldo has a knack for scoring goals that leave his

8 SPORT

# The Stars of the World Cup With one week to go before the greatest show on earth, Nepali Times brings you pin-ups and profiles of some of the biggest stars who will feature in Korea Japan 2002.

# •France •Midfielder •Real Madrid

# (Spain) 1.85 m. 78 kg

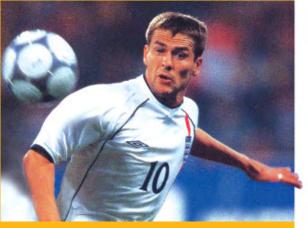
After his heroics in France '98, Zizou has reached the best form of his career. With his exceptionally brilliant goal against Bayer Leverkusen in last week's Champions League Final Zidane showed just why he's considered one of one the true legends of the modern game. Zidane's intelligence and his masterful dribbling and passing ability enable him to effortlessly create massive gaps in enemy territory. But what really sets Zidane apart from most players is his ability to rise to the occasion and create and score the momentous goals when they count



Italy •Defender •AC Parma (Italy) 1.76 m, 75 kg

> Italy's notoriously stingy defence today contains a new breed of contemporary world class defenders-athletic, fast and efficient unlike the classical tall, rocklike physical defenders of the past. Along with Paolo Maldini and Alessandro Nesta, Fabio Cannavaro completes

Italy's formida ble defensive catennaccio, or "chain-link" defensive trio. Cannavaro has incredible agility and pace but his strength lies in his ability to consistently manmark an opposing striker completely out of a game. Despite his size, Cannavaro relies on his physical strength and mobility and should be a threat to any attack the world has to offer this June in Japan and Korea.



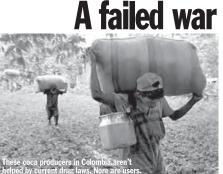
24-30 MAY 2002 100105 9

# 1.73 m, 70 kg

Eighteen year-old Michael Owen burst onto the international football scene in France '98 with his wonder-goal against Argentina. Now twenty-two, he has established himself as among the top strikers in the world. Owen's brilliant close control and acceleration is perhaps only second to Ronaldo when he is at his best. At only 1.75 m Owen is not considered dangerous in the air-but the timing of his runs, his pace and his sheer confidence make him a terror to defenders.



Dealers: New Road, Kathenandu -- Shatua Tradino Centre, Ter 200609 - Streethe Radio Cancers Tet 200500 - Star Electronica, Tet 200700 Administer Regis Antonization: De 2003 - Senti Registration, No. 2013 - Senti Senti



aws. No other set of laws produces so

much revenue for criminals terrorists

much violence, or contributes so

hepatitis and other diseases.

much to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The second myth presumes

in cannabis, opium and coca products

commodities markets, yet global drug

assumption that the drug markets have

more in common with smallpox and

Analysing Palme

are basically similar to other global

control policies operate on the

STOCKHOLM - Olof Palme, Sweden's then prime minister, was assassinated 15

years ago on 28 February. His death shocked millions everywhere: the crime was

an attack on democracy itself. Palme is now part of history. But history must be

The war on drugs persists because

he world's drug problems are on the global trade in illicit drugs that is enforced by governments and collected by those willing to violate the far more severe today than they were a century ago. Drug use hasn't increased enormously-huge autorities of sloopal anium and othe drugs were consumed back then. The and corrupt officials, generates so problem lies in today's drug control policies, which probably cause more harm than drug abuse itself.

Like alcohol Prohibition in the US during the 1920s and early 1930s. of two myths-first, that human global drug prohibition has failed to beings are better off "drug-free" and that all societies should strive to be so educe drug abuse even as it generate extraordinary levels of crime, violence In reality, few-if any-drug-free corruption and disease. In 1998, the societies ever existed. UN estimated the total value of the illicit drug trade at \$400 billion-7 prohibition reduces the harm associated with drugs. Global markets

percent of global trade. Critics say the figure is half that, but it is still remarkable Colombia today is far worse than Chicago under Al Capone as are other Latin American. Caribbean and Asian countries. Drug prohibition effectively imposes a tax

OPINION

freely analysed, not silenced out of deference. So, as

Palme was a powerful, eloquent critic of the US

Pinocher's murders in Chile, and so he has often

tyrannies. This isn't quite true. Palme systemati-

cally refrained from criticising many oppressive

dictators, or at least tried not to offend them. Do

not "vilify" the Soviet Union, said Palme, Chair-

man of Sunden's Social Democratic Party for 17

years and prime minister from 1969-1976 and

business of anti-Sovietism," he declared in 1984, a

No doubt, Palme reflected the spirit of his

times. The west's Marviet revival after 1968 deeply impressed journalists and

people, but Palme carried this spirit long after many others had seen the liber:

light. "Neither communism nor capitalism represents a dream of liberty for the peoples of Europe," he said a few years before the peoples of Eastern and Central

Palme also tried hard to divide the west at a critical moment. In the 1980s

the Social Democrats in Sweden and Germany developed a close ideological

and west, and nuclear weapon-free zones. The alliance that led to serious

collaboration in foreign affairs. The so-called "Palme Commission" (including

the influential Egon Bahr) suggested a policy of "common security" between eas

distortions of fundamental western values. Palme and Oskar Lafontaine, then on

of Germany's opposition leaders, did not see the Cold War as a conflict between

freedom and tyranny. When Palme visited East Germany in 1984 he never

"détente," "trust," and "friendship," but never "freedom".

criticised repression there, but praised its leader, Erich Honecker, underlining

the mutual struggle for peace and development. Palme's main speech mentioned

socialists, not least in Sweden. Vietnam changed the outlook of many young

again, from 1982-86. Do not engage in "the

typical neutralist stand in Palme's Sweden.

Europe embraced democracy and capitalism.

we recall Palme's assassination, we should also

and the war in Vietnam He cursed Soviet

oppression in Czechoslovakia and General

been portrayed as a consistent adversary of

regimes and embraced some of the cruellest

remember what he represented.

opium in Asia. Prohibitions imposed by the US and other governments destroyed traditions which reduced the harm caused by these drugs by "domesticating" them. At the same time, they encouraged transitions to refined drugs like heroin and cocaine. US law enforcement and intelligence agencies routinely provide informatio to other governments knowing it will

by ETHAN A NADELMANN

be used to arrest and sometimes torture those it identifies All these consequences of the drug

war could be seen as human rights abuses But the fundamental rights issue here is about the right of overeignty over one's mind and body-which also incorporates the right not to be forced to take drugs against one's will. Heroin users are denied the most effective medication available to remedy their addiction, methadone. People unable or unwilling to stop injecting drugs are denied access to sterile syringes. Millions who smoke marijuana or consume other psychoactive drugs an

rmed far more by state action than by drug use. We need a systematic review of th there is no demand. Governments car international anti-drug conventions

act unilaterally and multilaterally to regulate commodity markets, but that sustain today's failed policies. prohibition is not the ultimate form of Some emphasise the anti-scientific and illegitimate basis for including regulation, it represents the abdication of regulation. What isn't suppressed is nabis and coca in the conver unregulated-except by criminal Others point to the contradictions organisations. Around the world, drug ween these conventions and those violations account for the largest human rights, or note that they share of the roughly 8 million in mate exacerbate the problems they seek to of local jails and prisons-almost 10 ameliorate. A new global drug control ime must acknowledge that the tru challenge is learning to live with drug so they cause the least harm. People should not be punished for what the put into their bodies, only for the harms they do others. ♦

of the Drug Policy Alliance author of Cops Across Borders The Internationalization of US or extorted by government agents enforcing drug laws. In Bolivia and Criminal Law Enforcement ) Peru, coca was part of society, as was

percent. In 1980, 50,000 people wer incarcerated in the US for drug law iolations. Today, the total approache half-a-million with a few hundred thousand more locked up on other prohibition-related offences. In the developing world, poor peasants producing opium, coca and cannabis are arrested, and often beaten

other infectious diseases for which

(Ethan A Nadelmann is founde

BELGRADE - Three years after NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia people in the area are still breathing in particles of toxic depleted uranium (DU), according to the United Nations Environment Programme by PER AHLMARK



around the areas that were hit. "The contamination remains widespread. of the DU assessment team. "Constant monitoring of water quality is needed, and the site decontamination and construction work could notentially stir up DU dust from the ground surface in the future," he added.

ore for nuclear reactors or weapons and is used in the tips of bullets or with DU landed in Yugoslavia during the 1999 NATO campaign. (IPS)

# Anti-terror. anti-immigrant

next five years to renel asylum seekers from Australia's shores and implement a range of new "anti-terrorism" measures. Announcing the budget last Tuesday, Australian Treasurer Peter Costello emphasi security: "The government believed its priority should be a safer Aus-

Critics believe this is a smokescreen to allow draconian "anti-terrorism" legislation, which allows political and community organisations to be banned by a government minister, to be pushed through the senate later this week, and to intensify efforts to repel asylum seekers. The legislation is facing increasing resistance from government members, community

less than its entire annual aid budget, to keep out asylum seekers. The funding includes \$660 million for the "Pacific Solution" under which asylum seekers in Australian waters are forcibly removed to detention centres on Nauru and Papua New Guinea. Costello claims recent onveroment efforts have effectively ended asylum seekers arriving on Australia's shores. But buried deep in the budget is the assumption that the future costs are based on 4,500 people a year coming to Australia-



**ASIA** 

even a "limited" strike is liable to escalate, argues Lt Gen VR Raghavan, a they shocked the world by detonating strategic expert, because there is no 11 nuclear devices. India and Pakistar stable nuclear-deterrent equation once again find themselves on the brink of war and in the grip of intense between India and Pakistan, no insecurity. George Tenet, director of transparency about their nuclear the US Central Intelligence Agency loctrines: under what circumstance recently said that the chances of a subcontinental war "now are the highest since 1971". As more than one million soldiers confront each other nose-to-nose at the India-Pakistan border for the fifth month creating nuclear command structures.

> extra-regional events, or internal developments. Such a confrontation

# All the president's spin

ever level in 2001. Similarly, the hike in foreign exchange

agreed to end the Kargil conflict-to

October coup followed.

Musharraf hasn't been any better for Pakistan than presidents past.

Musharraf's annovance. The general's

MUDASSAR RIZVI in ISI AMABAD

October 1999, when General Pervez Musharraf toppled Prime Minister awaz Sharif's government, he promised Pakistanis that he would do verything the democratically elected set-up couldn't. He vowed to make Pakistan a moderate and forward-looking country by addressing poverty alleviation economic stability de-politiciention of state institutions accountability and good governance. But two-and-half-years later-and as he begins another five years in power after the 30 April referendum—most of his promises remain unfulfilled, analysts say. Indeed, some voters said life has become worse, not

better under the military regime, and this is why they did not vote in the referendum, despite an unprec-edented official "Vote Musharraf" npaign and official results showing that 98 percent of voters agreed with extending his stay in office. Musharraf claims victory on the economic front in three areas: the budget deficit is down to 5.3 percent of GDP, foreign exchange reserves have grown to \$5.3 billion, a record in the country's history, and foreign loans have been rescheduled to ease the debt burden. But many of these achievements were not due to reforms under the Musharraf government, but becaus of the events of 11 September, the dividends from a changed political environment that saw Pakistan's sup becoming crucial to the US military

campaign in Afghanistan. The World Bank says it is premature for Islamabad to declare victory on the economic front, as the post-September economic gains have not benefited the people. The IMF's Global Economic Outlook said growth in Pakistan actually æned in 2001. "If September 11 hadn't taken place, Pakistan's ec would have note-dired " commented a Fund official in Islamabad, reques ing anonymity. In a report last month, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) said Pakistan's economy faces serious problems such as declining investment in 2000-01, inadequacies in the tax collection system and protracted low spending on improving people's lives, a high poverty rate and low level of human development.

A Bank spokesman here said Pakistan reduced its budgetary deficit to 5.3

# Know thy neighbour

by PRAFUL BIDWAI

Apologists for the bomb are

being proven wrong—they proph esied that nuclearisation would

compel Indian and Pakistani leader

to behave "responsibly". Nuclear

weapons, said pro-bomb pundits

would even prevent conventional war

During the Cold War, the United

exchange a single shot although the

fought brutal proxy wars. India and

Pakistan went into battle a year after

the May nuclear tests, with 40,000

troops and over 1,000 casualties.

Since then, mutual tensions have

Nuclear weapons have also

economically and politically. Over the

pend more than twice as much on

primary education. For the price of

ne missile, it could run 15.000

rural health centres. Pakistan's

economy is already a shambles. As

it spends more on the military—it

is raising its budget by 11 percent in

midstream—its state will withdraw

from even the few public services it

provides currently. Nuclearisation

has promoted intense national

chauvinism and religious funda

mentalism in both countries. These

in turn, raise tension and make war

more likely. The region's potential

for nuclear catastrophe has never been

reserves was not due to

greater. (IPS)

ercent of GDP by slashing development spending to the lowest

e spokesman.

Many are feeling the economi

crunch at the household level A

language daily Dawn says prices of

7 essential commodities increased

by an average 20 percent between

The major drain on almost stagnant

percent hike in electricity prices, gas

and fuel in this period even as the

prices of some food items rose by 5

to 51 percent. This was in addition

to other unpopular measures-the

imposition of 15 percent General

where almost 50 percent have no

access to essential drugs. Govern-

ales Tax on medicines in a country

nent servants complain that the 25

percent increase in their salaries was

o little to offset the impact of

October 1999 and March 2002

incomes has been the 15 to 40

recent survey by the English-

an improvement in exports, which went down to \$7 billion as against the target

of \$10 billion for the current fiscal year. Foreign direct investment has also gone

crackdown on the 'hawala' system of money transfers throughout the world,

official purchase of around \$2.6 billion in foreign exchange from the market

unbridled prices. One-third of Pakistan's 135 million people still live on under-

The law and order situation remains unchanged, despite the government's

dollar a day. Over 45 percent have no access to primary health care. Officially,

claims to the contrary, and sectarian violence remains common, "This will not

change unless the government's actions are matched by real will," said Afrasiab

Khattak of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. The Musharraf govern-ment arrested more than 2.000 workers earlier this year in a countrywide swoop

against so-called extremist groups, but the absence of proofled the government to

offer general amnesty to those arrested, seeking only a statement that they would not participate in the activities of banned *jihadi* outfits in future. • (*IPS*)

unemployment is at 7.8 percent, though critics say it is much higher.

and international aid amounting to \$1.6 billion after 11 September," said

factors-increased remittances by Pakistanis through official channels after a

wn by 14 percent compared to last year. "The reserves increased due to artificia

next few years, India is expected to

extracted a heavy cost-socially.

them as it annually spends on

increased.

States and Soviet Union did not

This time the noises from India

and Pakistan could be more

than just sabre-rattling.

Threat 2015 report says that of all the

world's regions, the risk of nuclear war

is the highest in South Asia, and will

remain "serious" CIA director Tenet

testified: "If India were to conduct

large-scale offensive operations into

Pakistani Kashmir. Pakistan mieht

retaliate with strikes of its own in the

belief that its nuclear deterrent would

limit the scope of an Indian nuclear

There is distressing new evidence

that the subcontinent was on the brink

of a nuclear catastrophe during the

counter-attack."

BEIJING - Buildings festooned with barbed wire, roads sealed off with tape, sombre-looking armed police guards every couple of metres, hordes of policemen checking people's identities-this is the look of Beijing today. As China and Japan continue to be locked in a bitter row over the fate of five North Korean asylum seekers. arrested by the Chinese police inside a Japanese consulate in north-east China last week, few Beijing residents know why the city's downtown has been transformed into a military zone. Passers-by offered reasons ranging from the war in Afghanistan to fear of attacks by Uighur terrorists from the Muslim minority in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang.

While state-run Chinese media did mention the Shenyang incident, which drew Beijing and Tokyo into an angry dispute nothing has been said about the growing problem with North Korear refugees that China is facing. The media has also said little about the reasons that are causing tens of thousands of desperate North Korean people to flee their country and cross the Chinese border. Between 250,000 and 300,000 refugees are believed to be in hiding in the impoverished countryside in northern China, believing even that is better than their existence back home. People of North Korea are plaqued by a lack of food, heat and medicine and deprived of most basic freedoms. Little of this however has been highlighted by the Chinese media, leaving Chinese people unaware of the dimensions of the human tragedy unfolding next door. State media regularly trumpets warm relations between Beijing and Pvongvang-two communist allies who fought "American imperialism" in the 1950-53 Korean War. (IPS)

# East Timor looks to oil

UNITED NATIONS - The new nation state of East Timor is among the world's 20 poorest countries in financial and human developm terms, the LINDP said Tuesday. In a study released here, LINDP said East Timor's per capita income is about \$478 compared with its more affluent neighbours and soon-to-be regional partners, including Singapore (over \$26,000), Australia (about \$22,000), Malaysia (about \$12,000) and Indonesia (over \$4,500). The fledgling nation's human development index-based on life expectancy, educational attainment and income per person-is on a par with ailing economies such as Angola, Bangladesh and Haiti, according to the study

Addressing a special meeting of the UN Security Council on East Timor Monday, Singaporean Foreign Minister S Jayakumar, who also is Council president, said sustained international assistance would prove essential during its early years of nationhood. Last week, the international donor community pledged more than \$360 million in development assistance to be spread over a three-year period, adding to the \$81 million already available through a multidonor trust fund, bringing the total to more than \$441 million in international support for East Timor. UNDP said one of the major determinants of East Timor's longer-term economic future will be the way it uses revenues from oil and gas. Australia and East Timor have signed the Timor Sea Arrangement governing oil and gas fields they share in the Timor Gao. The treaty, if implemented, would provide East Timor with more than \$3.6 billion in revenues over a 20-year period.

These revenues are expected to be East Timor's key sources of income after independence. "The challenge is to resist the temptation to spend these revenues on current consumption but to invest in human development and stimulate private enterprise," UNDP said. (IPS)

40.0001/2ft.BAR .... Where the tales are as tall as the mountains

Succulent steaks and burgers bountiful, with a vegetarian variety. The friendliest har between Tibet and Timbuctoo. Live band on fridays!



Olof Palme's legacy is the belief that even fundamental freedoms are relative. ...... The same hannened in Cuba Palme shared a

appreciatively of "socialist revolution," never mentio g his own party's conviction that "revolution" should take place only after free and honest elections. Palme used Marxist slogans, but said nothing about human rights and political freedom, giving the impression that Sweden and Cuba embraced similar ideologies. Palme claimed that the two men were united in every respect, even in their happiness that the struggles for freedom of "the Vietnamese and Cambodian peoples have been crowned with victory." This was the summer of 1975 two months after Cambodia's Khmer Rouge embarked on a genocide that killed two million of the country's

in Indochina. Palme seldom condemned oppression in Third World countries. He constantly condemned apartheid in South Africa, but never criticised Mao's China, the most murderous regime to arise after World War II. This double standard was particularly pernicious in the Middle East, where Palme never censured an Arab country, regardless of its corruption or cruelty. The only nati in the region he repeatedly attacked was its only democracy. Israel. He even

Palme left behind, his anti-western agitation and his willingness to see fundamental ideals of freedom as merely relative values. For neonle seeking or defending democracy and human rights, Palme was an unreliable partner. It is

(Per Ahlmark is a former deputy prime minister of Sweden and is currently an author and newspaper columnist )

podium with Fidel Castro at a mass rally and spoke seven million people.

Newspapers in almost all democracies, including Sweden, were informing us of the Cambodian horrors Palme thought it more important to present a united

front with Cuba's tyrant than worry about attracities committed by communists

equated the Israelis with the Nazis. Fifteen years after his murder, Sweden and the west must grapple with what

Sundicate)



Belgrade is still pretty unhealth

24 - 30 MAY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

PARIS – A new report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD), which represents the 29 most industrialised countries, reveals a \$2.3 billion drop in aid from member countries last

year from the year 2000. The report released in Paris last Thursday by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD shows that

bilateral aid by OECD members fell from \$53.7 billion in 2000 to \$51.4

billion last year. Only five countries meet the UN target of giving 0.7 per

Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden, The US

Germany 0.27 per cent and France 0.34 per cent. In a parallel development at the OECD ministerial summit in Paris

last week, member countries failed to reach a consensus on rules to cover

state export agencies, which provide heavy subsidies to OECD exporters.

In most industrialised countries these export credit agencies (ECAs) even

blow to developing countries. "On the one hand, OECD countries such as

subsidise arms sales. Analysts say the parallel revelations are a double

the LIS. Germany or France continue to subsidise exports with taxpavers'

money and through the ECAs, often in detriment to the competitiveness

of the world's poorest countries," says Aaron Goldzimmer, representative

of the US non-profit Environmental Defence. "On the other, ODA, which is

one way to support the countries of the South to find a sustainable path

BUCHAREST - Former Communist countries can expect more funds but

also more caution in years ahead from the European Bank for Recon-

struction and Development (EBRD). Delegates at a two-day meeting of

the EBRD that ended here Monday expressed tempered optimism over the region's economic prospects, and concern over the social costs of

this year, up to more than \$33 billion from \$25.5 billion last year. The

bulk will go to countries such as Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, which are preparing for EU entry. Countries like Russia,

Romania, Bulgaria and Georgia are still rated below investment grade

but can expect a little more support from the EBRD. Helped by growth in Russia, the region as a whole posted a GDP

Eastern Europe is still low compared with that in some developing

investment climate in particularly south-eastern Europe and in the

Commonwealth of Independent States, which worsens the balance

countries. "One of the constraints on EDI is the relatively unfavourable

between the risk and return to investment," says the bank. Corruption is

often cited as a major factor discouraging foreign investment here. (IPS)

Don't drink the water or breathe the air

They are struggling to tap international capital markets and repay debts,

increase of 4.3 per cent, one of the world's largest. But that growth rate is

expected to slow down this year. The bank warned that FDI in Central and

European countries build Western-style economies, and has given

billions of dollars in loans to the region's 27 countries.

restructuring. The EBRD was created in 1991 to help Eastern and Central

The EBRD predicts a sharp increase in foreign direct investment (FDI)

to development and progress, is being reduced." (IPS)

Meanwhile in eastern Europe

cent of their gross national income (GNI) to development assist

gives only 0.11 per cent of its GNI for ODA, Japan 0.23 per cent,

Less of everything

although with low level risks for the population." said Pekka Haavist, head

DU is a waste product of the process used to enrich natural uranium warheads to pierce armour plating. On impact, DU breaks into tiny particles which can be easily ingested or inhaled. Some 31,000 warheads

CANBERRA - Invoking the spectre of 11 September, the Australian government has announced a massive increase in spending over the

tralia, secure borders, stronger defence and a strong economy."

groups and media commentators. Over the next five years Australia will spend \$1.5 billion, just slightly

the same number before last year's Tampa crisis. (IPS)

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of masterminding and aiding a 14 May auicide bomb attack near lammu ir the Indian part of Kashmir, in which more than 30 people died. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has omised a "counter" or "retaliation The Indian government has two options: harsh diplomatic measure gainst Pakistan, or "limited" strikes across the border. A strong lobby in India favour military action, including artillery shelling. "limited" air strikes and narrowly-targeted commando operations to destroy communication routes close to the Line of Control that

runs through disputed Kashmir. But

the coming week.

### silent on India's counter-preparations. Both are developing new missiles. it is almost inconceivable that New India test-flew a new medium-range Delhi had no contingency plans for missile in January. Pakistan is using nuclear weapons Pakistan's elected prime minister, Nawaz Sharif expected to conduct a test-flight within was told of the plans by US President Any reason can set off a military Bill Clinton in 4 July 1999 in onfrontation between the two Washington. Sharif recognised the countries: routine army exercises "catastrophic" danger, and "said he was territorial incursions (or fear of these). against (the preparations), but worried for his life back in Pakistan". He

could uncontrollably escalate to the nuclear level The CIA's Global

### they might use such weapons to deter 1999 Kargil war. According to Bruce "unacceptable" damage, or what is "unacceptable". India says only that it Riedel, a senior White House adviser at the time, the Pakistani army then won't be the first to use nuclear mobilised its nuclear arsenal against weapons Pakistan refuses no-first-use India-without the knowledge of then Both states have enough fissile material Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. US for 25 (Pakistan) to 100 (India) officials feared India and Pakistan were heading for a deadly descent into nuclear bombs/warheads, each of which can kill up to 800,000 civilians full-scale conflict, with a danger of at one go in a large city. Both are nuclear cataclysm." Although Riedel is

# 12 FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

# "Untouchability is not only a problem of dalits"

Sixty-eight year-old Padamsingh Biswokarma has completed his Madhyama (IA Level) in Sanskrit literature and used to be a teacher in Baglung. His views on the problems faced by dalits is diffe from those of people in the business of development. Himal Khabamatrika spoke to him about the issues confronting dalits in Nepal today.

# HIMAL: How would you define dalits?

Biswokarma: (They are) economically exploited. socially oppressed, deprived of educatio politically marginalised, ostracised from the world of religion. They are outside the mainstream of the state. Before the 2020 Muluki Ain (Civil Code 1971) came into force, they were considered untouchables

# What are the major problems they face?

literacy, poverty, social oppression and expulsion from the mainstream of politics and society. We will not have effective programs for dalits from the state until they themselves are in decision-making positions. Until then we will be unable to raise dalits to the level of other groups in society.

## So how can all this be channed?

First, educated dalits should get jobs commensurate with their qualifications. They need affirmative action, reservations proportionate to the size of their population. It they cannot have affirmative action, they must be protected in other ways. Dalits are skilled in working with gold, silver, leather and iron. Their skills can be conserved by engaging them in productive activities. The goods they produce can be made tax-free to help with marketing. Mananges (the people of Manang) are good examples of how people can progress, given supportive state policies

Which is the larger problem, economic poverty or untouchability? Dalits, who make up 20 percent of the population of this country, are plagued by both. Because they are poor, it is difficult for them to get a good education and if they do manage, they find it difficult to get jobs. Then there is untouchability. Even today educated dalits cannot openly say 'I am a dalit.' Even today they have to lie about their sumames to be able to get housing in cities.

# What should be doneoput caste-related problems second and first work towards reservations, or end We need to balance the two. There was no untouchability in early times. In the Gita Krishna tells Arjun that

character is based on virtue, that your deeds should reflect your virtuousness, and that caste is determined by your deeds or karma. That is why we need to revise the scriptures relation to dalits that were added to the scriptures after the Vedas. In short, to emancipate dalits from social and religious oppression, we need to improve Hindu religion and culture. To put an end to their economic problems, dalits need to be given facilities and reservat

### Isnit there untouchability within the dalit community?

We have made it a tradition. The Upadhvavas do that with the Jaisi, the Jaisi with the Thakuri, the Thakuri to the Chettri, the Chettri to Newar, the Newar to the Gurung, the Gurung to the Magar, the Magar to the Kami, the Kami to the Sarki, the Sarki to the Damai, the Damai to the Gaine, the Gaine to the Badi, the Badi to the Pode and the Pode to the Chyame.

This is why it is important to not say that untouchability and equality are issues related only to dalits. Yes, because they are the weakest, they are the most affected. The roots of untouchability are not Vedic religion but feudal tradition and they will remain until that is erased. That is why we need to look at untouchability and caste as a problem of all not only dalits

Have you had any bad experiences because you are a dalit? I had a Jaisi-Bahun acquaintance in my village. When I was told to step down from the threshold of his house, almost felt as if I had died ... Once, on the way from Pokhara to Baglung, I met a pundit on the road. I discussed the scriptures with him. While we were taking leave from each other he asked me which bahun I was. and I said Biswokarma. After that he began to address me as timi, not tapai. I felt bad but such instances are common

# QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Democracy has become weak because you have party workers sporting chappals even as the ministers are always dressed to the nines.



echnergen 2008: Spacetime Daily, 19 May



The offering on the dishes: Emergency Man: Do I want more?! Enough sir, I'm full,

it in its two decade-long life, and creepers have taken over it. The only TU institution with the mandate to conduct research work on applied science and technology is defunct because it does not have enough money. TU allocates Rs 9.5 million annually to RECAST, but that is spent on

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALL PRESS

Recast RECAST

University's (TU) Research Centre

(RECAST) is a mockery of the

for Applied Science and Technology

institution itself. There has been no

repair or maintenance work done on

estaction AGes: The wind mill at Tribhuvan

Spacetime, 19 May

paying the 95 employees. There is no money for research. RECAST time for you to stop acting as a leader. You distribute money employees complain that TU used to provide a minimum of Rs 700,000 ever year for research in tration, unfair means and win science and technology but this year, there isn't even enough money to pay the telephone bills. "When rays of light you are expecting, and we don't have enough money to pay even if it does, it will come with for utilities, how can we be shades of darkness smeared on you expected to conduct research faces. What do you want? Wealth programs, even if we wanted to pay or leadership? Tick one. for them out of our own pockets

asks Roshani Shakya, administrative head of RECAST "Even our simple expenses are being paid for with help from outside projects." Most of the 28 research post

are empty. A few are staying afloat by working with outside projects in four areas. These include a British Embassy-funded experiment to nerate alternative fuel (oil) from the Sajeevan plant, research into the feasibility of solar dryers, the properties of Seabuckthorn juice, and a project looking into plantbased cures for cancer being carried out in coordination with the Thailand-based Asian Institute of

Technology. The rector of TU, Professor Di Premrai Pant thinks there is nothing abnormal about the fact that the research budget has been slashed at a time when TU itself is cash-strapped. "It's perhaps natural that RECAST also suffers when TL is going through a budget slump. but research work must not stop.

TU is discussing the possibilities of outside help to invest in all four research centres," says Professor D

Mohan Bikram Gyawali, executive director of RECAST. "The third instalment of funding that His Majesty's Government was supposed to give TU has been delayed, hence a delay in the allocation of a research budget,"

Money, leaders

saw Dr Pant

21 May

Bhairav Risal in Spacetime, Alactine NGo The current aim in politics, whose sole ambition is to amass wealth, is sweeping the country like a hurricane that can't be stopped. Maybe in a rich country it would b natural for the rich to rule, but in a poor country the poor cannot be ruled by leaders whose mindset is geared only towards earning more money. True leadership of a nation does not come about by actions

such as abducting parliamentarians or luring greedy ministers to Bangkok The tendency to consider oneself above law is also harmful.

You become minister and misuse public vehicles. Why should the ple consider such people as aders? You get telephone lines allotted to you in every other



esent during the prime minister's meeting with President George W Bush, an indication of the importance the US is currently giving to security in Nepal. At a time when the Maoists are increasing attacks on physical infrastructure, making it difficult to evaluate how donors' money and other assistance is being used analysts feel it would be appropriate to bring the Maoists around to a peaceful solution. The US has



Look who's talking Dhruba Hari Adhikary in Deshantar, 19 May

Embassy to learn that PM Deuba

hardware. I am not sure about how

other fellow viewers found it, but I

was tormented and distressed.

I feel that this incident

know what could have really

concerns every Nepali We must

happened at Singha Darbar that

day, what the employees in the

press department and all the prime

had thanked India for providing

weapons and other military

Last Sunday [19 May] the Tanka Prasad Acharva Memorial Prime Minister Sher Hiteshile Trust organised a day-long Deuba met the Indian Chief of Army Staff General S interaction programme on the national problems. Different ideas Padmanabhan at Singha Darbar on were tabled there, but the Thursday, 16 May. Nepal conclusion was that if firm Television covered the event on its 18:30 news bulletin with visuals of committed steps were not taken towards changing the social, Prime Minister Deuba shaking economic and political order, a hands and sitting down for talk more serious problem would with General Padmanabhan. emerge even if the Maoist crisis The meeting, and the issues were resolved some day. The discussed were what we generall organisers attempted to include anticipate when top-ranking arious points of view from officials from two countries meet different ethnic groups and regions. But what really surprised and All had the same questions: Whose country is this? Doesn't this nation pained me is the source of the information that our national belong to all? Where is equal broadcaster had to rely on. It was opportunity? There were harsh, clear that while the government touching questions. But even in owned Nepal Television shot the visuals at Singha Darbar (where NTV is also located), its source of that serious gathering, they did not talk about asking leaders to give back some of their excess (illegally information was the Indian amassed) wealth to the nation. No Embassy in Lainchaur leader volunteered to give. NTV had to rely on the press statement issued by the Indian

# More money Deshantar, 19May

Despite Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's recent visit to the US and the United Kingdom to garner support to fight the Maoist terrorists, the kind of support Nepal will receive-in terms of the weapons, as well as development assistance—will only be clear after

minister's advisers at the PMO international donor agencies and might have been doing. What well-wishers meet on 19 and 20 June (in London). might have kept the Defence It isn't yet clear either what Ministry busy that day? Issuing support will be provided by the long statements about the death in everyday clashes between the UK, at whose initiative the meeting is being held. However, Maoists and the security forces What could have prevented the there is an indication that donors such as the UK. France, the US, headquarters of the Royal Nepal Army from acknowledging an Japan, Germany, India, and China will support Nepal with modern important meeting attended by the Chief of Army Staff himself? It weaponry, other arms, military training, as well as development seems that none of our governaid. Nepal has never fought ment offices documented the meeting. ...If Singha Darbar had terrorists, so countries like India and the US sent their army provided it with information. personnel here (for assessments). NTV might not have had to rely The donors haven't decided who will provide what and how much

on material produced by a foreign embassy Possibly, this will be sorted out at The government should learn London, Prakash Sharan Mahat, from its mistakes. Otherwise it advisor to Prime Minister Deuba could just appoint the Indian and member of his US, UK Embassy to prepare all its publicity materials, and gradually entourage, says the prime minis ter's visits were positive. US hand over total governance too. Why bother about protecting our Foreign Secretary Colin Powell and National Defence Advisor sovereignty? Condoleezza Rice, were both

### HISTORY AND CUI TURF

# NEPALITERATURE

# **THE MID-COLUMN BLUES**

pewilderment, and moral outrage, at



# **Bimal Nibha**

S o a year-and-a-half after starting this column, I received some feedback on i at last, confirming to me that at least olumn, I received some feedback on it, one person does read it: Ajit Baral. "Why should I read your column." he wrote in a touch-minded email which I here paraphrase when I can read the original Nepali work? And you never say anything critical about the work you're translating: what's with all the praise for Nepali literature, all this currying of favour with writers and poets? Don't you have anything hard-hitting to say?" I wrote back timidly at first: well, um, no, I don't have many hard-hitting comments to make about Nepali literature (all my meanest observations I compressed into one Himal

Then I got defensive: "Naturally, I translate

My I-see-what-you-mean-but-can't-

rejoinders from my column's single, toughminded reader, but secretly, I started wringing my hands about what a terrible column this is. I mean, who cares about Nepali literature to begin with-other than Nepali writers and poets? Do English readers really care what Nenali writers are writing? Let's be honest here. Because it's not like Nepalis need to be reading their literature in English translation. Distraught, I asked my friends what for I was writing this column, and they out-and-out admitted that not only do they not read this column, they've never read anything I've ever written. There are moments in one's life when one realises that one's efforts are mere gnats in a storm: no one has noticed that they are there, and no one would miss them if they were to disappear. I have experienced innumerable such moments in my (short, and that is what makes it so dep ing) involvement in Negali literature All around, there is bloodshed, and I'm doing what? Translating Nepali literature into

Who knows what's happening

in the dark age of absolute monarchy and in democracy, one of my own

by MANJUSHREE THAPA

Both friends are missing one arm each You tell us now how we might wear shirts that have sleeves on both sides

CYCLE Rimal Nihha

> It's been a few days my bicycle has vanished Do you know where I might find it? It's true that my cycle is small its tires are hald they have too little air the colour is faded the stand is broken the kinetic light is faulty the bell trills softly the peddles move slowly the chain is old

the handlebars are askew the wheel is hent it has no carrier and no lock

No matter what even if it's small and defective even if it's shahhv no matter what it's like, that cycle is The weight of my body lies on its seat

The measure of my feet fills its peddles The print of my hands marks its handlebars My breath rests in each part of that cvcle

I am there In summary that cycle is my life (What kind of place is this not unknown to me, my own village

where in the bright light of midday a whole life has vanished Do you know where I might find it?) It's been a few days my bicycle has vanished Do you know where I might find it?

aken out of shallow graves. And the innocents, Nepalis who side with neither side, just got in the way. People walking to work, people buying fruit, vegetable vendors, men on the reet walking on the scalding asphalt, sweating under the noonday sun, pulling carts piled with 100 kg steel cabinets. All struggling to earn enough to buy food

for the evening meal for the hungry child, expectant wife swollen with a sixth. At first you could count the dead on the fingers of your hand, now we have exhausted the fingers many times over. The daily death toll is an-nounced on the radio as if it were cricket scores—a sixer, a century, body ounts numerically listing a grotesque match. Listening to it out here, far from the capital it seems like a farce-history repeating itself like an unstoppable tragedy. Now the deaths come in hundreds, numbing numbers that we need electronic calculators to project before our eyes. And the audiovisuals on television shows corpses piled high. Is this the Nepal we were born in, the Nepal we love so dearly?

Most of the dead are men. This is a patriarchal This is a farce, history society, so these are all repeating itself like an "breadwinners": someone's father, someone's brother. unstoppable tragedy. someone's son, nephews and

uncles. "Martyr" is a fancy word for workers who died trying to feed their families. Society demands that there be a son to carry on the family name, society demands that the son shall earn, grow up to start a family, look after his aged parents, get his sisters married, shoulder the burden of the dowry, beg before the groom's parents (having forgotten he was groom himself once) educate the younger brothers and plough the land (we still do not look approvingly at those women who take the onus of tilling the fields in the absence of their migrant husbands). So what happens to their dependants? Thousands of Nepali men killed

eans hundreds of thousands who have lost their sources of livelihood. oldiers, police, teachers, political leaders, civil servants, Maoist militia--thes all have families. Are they not pivots in a life-support system to mother, father, brother, sister wife and child? Where does one place this blood-letting amidst the sweet smelling meadows of Mustang or the crystal cool waters of the Bheri? Survival cannot overlook existence, the quintessential and breath taking beauty that surrounds us amidst the carnage. Now too amongst the concrete melee of Kathmandu, one can spy niches of the human spirit. The fervour of devotees at Bagalamukhi every Thursday morning, the flying pigeons at Krishna Mandir Square, the vermilion and yellow-powdered deities (even Comrade Prachanda has red vermilion solattered on his brow the solitary red hibiscus adorning the stone images polished to perfection by

a million supplicating fingers over the centuries. Further off, the sweating Bhimeswor Mahadev, the multiple tridents raising heir defiant spikes to the skies above Kalinchok. Have you walked through the rhododendron forests at Ghorepani in early April? A canopy of red, white and pink blossoms, the cascading waterfall at Rupse and the changing moods of mountains along the Tila. Where will all this be a few years from now when the sweetness of our nation is slowly extinguished? Where will the doves rest? ♦





Khabarpatrika article a few years ago; I have nothing much to add to that). I wrote Basically, I read Nepali literature, find some of it good, translate a few of these pieces every other week and call that a column.

only pieces that I like," I wrote, "so I only have positive things to say about the work I'm introducing. I mean, why translate a bad poem or story just to then be able to criticise it? Life is too short. I have better things to

really-be-bothered response prevented other

English. You know? Yeah. culture-shulture is important at wartime too, yada yada: I know, of course, the value of translating literature

my friend had fallen from a police shot near the statue of King Mahendra One arm had to be amputated Since then he'd required a slightly different kind of shirt a shirt with only one sleeve

But what was this? I was missing one hand Noting my confusion

do." I got quite scrappy at the end. "Do you

I just took it to make do It seems that it's possible to work with only one hand My friend and I both wore shirts

and in exuberance I tried He grew serious and said-

But I couldn't locate such a shirt in any of the shops When I said so to my friend he smiled and said-A shirt with both sleeves will do for me, Companion Look, look at my hands Oh! How peculiar Both hands were there as before A moment later in an outburst of iov I tried to take his hands in mine

my friend said-Companion don't be surprised

This is actually your hand

with sleeves on both sides That he was missing one arm made no difference at all for I had both Then came this matter, one day-Making an invocation to the masses the Prime Minister was waving his hands I too waved my hands in salutation

to raise both arms forcefully But I couldn't do this I was missing one arm I assumed it was with my friend Upon meeting him later lasked-Where's my hand

> I don't have your hand. Companion Lalso grew serious and started to frei

They're suddenly disappearing, hands



the failed promises of the recent past. Writing with a clear ethical ision, he calls not for a return to the authoritarian forms of overnment that many Nepalis ern to be wishing for these days, but for greater, and truer democracy. Both the poems below come from his collection Aagonica Ubbieko Machhe A Shirt With ONLY One Sleeve

> For my friend I needed to purchase a shirt with only one sleev At the time of the democratic movement

# **| 4** сптү

FILM Kathmandu Documentary Film Association presents People Like Us: Social Class in America, a funny and provocative look at class and race in the US. 23 May, 6PM, Rs 200, with 50 percent off for students Indigo Gallery Mike's Breakfast Naval

### EVENTS

- \* Meditation Retreat for Nepalis by the venerable Tsok-Nyi Rinpoche at the Ngesdon Osel Ling Monastery, Halchowk Danda. Seven-day silent retreat from 12-19 June with meditation, teachings in English on shamatha and viapassana meditation and Buddha dharma. Rs 1,000, including housing, food, monastery upkeep, Contact Nagariuna Institute of Exact Method, Patan, 527446; Himal Association, Patan Dhoka, 542544; Blood Bank, Pradarshani Maro, 229344; Basanta Raniitkar, 249455, chhipaus@yahoo.com; or Manjushree Thapa, mthapa@mos.com.np.
- Friends of the Bagmati aim to clean up the Bagmati river. Monthly meetings open to everyone. Email friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com for details.

## MUSIC

- 1974AD in concert 25 May, Birendra International Convention Centre, Baneswor, 2.30PM. Tickets, Rs 1.000. Rs 500. Rs 300. Rs 200. at Tik 'n' Tok. New Road and Jawalakhel; La'Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque, Pulchowk; Jatra, Thamel; all Bakery Café outlets, Dexo Music, Thamel and Kantipath; The Club, Bhat Bhateni; and at venue.
- Rockers on Parade Robin n Looza, X- arica, Albatross, Ugrakarma, Mokshya and many more perform at the Mahendra Police Club from 2PM. Tickets, Rs 125, at Tik n Tok, New Road and Saturday at Mahendra Police Club. Club Rumba Latin band, salsa food until midnight on Thursdays. Early bird discounts between
- 8-9 30PM huy one get one free Hotel Shangri-La 412999 Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526
- Beatle Nite Tribute to the late George Harrison. 12 May, 6.30PM, New Orleans Cafe, Thamel. 425736
- Sown Memory Lane Wednesday nights with Teesta. The Rox Bar at the Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234
- Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant, Thamel.

# DRINK

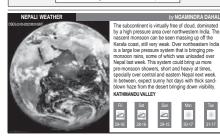
- Fridayz Music, dance and between 9PM-11PM, unlimited drinks with entrance. Men Rs 995, women Rs 495, couples Rs 1,445. Until 7 June at Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- Coming soon Fusion at Dwarika's

- Saturday brunch Buffet, free flow of beer, desserts, outdoor activities for kids below 12 and complimentary use of the swimming pools and outdoor jacuzzi. Adults Rs 1,050 plus taxes, children below 12, 50 percent off at The Café, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234 \* Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating
- and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café, Thamel. Steaks, Sangri and ESPN Food, drink, and the World Cup at K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel
- 433043 Big Barbecue Two cocktails for the price of one (Rs 250), Friday through Sunday, 4PM-8PM.
- Kilrov's of Kathmandu, Thamel, 250440 San Miguel BIG Brunch Lavish brunch buffet and free flow of San Miguel beer. Saturdays 11.30 AM-2.30 PM at The Fun Café, at Radisson Hotel. 411818
- B-B-Q & MoMo Evenings 5PM onwards at Nanglo Café & Pub, Darbar Marg. 222636
  Special Thai Authentic Cuisine at the Ban Thai Restaurant, Darbar Marg. 243271
- Buddha's 2,546<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary 108 lamas pray for peace and recite the holy Tripitak at the Boudha Stupa Mandala on 26 May. Watch from the Stupa View Restaurant and Terrace, with etarian food, clav-oven pizzas and momos, 480262 Too busy to eat lunch? Daily specials for the busy executive at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488.
- Weekend Brunch Rs 350 per head, special package available with bowling. Oriental and continen-tal lunch or dinner by the pond. 1905 Boardwalk, Kantipath. 225272
- Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510
- \* Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights, 416096

# GETAWAYS

- \* The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner, 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort. 560675
- Packages Overnight and short-stay at Dwarika's Hotel from \$99, 479488 The Teahouse Inn Combo Special package for Negalis and expatriates. Rs 700 per person on twin-sharing basis for room, breakfast, Nepali thali lunch or dinner, and swimming and jacuzzi at the
- Club Himalaya 410432 680048 Summer Splash Use of pool 15 May – 15 July, 10AM-6PM Over 18 Rs 4.000 plus tax, schoolchildren under 18, Rs 2,000 plus tax. Hotel de l'Annapurna. 221711
- Shivapuri Heights Cottage 30 minutes from Kathmandu, staff guides to monastery, peak and reserve. Rs 1,850 per person with dinner and breakfast, Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, children under five free. info@escapetonepal.com

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





YAK YETI YAK 6£.,

Plants and People of Nepal Narayan P Manandhar Timber Press, Oregon, USA/ Cambridge, UK Rs 5.750 For 30 years, with limited means, but a vast heart and engaging, scientific mind, Manandhar borso y tan, white the terms of the test hand the cogenity scheme test, industry in the test of te

ethnobotanical information is derived. The result is this brilliant book, a world-class contribution to ethnobotanical literature, and the most complete survey ever of Nepal. Limited edition, few copies in stock, order now.

> Chhetria Media: Vigar ra Vartaman Pratyoush Onta, ed Martin Chautari, Kathmandu, 2002

24 - 30 MAY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

Rs 200 This volume, a compilation of essays and case studies, explores the impact of democracy on the Nepali press, particularly outside Kathmandu. Dealing with the country as divided into develop-

ment region, the essays tackle two aspects of the evolution of the media in different parts of Nepal, first detailing briefly the history of journalism in the area and then looking at the current state of the media and the changes it has seen, especially post-democracy.

> Kimiyagar Paulo Coelho, Ritesh Thapa, trans. Walden Book House, Kathmandu, 2002 Rs 200

11AM-8.30PM 480262

A Nepali translation of the Paulo Coelho's bestselling The Alchemist: A Fable About Follow ing Your Dream. An Andalusian shepherd boy dreams of hidden treasures in Egypt and sets off o follow his vision. Along the way he meets many people, including an alchemist who teaches him about the "Soul of the World" and how to stay true to his dream and consider the fear of suffering to be worse than suffering itself.

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

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# HERITAGE

# the desolation of Lumbini in 1967, Tourism Bal Bahadur KC, ex-officio from 🖒 p1

the International Committee for the Between the largely Hindu Development of Lumbini was administrators. Buddhist leadership supposed to fund-raise and keep and Muslim locals, Lumbini Lumbini in world focus. becomes a proper cauldron of woe Kathmandu's unconcern has Then there is the donor factor. left the Committee moribund for Although the LDT has sole say over more than a decade. The United the area, since 1997 the Sacred Nations website today does not Garden has been declared a World even list the Committee and Nepal's Permanent Mission to the Heritage Site, which brings it within UN is clearly un-interested in the oversight of UNESCO. Meanwhile the Trust has tended to lean reviving the body on the Japanese Buddhist Federa So what has changed, that we tion (JBF), practically regarding it can now look forward to the as exclusive patron. proximate completion of Mayadevi In thrall of the small pickings temple structure? from the JBF and heritage support The sudden burst of activity can be attributed to the coming provided by UNESCO, the Nepali commissars have quite forgotten together of three factors: a can-do the existence of an unique inter inister supporting a new, commitgovernmental committee at the ted leadership at the LDT, which in United Nations Headquarters in New turn took the help of the profes-York, solely dedicated to Lumbini. sional architects and engin-eers of the Institute of Engineering (IOE) Started at the behest of the late Secretary General II Thant who at Pulchowk Minister for Culture and dropped famous tears on seeing



LDT Chief Omkar Prasad Gauchan on inspectio





he Mavadevi temple, pre-1992, with Ashok pillar on left



the new building. the building can be completely dismantled. The use of steel This was the site where Emperor Ashok put up the rock pillar marking girders, fabricated by the Radha the birthplace of the "Sage of the Steel Structure of Sano Thimi Sakyas" in the 3rd BC, and where leaves the building without pillars Chinese travellers Fa Hien and which allows a walkway from which Hieuen-Tsiang separately reported visitors can view the excavations, a complex of monuments in the 5th the 'marker stone', as well as the Mayadevi statue restored to its and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Archaeologists of original sanctum British India located the Ashok pillar in the 1890s. The scholar A key challenge encountered autocrat Keshar Sumshere cleared by the design team was building a the area and had by 1939 put up sturdy foundation to take the load of the heavy steel frame without the whitewashed brick box around impinging upon the archaeological integrity of the site. The architects and atop of the ancient mound

ntaining Mayadevi's statue. It is this aesthetically chaldiscovered that an evoloratory lenged white box that has for sixty trench had once been dug by vears been associated in the mind archaeologists right around the temple structure. This alreadyof people everywhere with the place of the Sakyamuni's birth. The disturbed perimeter thus provided image included the large pipal tree the space for the pylons and crosswhich grew out of one side of the block. Over time, the structure-andbeams to take the load of the steelwork. There was still the need tree standing astride the Ashokan to place deeper piles, however, and nillar took on an iconic nower by for this the architects chose to insert association - until the excavation 30-foot beams of sa/wood-choser 'disappeared' it. The LDT gave for being "organic"-into the alluvial soil. As hammering would ermission to the Japanese Buddhist Federation to 'tackle' the tree which was spreading it roots have created unacceptable vibrations, the piles were placed using into the brickwork, but in a process augers turned by expert augurthat has not been adequately explained, the entire structure was dismantled and another metre or nore of soil dug up.

Lumbini got converted from nativity site to archaeological dig, and the foundations of a 15chambered edifice were revealed. as well as the rock conglomerate 'marker stone'. The Japanese and Nepali archaeologists involved in the did have cited various historica references to prove that this stone marks the exact place of Siddhartha Gautam's birth.

# Tug-o-war

The excavation was completed in 1996, but the next step-what to do with the site-became the subject of a tug-of-war between the various national and international players Also to be contended with were the UNESCO guidelines on the conservation of heritage archaeoogical sites.

Some proposed a praver hall others a grand hollow stupa covering the entire site. Yet others wanted a building with 'Nepali' elements, and there was a sugges tion of recreating a Mauravan period shrine. In the end, an original plan put forward by the IOE

was re-evaluated and approved. The principle challenge was to find an appropriate design for the huilding itself so that the archaeo logical finds would be displayed while the Mavadevi statue was returned to its original sanctum. (The image had been removed for safekeeping when the dig becan in

1992.) The IOE team's proceeded with its work on the basis of the following decisions.

. Keshar Sumshere's box would be emulated despite its aesthetic shortcomings because the appearance of the earlier historical structure is unknown

The planned structure, with brick covering the steel. West elev · the archaeological ruins as well wallahs brought in from Patna. as the 'marker stone' would be \*Reversibility is important in exhibited by making the inside of this type of work, for some day the structure hollow. someone may come with a better · pilgrims and tourists would have idea for the heritage site. That is access to the inside of the building. why we have designed it so that this

building can be completely pulled apart with no damage to the archaeology," says Jib Raj Pokhrel. One satisfied person in Lumbini today is Basanta Bidari, I DT's Chief Archaeologist of the last 18 years, who has had the unenviable task of being custodian of an out-of-sight nativity site beneath a tin shed. Says Bidari, "This project is unique because it does several things at one go- it follows LINESCO quidelines respects Nepali sentiments and memories as well as follows

architectural conventions for such sites. Besides, the Mayadevi statue will be back where it originally was. Faced with the 26 May deadline, the IOE team worked up a storm to finalise the design and structural aspects in just a monthand-a-half.

"Even if we are unable to complete the whole building, we will have Mavadevi back in her sanctum on Buddha Purnima." savs LDT chief Gauchan, overseeing the work in his suruwal-kameei and an umbrella to protect him from the blistering sup The cost of the project is Rs 70

million. The LDT will pay Rs 30 million and the government is sunnosed to come up with the rest Gauchan says the money has been promised but not vet sanctioned.

slack," says Gauchan. You do not have to look far to see that Lumbini may yet be buffeted by the machination various factions and groupings Political changes in Kathmandu directly affects the executive leadership of the LDT. Since Sentember 2000, there have been five chairmen of LDT (i.e. ministers of culture and tourism), and sever individuals have occupied Gauchan's position of Vice Chairman since 1990. All of them might well have done a decent job had they been allowed to stay through

\*For all the pride we take in Nepa

being the birthplace of Buddha, the

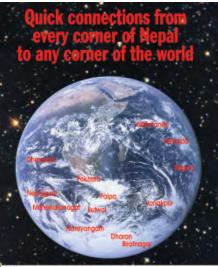
attitude towards this place has been

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the stipulated five-year term. Being made a political football is what has made Lumbini look increasingly like what one journalist described as a "religious Disneyland", rather than a spiritual site without religio-political overtones. a space that can be 'owned' by all the world

Perhaps the work underway at the nativity site, at long last, is signal of the maturing of under standing as to what Lumbini represents. If this is true, one may even begin to hope for the imple mentation for the grand visions that form part of the Lumbini Master Plan prepared by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange in 1975. Omkar Prasad Gauchan certainly, cannot wait to get

started on that "The idea is to keep working as long as one is allowed to," he says, +



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# Under My Hat by Kunda Dixit

ince we can now all aspire to have Aristocratic European Lifestyles in our new townhouses right next to the scenic brick kilns on the outskirts of Chapagaon, it is imperative that we move with the times and catch up with the rest of the world in acquiring the latest consumer electronic products to make it easier to carry out mundane domestic chores around the house. The rest of the world, as you must be aware, is taking

.6

great leaps forward in combining recent advances in wireless telephony with television on the one hand, the Internet on the second hand, video cameras on the third hand, and DVD players on the fourth hand. That makes it a total of four hands, but never mind. Let's suppose for argument's sake (if you really want to argue about it) that we do have four hands. That is still too few for Nepalis to come to grips with the challenge of leapfrogging to the Information Age.

If nothing is done, we will be the only country left on the planet still using mobile phones to just make phone calls. On a recent spring mission to the world's most wired country, Singapore, I happened to eavesdrop on two teenage operatives using their tiny Sony Ericsson T68i mobiles to secretly take pictures of the city state's newest pride and joy: the Double Durian Opera House. If your city wants to build an opera house these days, always remember that two durians are better than one. Cell phones, it seems, now

serve also as neat spy cameras. The new watchword in consumer electronics is "Convergence". Combine everything with everything else and, before you know it: you have another gadget. Take the new Sony DCR-TRV50E Network Handycam, this is a 1.55 mega pixel digital video camera, portable PC and mobile phone all rolled into one. Its unique touch screen with stylus pen allows you to surf the Internet, send and receive email wirelessly without a PC-while simultaneously shooting a video of the wedding reception of your sister-in-law's maternal aunt's cousin's nephew.

In the Fitness Gadget category, my vote for the Convergence Award goes to the Cardio Bike Recumbent

which is a cycling workout machine

integrated with a video game so that while you pedal away in the comfort of your den you can actually watch on a LCD screen a simulation of a preset choice of trails: from flat city streets with traffic, to up-and-down country roads, right to the most difficult: base camp to the Everest Summit up the classic Western Cwm route

More and more home appliances will have a combination of technologies in the near future. Here is a peek at what tomorrow may bring: 1.Remote controlled vacumm deaner. Model

Humvee CRV-88DX-Turbo, For parents who have given up on their teenage sons ever cleaning up the house, here is a clever way to get them involved in domestic chores. The Humvee can be controlled via a joystick and a PC screen which relays a wide-angle image rom a tiny camera fitted on the vacuume cleaner. The boys can have hours of fun zapping at bits of doritos that fell behind the sofa last summer, sucking up tufts of dog fur from the carpet, and carrying out cordon and search

operations on roaches in their case hideouts 2. Microwave ovens that come with cable-ready plasma television screens. Model Sanyo EMF1006MW with 21" display panel. This convection microwave oven comes with reheat, grill, defrost and recipe function that allows you to watch the China vs

Brazil match while you wait for the frozen chicken roast to thaw inside. 3 Electric razor-cum-mobile The Gillette-Nokia 9220 Exommunicator. This electric razor with flex integral system with charge control, moustache

trimmer and pivoting cutting system has a built-in mobile phone. Perfect for busy xecutives with aristocratic European lifestyles who need a quick shave while calling a

An oracle for N computerised system with a sensor

impressed by her poise and confidence. The real story behind that air of intelligent competence is even more so. There is some real buzz about the 24-year-old techie in Kathmandu's corpo-The first woman to become a Oracle Certified Professional in the country, Kamakshi is at ease

teaching the program to profes-sionals much older than herself. "I've been teaching Oracle since I was 19. so I'm guite comfortable." she says confidently.

Kamakshi and her fiancé also a computer professional, train students in various computer programs and market software. Becoming a certified Oracle professional, in particular, is a tough and expensive process. Kamakshi's training institute Microhard has created a portal where students can access 40,000 potential exam questions. "If they score a hundred percent on our tests, that means they'll probably

NEPALI SOCIETY

o meet Kamakshi Rai

casually, a reporter is

rate circles

get 75 or 80 percent on the real one-and that's what you need to pass. It's hard," she says. She can teach, but levelheaded Kamakshi says selling software is a different challenge altogether. She recently set up Microhard, a franchise of an American software development and training institute "You have to deal with decision makers, managers, administrators, nontechnical people who don't have a

clue. It's pretty demanding." competent as she explains to

marketing the software two months computers, and the other a gender ago, the results have been consultant whose computer literacy encouraging. "Many companies use swipe cards, but that could give rise to proxy entries. This actually is restricted to email and Internet Kamakshi's long-term goal is to set up a software development tells you whether an employee is in centre and get into e-marketing. or out of the office," says Kamakshi. "The economy can't sustain that Kathmandu Guest House is their first client, and companies such as now, but we definitely plan to promote it in future as a business Toyota, Soaltee, and Shangri La solution." Even the Nepal Tourism are also showing interest. Board, which needs all the help it In school in Dehradun her can get, has approached her career counsellor saw sparks fly

Perhaps between them, some when Kamakshi was anywhere near tourists can be lured back here. . a computer and suggested she pursue further studies in IT. Kamakshi did, but also worked at an arts degree just in case. It couldn't

hurt to be well-rounded. But anyone who knew her even at 18, when she was a replacement executive and student representation tive at the Tata Unisys in Siliguri, couldn't believe she'd make he career in any other field. This was followed by a three and-a-half year stint at World Distribution Nepal in Kathmandu, where she taught students Oracle and helped create hospital management systems for Norvic. Apollo, and the Nepal

Medical At work, she's convincing and College, "I'm client, or need to quickly happy my call a client while having a close potential clients how Biometrics, a parents Want to fly to Singapore? Start by first driving around Kathmandu Join the Surya Lights Treasure Hunt and win a trip for two to Singapore\* La bet the compactors with Notis 6050 Call changes and Tisset setther 1760.1 APT. To

200) it's the day Kethmanda city backles up for the Serve Lights Protects Rust. Cars will be agged off from Rotal Baalter Crows Flass and will go as a tarke charged bast. To join the transce trail t far entry forms in severapers, estacted extlets or log cate our estatis reer transmitters, con.mp ses tupod and be propared to give deptain Book a run dar his treasure

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TREASURE

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# encouraged me," smiles Kamaksh to identify people by their finger-prints, works, Since they began "After all, one is a retired army officer without a clue about