



EXCLUSIVE

Royal soundbites

(Excerpts from an unofficial translation of King Gyanendrais interview with Nepal Televisionis Durga Nath Sharma on 5 June.)



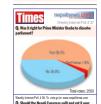
- . When we came to the throne it was an unexpected and unimaginable situation...I couldn't have ever imagined things would turn out that way. The biggest and most encouraging thing was that we were able to face the challenge with the people's support. That was most important.

 Nepalis I have met have told me that
- those responsible for making democracy flourish are not playing the role they should be. And until that happens, the benefits democracy cannot bring peace CK Lal p2
- and security to the citizens.

 Past imperfect, future uncertain Why look at elections negatively? I feel the government, political parties, different classes of society, have to look at it as a positive thing, and prepare for free elections on the specified dates.
- The continuity of the institution of monarchy rests on the faith trust and respect of the Nepali people.
- Those who cannot deliver (develor) ment) should not blame the system.
- Our peace-loving country today is caught in a spiral of violence. If all sides are committed to the well-being of the nation and the people, we believe a solution can emerge from an approach compatible with the constitution.
- . I want to tell the Nepali people: Live as Nepalis, he proud to be Nepalis, Let good. This nation will not ask you to make sacrifices, you have to step forward to do so. That is my message

More promises

The government told donors Thursday it had come out with an "immediate action plan" to get its reform drive started. The plan contains a list of promises the government says it will fulfil. One donor told the government: "We've heard all this before, what is the guarantee that you will do it this time?" The pledges come from a caretaker government that does not even have a finance minister. All eyes are now on the 2002/03 annual budget, which will be announced as an ordinance in mid-July.



from the political disarray in Kathmandu. And they seem to be using the time to re-strategise while waiting for the Congress's internal crisis to play itself out, and perhaps prepare for what Baburam Bhattarai calls their "decisive

avenge the massive defeat in Khara in which the army says at least 200 guerrillas were killed. Then, there is the need to carry out something spectacular near Kathmandu to force the government to give up its surrender-before-talks stance. It has become pretty clear to the Maoists that overrunning an army garrison in the far-west does not make the powers-that-he in Kathmandu sit up and take notice. Security sources tell us that captured

Maoists have been speaking of preparations underway for major attacks on military or infrastructure targets. The shootout in Changu Narayan on Tuesday in which six alleged Maoists were killed was one of the most serious skirmishes inside the Valley so far Reports from the hinterland confirm that there is assembly-line manufacture of improvised explosives, and massive forced recruitment from every family of one young man or woman. Thousands of boys and girls have fled to the towns and Kathmandu in the past month.

The Maoists appear to have decided that the time is ripe for their "war ki par" (do or die) moment. Baburam Bhattarai himself hints as much in his interview with the Maoist paper Jana Awaj on 9 April, where he said: "It is likely that the decisive leap forward can be taken in the next few months?

One contributing factor to this is the political infighting, which is coming to a head, and the polarisation among parliamentary parties. Mao Zedong said hit the enemy when it is in a crisis." and

PUSKAR GAUTAM

They need a hig push at this time to

has re-opened back channels with the track strategy, have kept the door to negotiations open. Prachanda's last statement on May Day, hinting at has come out looking hardline. And although Britain, the United States and India have supported the government's

secret talks. The Maoists also face increasing internal pressures. Hardliners in the military wing are impatient, and ethnic militant allies like the Khumbuwan Mukti Morcha have split over whether or not to stay with the Maoists. The militia is feeling the heat from the security forces, and also losing local support due to its extortion, food looting and forced recruitment. All this could indicate that the Maoists have

Mulvankan editor Shvam Shrestha savs this actually presents an opportunity for peace, and that the run-up to the elections could be when the Maoists and the government might reach a compromise. Hi four-step peace plan goes like this:

- Lift the emergency;
- Declare a ceasefire to provide space for political activity and let the economy

line. It is conceivable that the Maoists will wait to make one last attempt to stop the escalation of the conflict to a dramatic new level. The Koirala faction of the Congress Maoists, and the Maoists, in a classic two negotiations, was one of the most conciliatory he has ever made. But by repeatedly rebuffing these offers, Deuba's government stance, the Europeans now seem to think there is no reason why there shouldn't be

decided that it is now or never

- 3 Start the process of dialogue for socio economic reforms and lasting peace; and Have an all-party caretaker gov
- oversee elections, in which the Maoists may also participate. These actions may bring the Maois the political process," Shrestha told us. "Otherwise the elections may not mean

anything." For their part, the Maoists seem convinced that the government will not willingly create these conditions, and are therefore consolidating their forces for an offensive

The Manists were considerably encouraged by the ease with which they razed the garrison in Gam, and may have figured that they are now ready for conventional battles against the army. However, the defeat at Khara two weeks ago proved that the army's night-time air support and the quality of command can easily tip the balance against them.

The Maoists may feel that they have reached the "Strategic Balance" phase of their struggle. In their analysis, the Shining Path and the Colombian revolutions failed because they let Strategic Balance drag on for too long. In Nepal, the Maoists think a quick push when the state is vulnerable will take them to victory. But they don't seem to have reckoned with some other factors.

The security forces are now banking on superior intelligence, and have also launched a psy-war campaign with posters, pamphlets, television programmes and even an exhibition of captured Maoist artefacts at Tundikhel. The idea is to portray the Maoists as antipeople and unpatriotic. And India is the wild card. The Maoists know that their big push will not be successful if the Indians continue their crackdown on their cadre in India.

Nepal is now polarised between the revolutionaries and the reactionaries, and both could invite outside interference. But Nepalis have a third choice: side with forces of democracy, and press for progressive reforms.

Nenali Times: What is the Canadian position on future development assistance to Nepal in view of the current

Peter Sutherland: Canada remains committed to assisting the government and the people of Nepal in their efforts to reduce poverty. We have been development partners for over 30 years and intend to continue to support Nepali efforts towards equitable and sustainable development. In this difficult environment, where the security of the women and men working with Canadian projects is our primary concern, we are actively adjusting our programming and approaches so that they remain effective. We are finding that the programs which have been able to strengthen communities are the most resilient in the current insecure environment

Have your priorities for aid changed over the years?

During the 1970s and 80s, Canadian development assistance successfully supported the opening up of Nepal's remote areas by sharing Canadian technology and approaches to rural access—particularly in the aviation sector. We then moved into a period when CIDA's aid program focused on water and energy resource management through central government institutional development. In the 1990s Canada's aid prograi focused more on community-based development. The current CIDA program aims to reduce poverty and promote peace by facilitating effective implementation of Nepal's devolution process.

There have been failures like the K-BIRD project, but there have also been successes like your technical assistance for the development of civil aviation and hydropower. Have these lessons been incorporated into future plans?

Like some other integrated rural development projects in Nepal, the K-BIRD project suffered from poor co-ordination between line agencies at the district level and a lack of genuine participation in planning and implementation of the project by the people affected. Learning lessons from this and other more successful community-based initiatives in Nepal, CIDA has been supporting the institutional strengthening of civil society

illion. Canadian ambassador to pal, Peter Sutherland, speaks to Nepali Times of aid priorities, and Nepal's capacity to use assistance effectively.

rnanisations as well as nartnershins hetween civil society government and the private sector to improve access to basic ervices and increase productive capacities. We are happy with the results, but more importantly, we see around us strengthened Nepali institutions within local and central government as well as civil society. It is with these partners that we will continue to support poverty reduction and efforts towards equitable and sustainable development.

What is your assessment of the government's present ability to use foreign assistance effectively?

There is some for the government to increase its shility to effectively and efficiently use foreign assistance. It needs to address urgently issues of governance such as corruption, civil service reform and broad based participation at the grass roots level. The present political instability and insurgency have further constrained the government's ability to expedite development in a balanced manner. In my view, the govern-ment has to devolve more authority and resources to local bodies and communities and foster partnerships with civil society and the private sector in order to improve service delivery and better handle conflict at the local level.

What is your government is views on the current conflict in Nepal?

Canadians are deeply saddened by this conflict which has claimed the lives of so many Nepalis. We condemn the methods that the insurgents have resorted to, particularly the destruction of vital infrastructure, extortion, torture and executions. Innocent civilians have been caught in the middle of this conflict. In addition to the many who have been killed or injured, hundreds of others have been displaced by the conflict. We urge the Maoists to renounce violence, lay down their arms and return to the negotiating table. Canada supports the democratically-elected government of Nepal in its efforts to protect its citizens and to bring about a return to peace and order in the country. However, we are also concerned about the increasing number of human rights abuse allegations directed at members of the Nepali security forces in connection with such anti-insurgent activities. Nepal has found itself being scapegoated as a hotbed of intelligence

For a geographically challenged country like

Nepal, there is really no other way.

Devolution, not revolution

eparated at birth, have demonised

The epicentre of the India-Pakistan

each other for the past 50 years of

relations have been tense.



else can slowly fall into place. But with so much anger and bad blood, we can no independence. They have fought three longer rely on just good sense wars, and even in times of relative peace, to prevail, and only trust that

the leaders of the two sides will not think the unthinkable. It is no coincidence that India-Pakistan tensions reach breaking point each time there is a domestic crisis. The present war-mongering comes amidst ectarian violence in Gujarat where some 1.000 people have been killed in pogroms

With the war in Afghanistan winding down, there is a real danger of the conflic drifting eastwards. At no time since the 1971 war have tensions been so high. Two years ago when a fierce battle erupted in Kargil, it was the first-ever conflict between nuclear-armed nations in world history

ALMS RACE

that up to 12 million people could be killed in a nuclear exchange between the two countries. There is a need to deescalate, and immediately,

To resolve Kashmir, we have to ask what do the Kashmiris themselves want? Most there are fed up with the war, fed up with human rights abuses by Indian security forces and foreign militants infiltration from across the Line of Control. A moderate and democratic Pakistan is in everyone's interest: in President General Pervez Musharraf's interest, and in Prime Ministe Atal Rehari Vainavee's. If that is their common goal, there is every reason for the two to work together, and the general needs to be given political space to de-Talehanise Pakistan

The first immediate step for both sides is to tone down the rhetoric and stop media

activities, and has suffered because these two neighbours haven't been able to get along. As Chair of SAARC, Nepal should he taking a lead in knocking the two heads together, but we have our own problems. must know that the rest of the world is And it is time the region looked beyond laughing at them. These two insecure nations want the world to take them seriously just because they have



Past imperfect, future uncertain

the girl of his choice. Unencumbered by invariably generates, he didn't hesitate in translating his impulses into action. Hi methods were in a way "fundamentalist", but his goals were quite modern. He aspired to do in decades what other countries had taken centuries to accomplish. Rather than follow the Divine Counsel of Prithvi Narayan Shah, King Mahendra chose to follow the isolationist path of another illustrious

ancestor—Jung Bahadur Kunwar-Rana. Perhaps it is no coincidence that King Mahendra began his direct rule after the 1960 coup by revising the civil code that Jung Bahadur had framed, which was itself modelled after the Napoleonic Code that Jung saw in France. Apart from a promise to untouchability, there isn't much in King Mahendra's Muluki Ain that can be

King Mahendra's faithful courtiers extolled the virtues of the divine king as outlined by Kautilya in his Arthashastra, and missed seeing the futility of discovering a new utopia in nostalgia for an imagined past. Fortunately for King Mahendra, there was a school of thought in the United States at that time which believed Will King Gyanendra be a rational king or an emotional ruler?

that controlled dictatorship was preferable to the pitfalls of communism in emerging Third World democracies

Those were the days when political scientists at the Center for International Studies at MIT were fashioning the template of the Land and Climate Theory of governance to spreading in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It wasn't surprising that Americans picked up even the salaries of government employees in the wake of the overthrow of parliamentary democracy. King Mahendra's direct rule was bankrolled by greenbacks.

The region's geopolitical environment had changed by the time King Birendra ascended to the throne in 1972. After the setbacks in Vietnam the Americans were on the verse of withdrawing from world hot spots. The Non Aligned Movement was running out of steam as countries like Egypt and India drifted into the Soviet camp. To continue cautiously with that King Birendra had, and conservatism became the defining feature of his rule. Let's face it: King Birendra was a likeable person

and a good king. But it is no disrespect to his memory to say that he was not cut out to be a great ruler

Monarchs are compared to their successors and predecessors. King Mahendra was often measured unfavourably against his democratic father. The administrative reign of King Birendra was often unkindly juxtaposed with the paternalistic rule of the pioneer of the Panchayat. The intention of those who extol the democratic virtues of the late king may be to create an ideal for the present ruler to live up to. But history can't be a casualty to these vorthy exercises. King Birendra respected the status quo, and when changes had to be made, he ensured that they were orderly and gradual Call him constitutionalist if you will, but he

It was due to King Birendra's extrem autiousness that the referendum he declared turned out to be an instrument intended to buy time for the Panchayat regime. Had he en more accommodating, BP Koirala wouldn't have died a broken man, with his life's mission of restoring democracy not even partially fulfilled. It took a People's Movement ten years later to force King Birendra to bestow sovereignty upon his people. As it turned out, his own son, the crown prince, lacked the patience to wait for a favourable decision from his parents. King Birendra shines like a beacon today partly because of the post-1990 political leadership that squandered the freedom he ushered in.

nuclear bombs. The world is getting

It is time India and Pakistan redefined security. The real security threat for both

countries does not come from each other's

territory, but from the poverty and inequal-

India-Pakistan conflagration. It will be a

coup de grace for our tourism industry.

Negal has a lot to lose in case of an

sands of Nepalis are deployed on the

front hundreds of thousands of Nepalis work

n Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana—which will

be Ground Zero in case of war. And if the war goes nuclear after August then we will

be downwind from radioactive fallout.

pretty sick of them crying wolf.

Just when King Gyanendra is about to come out of the traditional period of mourning, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has brought about a virtual political paralysis by dissolving parliament. King Gyanendra is nov forced to weigh his options and act. A return to Mahendra-style fundamentalism is not possible because democracy has by now struck rs deep in the Nepali soil. The people may have rejected politicians for the moment. but politics continues to rule their hearts. With the insurgency raging in the country side, conservatism of the doing-things-thedone-way can't be the escape route either. King Gyanendra has the task of finding a way forward, taking into account these hard

I didn't take notes when I was granted an

clean and seems to show that he

country at heart. He was forced to

set up a "iumbo cabinet" to protect

himself from being overthrown. But

and has surrounded himself with the

allegations that Deuba is pro-royal

Marrying into an elite family is not

his fault. His ideology, as far as I

know, has no link to his marriage

question of who is the best in a

democrats. Deuba is the prime

ister and above the party

leader, and he must see the

national interest above party

interest. The extension of the

so he should have had an open

debate in house before deciding.

On the other hand. Koirala should

have debated the issue first in the

narty central committee. Again, he

took a unilateral decision to expel

people punish a leader elected by

racy in Nepal is in danger. But it is

because of dictators like Deuba and

millions of Nepalis? Yes, democ-

Deuba from the party without

consultations. How can three

mediocre pile.

Deuba is no saint, but it is now a

Neither Deuba nor Koirala are

he lacks ideological steadfast

most corrupt ministers. The

has the long-term interest of the

audience with King Gyanendra some months ago. But I remember coming out of Nirmal Niwas with the distinct impression that the king had already made up his mind about what he intended to do. His purpose in meeting people like us was not to hear what we had to say, but to share his vision of the

Given the mess we are in at present, the king will be hailed if he were to take bold and ssive steps to strengthen the fruits of the People's Movement Then the threat that Deuba has brought to face democracy can turn

There are enormous risks involved in tell, but one thing is certain: there is no more for any kind of extremism in this politically by definition, has to be a judicious mix of the wisdom of contemplation and the power of emotion. The responsibility of a true leader is to resolve the conflicts and manage the contradictions inherent in any system.

future. We were his sounding boards.

out to be an opportunity. democratic reversal. Will King Gyanendra be a rational king or an emotional ruler? Time will charged atmosphere. A constitutional monarch

Taxing power and responsibilities should

be based on the size and scope of each level of government. The Planning Commission and the Monitoring Body can help in this regard. Any disputes among the three layers of governments about power and responsibilities can be settled by the Supreme Court. current constitutional provisions dealing

and the members of the executive branch

(the cabinet)

· Give the central authority (eg, the Lowe and Upper Houses based on two-thirds majority) the complete power to take over regional and local governments in case of a grave emergency situation, such as local and/or regional insurgency that threatens

national security The regional government should not be allowed to raise armed forces. It may be delegated some policing role.

 The regional legislative body should not pass laws that contradict national laws. Any disputes must be settled in the

A parallel judiciary system, which is not discussed here, needs to be worked on eventually to fit the proposed institutional mechanism. A constitutional provision is needed to devolve power to the regional government and reduce the functionality of the district-level entity in order to avoid and reduce duplication, conflicts, and the

expenses of coordination. Unlike the republic demanded by the

political system encourages electoral participation and promotes accountability And, under this system, the constitutional monarchy is actually strengthened. Strong regional governments would reduce the impact of national-level crises on ongoing development efforts outside the Valley much the same way as impeachment hearings in the United States did not impede the business of state level governments. Similarly, the national crises in New Delhi engross national legislators, but state governments move on with their economic

growth and development plans. The regional jurisdiction is much better equipped to fight for the rights and responsibilities of the fifteen or so districts within each district/ regional assembly. Under the current system, political bosses tend to take projects to their constituencies, often in eastern Nepal, and many weak districts in western Nepal get left out.

Maoists, the proposed decentralised

The central government will also be more efficient in dealing with five regional governments rather than a host of highly neterogeneous and fragmented district units. In addition, the provision of a direct voting mechanism ensures accountability, and puts into place checks and balances Five regional governments in a geographi cally challenged country like Nepal will work, especially in the context of growing regional sentiments vis-à-vis the centre of

wer, Kathmandu

Voters may vote for a party and its candidates at the national level on the basi of issues of national importance such as SAARC and SAFTA, immigration policy, trade with India, water resources, national security, discrimination against dalits and women, child labour, girl trafficking, information technology, income tax, and environmental damages and policies. At the same time, they may choose to be totally apolitical in the selection of their local. village-level leaders, and consider only their ability to look after local needs and issues such as law and order, sanitation, property raxes, health

Similarly, regional level voting preferences may be based on completel different issues, such as the nature of the regional universities, exploitation of water resources, small hydro power, tourism, sales tax, property tax, business tax, emission standards, public school systems or healthcare Federalism and political decentralisation would also help achieve equity across different regions

within a country. It is likely that such a proposal would fall within the intersecting domain of negotiation of the political forces compe ing currently: the government and the Maoists. It may even lure the rebels back to the negotiating table. Luckily, Nepal does not suffer from a separatist movement as in

democratic Nepal have mostly emanated from economic deprivation, regional disparities, and a sense of powerlessness. A well-articulated democratic regional structure of self-reliance will move the country towards a true form of political decentralisation process and may preemp any ethnically motivated dissent that may

Sri Lanka. Conflicts and dissension in

The north-south regional structure as envisioned by the late King Birendra will perfectly map into the proposed plans. Paharis and madhesis from various district of the region will have to work together for a common cause to develop their regions in areas of common interests such as feeder roads, schools, university, hospitals, taxes, agriculture stations, technical education,

ectricity, irrigation, and water resources People of the tarai will benefit from water resources coming down from the north, and will also enjoy tourism opportu niries Ar the same time, the hill people wil be linked to industrial activities that are likely to take place in the plains. The bottom line is to empower the people s that they can chart their own destiny.

(Alak K Bohara is professor of economic at the University of New Mexico, USA and earned his Ph D at the University of Colorado in Boulder)

Kunda Dixit must be a hell of a

character to be writing the

don't understand one bit of

what he says. There are

therefore, two possibiliti

a jenny ass, or vice versa.

reading such incoherent

popular and nonpareil colur

Under My Hat, Ironic though, I

either he is a genius and I am

ving lived in the US for

blubber. This year when I visit

my home for Tihar I would be

honoured if Kunda could spare

Washington DC, USA

date, never had the privilege of

several years. I have, to this

LETTERS

vertiginous speed. I can see our

again by politicians, insurgents.

news in a sensationalistic and

aggressive way, only generates

either more violence or complete

insensitivity in the long run. The

little voveur we all have inside (no

only Nepalis) can turn very soon to

indifferent and it is mainly from the

media that he gets his nourishment.

others as well) to see a picture of the

pecause there I can realise and feel

image of the tragedy itself normally

the magnitude of the loss. The

persons involved in a tragedy, when

It moves me more (and I believe

be a monster or be completely

media and civil society. Presenting

In your editorial ("Voyeurs," #90) you strongly criticised Nepal Television and its viewers for converting the insurgency conflict as a "spectator sport" and not respecting the dignity of the dead. This was reinforced by CK Lal in ("Amusing ourselves to death," #91). That is why I am baffled by the fact that you published right alongside a corpses in a trench. There are either conflicting interests or lack of clarity on how to present news or move the public in the present

It is very painful for me to see ving the steps of



gruesome event. That is, if we haven't got insensitised by watchin

too many of them. Those of us involved in media (or in our own voveurism) have only to think for one moment about how we would feel if the body in the news is our mother, father, brother sister, daughter, son, or friend to understand the pain, grief and anger such exhibition would

Karin Eichelkraut, Patan

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL In parliamentary democracy it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to seek dissolution of the elected chamber and call for elections, and (except in exceptional circumstances) the constitu tional monarch is expected to agree ("Who's the boss?" by Puskar Bhusal, #96). The 1994 intervention by the Supreme Court, setting aside the dissolution sought by PM Manmohan Adhikari, and accepted by the late King Birendra, may be debated for its merits and demerits but it set the had precedent of interjecting legal mediation in hasically political matters. It contributed to further weakening

the post of Prime Minister, and

bred irresponsibility by encourage take to the Courts that which should Parliament and the "Kinn-in-Parliament". No constitution is perfect, and neither is the 1990 Constitution of Nepal. Except in very clear cases of the breach of the law it is best to leave the mistakes and adjustments of the parliamentary process to the political sphere. Judges must not

develop into political headmasters Mithun Jung, Naxal The issue of whether or not the country can bear an untimely #96) can be debated forever. But the fact is that the constitution gives the prime minister the Prasad Knirala should reflect upon his past: under what circumstances did he dissolve the House of Representatives in 1995? What would he do if it were he who was expelled from the party? Koirala member of the party, and his actions have imperilled the party and the nation Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is a politician

too, but at least he is relatively

Hari Pokharel, Taiwar

 I am saddened and disappointed by the dirty game played by Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala. He doesn't seem to care that the Manists are enreading across the country, he doesn't care what the Nepali people want: all he wants is power and he is out to get it by hook or crook. At least this time Deuba was doing something to crush the Maoists. He called for dialogue, which didn't work, Koirala is lealous of Deuba because he is naining nonularity. That is why he BP Bastakoti, UK should think about his country and not just about himself.

Basu Shrestha, USA Hats off to Kunda Dixit ("One. year later", #96) for giving us balanced news. Yes, the roles of the king and the prime minister should he like that of nang ra masu which I believe both King Gyanendra and Prime Minister Deuba can be. I wish Deuba all the best in the coming election and believe that we have a brighter future in King Gyanendra (and Prime Minister Douba) and that they can lead us out of the like His Maiesty's no-nonsense

Sameer Rana, Wisconsin. USA

hoever we may blame for the crisi

of democracy in Nepal, we have to

agree that all Nepalis are in this

together. The other point most would

accept, one that is the source of many of

Nepal's current problems, is that political

and economic power is concentrated in

the capital. A federal system of govern-

Kathmandu's over-importance, its pampered class and its unconcern are

outside the Valley, and the Maoists have

sentiment. The government, instead of only

nursuing a military solution, must start

thinking of a three-pronged strategy that includes security, economic development, and political change.

On the political front a federal

mechanism would preserve the constitu-

democracy, and it would not require any

changes in our administratively-defined

geographic units such as village councils.

with the monarchy, and legislative,

sibility would remain intact. Other

changes would be required in the

constitution, including:

assembly members.

district units and development regions. The

executive and judicial power and respon-

• Introduce five regional assemblies. Two

from each district within the region would

determine the size of the assemblies. The

members of the village assemblies would

elect the governor, avoiding a conflict of

· The governor appoints a district officer

for each district to coordinate developmen

efforts, but the district-level entity will not

The governors pick experts who are not

conflict of interest between the lawmakers

members of the assembly to form the

cabinet. This ensures that there is no

have the authority to levy taxes

number of ward representatives

Reduce the size of VDCs and the

issioner—a career civil servant—

interest between the governor and the

or three directly elected representatives

tional monarchy and strengthen multiparty

succeeded in taking advantage of that

ment to devolve power across Nepal

would be an essential first sten in

resented by many millions of Nepalis

resolving the present crisis.



it again. The nation is in the midst of a crisis in every imaginable way and its so-called leaders are busy in their utterly disgusting power struggle. I have never been a great fan of Nepali politics but I have never hated it as much as I do now either. I have seen the royal massacre, the Manhadi's opportun ism and dozens of Nepali deaths being reduced to mere statistics, but there is a limit. Lat least. deserve to be spared of worldwid humiliation because of this ridiculous clash of egos. Give me a break. I just want no news about Nepal for a month. Is that asking

Sajju Khatiwada, via email The prime minister is a member of the ruling party and

method the policies and programs of the party for the benefit of the people and the country. Here, the word "benefit" is used in its aesthetic sense. Regarding the issue of extending the state of emergency vis-a-vis the tussle between Deuba and Koirala, did Deuba register the proposal to extend the state of emergency without the knowledge and consent of his party? Just one uestion to Premier Deuba: Shouldn't he have conveyed his justification to the people and the nation through national TV, radio. and the print media on the morning of 23 May? Every action hindsight coverup. The Manists

the greed for foreign funds to

RUMOUR MONGERS

combat "terrorism". The call for the Maoists to "surrender" their arms does not make sense, since surrendering arms means surrender ing. Politics in Nepal is like trying Stadium: it just doesn't work except

G Buddhiman, by email

HEART-TOUCHING I was touched by Megh Ranjani Rai's "Midnight memoirs" (#95). It saddened me and shook me. Being away from home is hard. Yet, knowing that I have a dream to follow, and the knowledge and skills that I acquire here will make me resourceful to my motherland is what gives me energy to move ahead. But the news from Nepal is so gloomy and frustrating. We don't want to lose the hope that one day soon peace and happiness will be restored and our heautiful homeland will bloom with the glory of harmony and prosperity. Thanks to Megh Ranjani Rai for her heart-

Palden Lama, Australia

In response to Manjushree Thapa's column blues." #95) I want to first extend a note of appreciation for

the consistent efforts she has made to make Nepali poems accessible to an English reading public (When Nepali literature ever the subject of conversation in postcolonial comparative literature circles?). and second to reinstate the point she makes too subtly: translation is never a neutral act of writing or

In the 6-14 June edition of Nepali Times Kanak Dixit ("The Valley of Halla " #46) cited the last six lines of Bhupi Sherchan's epic poem "This is a country of hearsa and rumour" to provoke a critique regarding the proliferation and emination of rumours and conspiracy theories in the wake o the royal family killings Divit traced the circulation of rumour to the "mediocrity" of the Nepali

In what I consider to be a distinctly political move (and one that I happen to agree with entirely Thapa provided the Times with a complete translation of Sherchan's oem, thereby allowing us to read the last six lines in the context of the rest of the poem. She thus evealed Sherchan's position on rumour to be very different from the one implied by Dixit.

Rumour here was not being portraved as the reflection of a vacant, parochial, extraneous Nepali psyche (Dixit's version), but rather the consequence and defining feature of the losses and contradictions inherent in modernity. So let it not be said again that Thana's translations or translations in general, are not used or interpreted through multiple political registers that are direct commentaries on the state of current politics. Furthermore, let the writer he assured that she has more than one curious reader

visiting her columns. And this one

I have a limited knowledge of

inated by the works of Bhup

Sherchan and the translations of

Joshi (cca 1985) Kunda Divit (cca

Maniushree Thana. A friend of

mine (a white, male blue-collar

just read me Manjushree

encouragement?

(#95) in its entirety over the

phone. Do you need any more

Nirmal Niroula, University

of Kentucky, Lexington, USA

worker) was in Nepal recently and

Nepali literature, but over the

years. I have read and been

1978), and recently by

Sepideh Bajracharya

Cambridge, USA

is grateful for the effort.

some time and explain some of his columns to me. Dr Govinda Luitel,

CORRECTION

In "The war in numbers" (page , #96) please disregard the three extra zeros in the second sentence which should read: 'According to the human rights organisation INSEC 2,883 Venalis have died in clashes between security forces and the Maoists during the country's six month insurgency." The error is

regretted. -Ed

Options are limited for people whose kidneys fail in Nepal. There are few dialysis facilities here, the law on organ transplants is vague, and there is said to be a dangerous, illegal trade in kidneys.

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

year ago, Jeet Bahadur in was like many young Jepalis, living and working far from home. The 25-year-old sis, is expensive and traumatic, put in long hours at a gas station especially for underprivileged in Saudi Arabia to send money back to his family in Dhania in the social support network. Jeet insurgency-hit district of Baglung. makes the eight-hour journey Jeet had been feeling out of sorts for some time, always fatigued and nauseated. When he started having to take bathroom breaks constantly and realised he was rapidly losing weight, Jeet finally went to a doctor and was told that his kidneys were the normal Rs 20,000 or so per failing fast. By the time he got home, Jeet's facility in the country is even

illness had progressed to end-stage renal disease (ESRD), a result of Koirala Memorial Cancer chronic renal insufficiency. In lay Hospital in Dharan language, his kidneys had been Dhana Lama is in some ways deteriorating for some years and had luckier. Dhana, now 30, also by then pretty much stopped suffers from ESRD and has been functioning and were unable to on haemodialysis for the last excrete toxins, which was why Jeet was experiencing such a multitude three years. Kathmandu-based Dhana pays for his treatment with of symptoms. the help of donations from people Jeet soon realised that this is one of the worst diseases a poor person can have in Nepal. To live even a semblance of a normal life

who read about him in the papers occasionally. Dhana, who says he has always been very independent. is from a lower-middle class he either had to find a donor and amily and lives in a three-room have a kidney transplant, or have house with his father, a brother his blood drained, purified and with a drug problem and an pumped back in two three-hour ageing aunt. He managed to finish essions every week. A transplant his ISc from the Nepal Science would be cheaper in the long run, Campus and was working towards a BSc from Tri-chandra College, if leet could first find a donor and then spend at least Rs 1 million funding his education by doing for the entire procedure, after odd iobs-sometimes he was a which he'd have to take expensive computer technician, at other drugs all his life. times a dve master like his But transplants aren't really father-when his kidneys started

an option in Nepal: the law is to fail three years ago. vague, and even if one of the few Today, Dhana has still not trained professionals who can found a donor and the dialysis perform the procedure wants to machine is his only link to life

take the risk, a strong mafia is said to control the kidney trade, which the law forces underground.

started have already died. I'm The alternative, haemodialybravely. Motivated by his people and those without a strong struggles, Dhana has become from Baglung to the capital twice raise awareness about renal a week. Since there is no one to disease and what can be done take care of him here and he must arrange everything, from food and other natients he met at Bir Hospital started a non-profit accommodation to medication, by himself, his costs are higher than month. The only other dialysis Dhana's never-say-die farther away for Jeet, at the BP attitude is perhaps one of the

reasons he has received so much media attention. Unfortunately, the media usually fails to see what this dying man is really fighting for. A three-hour dialysis session at one of the three functioning machines at Bir Hospital costs Rs 250. Patients need the procedure twice a week-three times, if you follow international therapeutic norms-and each time a new set of apparatus is required, including artificial kidneys, pipes and syringes to pull and transport blood, saline water, as well as buckets. Add to this the costs of the expensive imported medication the patient needs, and the monthly medical expenses of a person with renal failure are as much as Rs 20,000

for someone like him truly hard isn't just the burden of having to treat an expensive disease, but also the sometimes unprofessional attitude of the nurses and even the doctors. When Dhana complained about how rude the nurses some-

forever. "All the other people who were undergoing dialysis when I quite a survivor," he says, smiling actively involved in helping others like himself, as well as trying to about it. This year he along with called the Nepal Kidney Patients Association, which is trying to set up a network of ESRD patients.

times were at the Bir Hospital in an loss, we have not stopped interview with a local newspaper, the medical staff there refused to treat him when he returned. "We know that we are getting treatment at a very cheap rate but the nurses and doctors sometimes act as though our lives mean nothing, as if they are doing us a favour," says Dhana, recalling how a renowned surgeon came up to him after the interview and called him a threat to Dhana says that what makes life the survival of the hospital.

more likely that the entire region must suffer when the enemies posture and

weapons, foreign government would not issue travel warnings about distant

capital cities and—crucially—neighbouring states. By the way, anyone in

puff out their chests. If India and Pakistan possessed only conventional

Dr Sudha Khakurel, head of ephrology at Bir Hospital admits that mistakes can sometimes hannen but also tells us about the good her department is doing. You have to understand that al though we are running at a severe



mately 35 with acute kidney failure anyone's treatment. Most which is reversible a year. patients just cannot even afford it. They drop out by themselves after a few months." The hospital

Almost every private hospital provides dialysis, but at a cost that is usually ten times higher than that recently acquired two more charged by Bir Hospital. This is why Dr Rishi Kafle, a nephrologist computer-operated dialysis machines. The nephrology set up the National Kidney Centre. department of the hospital and a not-for-profit hospital that treats ients like Dhana lobbied the kidney problems. There has been no Ministry of Finance for months in official survey of the scale of renal problems in Nepal, but specialists order to be able to take possession of the machines—the such as Dr Kafle estimate that hospital administration could not nearly 2,200 patients seek treatment every year for chronic pay the customs duty due on them and the machines were renal failure. The numbers might stuck at customs for two months seem low, but the danger of ESRD Bir Hospital currently treats 22 is that patients often do not even know their kidneys are failing them patients with chronic renal until both the kidneys stop insufficiency a week, and approxi-

Peace by any means

If America's attack on Afghanistan after 11 September was justified, the same international coalition has the right to take any measures to

any of us grew up with nuclear nightmares haunting our sleep. My mother told me in the most fearful possible terms about the American-Cuban missile crisis of 1962 when Nikita Khurshchev of the Soviet Union and President Kennedy stood eyeball to eyeball and brought the world as close to nuclear war as it's ever been. In the 1980s, I joined various nuclear disarmament movements calling upon the successors to Kennedy and Khrushchev to realise the folly of their ways. In a sense, the east-west stand-off ended perfectly, with the demise of Soviet communism and the broadening of the church of liberal democracy to encompass all forms of political thought that embrace freedom.

But those nuclear weapons remained, rusting in their missile silos or submarine launch tubes. And other countries eved them with envy and determination. Too young to remember the horror of impending war in the early 1960s, I'll never forget the events of May 1998 when both India and Pakistan went overtly nuclear. At the time, India's newly-elected coalition government was mired in political infighting and I continue to believe that there was more than element of domestic politics in Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajapyee's decision to test the country's existing nuclear weapons Across the Line of Control, an embattled Nawaz Sharif watched with trepidation and took phone call after phone call from Washington, Japan and European capitals. Each voice down the line would outline a more generous offer—a bribe, if you like—of cash, loans and debt relief if Sharif didn't respond to the Indian tests. He considered them all, very, very seriously. But in the end it was impossible for a civilian prime ministergoverning on sufferance from a powerful army—to avoid ordering that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal be wheeled out and put through its paces. A Pakistani public celebrated with glee-a grim and horrible mirror of India's own joy at its perceived place at the nuclear top table.

In short, two huse, influential vet poverty-ridden countries committed acts of immense risk and potentially fatal insanity, arguably for domestic

prevent nuclear war in South Asia. Nepal's tourism industry who expects any sort of recovery anytime soon is deluding themselves. The final nail is being driven into the coffin of tourism here by the very existence of Pakistani and Indian nuclear arsenals.

There is a glimmer of something that might-in time-become hope, and it lies in those peace marches of the 1980s that I remember as part of a iaded, faraway youth. Nuclear weapons are not the internal concern of any one country. They respect no borders, their fallout is born by the winds, their victims must be cared for by all of us. Similarly, we have every right, in this region and around the world, to acquaint India and Pakistan with our feelings, to devise regimes of sanctions and punitive actions that might help deter the use of atomic bombs. If America was justified in attacking Afrikanistan after 11 Sentember, you could arrue that the same interna tional coalition has the right to take whatever measure it can to prevent nuclear war in South Asia, from coercive diplomacy to pre-emptive strikes on nuclear facilities and launch areas. Beyond that, the world must get involved in resolving issues that provoke hostilities, from Pakistan's support political reasons. If nuclear weapons had a moral or military justification at for terrorist groups across the Line of Control, to the matter of Kashmir. all, it was the Cold War theory that they deterred conventional war and Citizens of South Asia must put aside petty problems and domestic kept each side's dirty tricks within privately agreed parameters. But on the differences and acquaint the two giants of the region with their feelings. Ecurrent evidence, nuclear weapons have only heightened tensions in South Asia, increased the dangers inherent in fifty year-old hostilities, made it far mails to governments, letters, rallies and delegations to hostile capitals are

good places to start. The late King Birendra once proposed making this region a Zone of Peace. The time is right to renew that idea with vigour. We must insist that future generations have the right to live in peace, prosperity and freedom

functioning

The Centre started treating oatients five years ago when a German woman Beate Vogt decided to donate dialysis machines to Bir Hospital. When she realised how much red tape that would involve, she gave the machines to Nepal Kidney Centre instead. Vogt has donated 16 machines already and comes to Nepal once a year with supplies and medication for kidney nationts. The Centre, which is funded entirely by Voot, charge between Rs 2,500 and Rs 3,000 per session. Unlike a dialysis ession at Bir Hospital, patients do not need not to organise any of the other essentials such as the artificial kidneys or tubes. The Centre has set aside two machines for patients with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C. "The main drawback of this disease is the expense. The wealthy may be able to afford dialysis all their lives. but it's a curse to even middle class families. In countries outside SAARC the cost per session is at least \$200. We charge \$40, but how can you expect most Nepalis to afford this?" asks Dr Kafle.

For people like Dhana and Jeet, doctors say the only the only feasible way to live with the condition is to have a kidney transplant. It's not a perfect solution, but it can go a long way in making life easier for them. The problems with organ transplants, and kidney transplants in particular, are legion. First there is the law. The Nepal Human Body Organ Transplant Act 2055 was created without consulting any medical professionals with adequate knowledge of transplant surgery Article 15 (4) of the Act ask doctors to certify that the donor of any organ will not immediately die donation, and article 15 (5) asks doctors to certify that the organ donated will grow back naturally Liver transplants, thus, are allowed

because the donor's body regenerates those parts of the liver than are taken out. Kidneys do not "grow back", and even though a person can function with only one kidney. donating it becomes illegal, doctors have no way of proving that there is no causal relation between the removal of a kidney and death, even a few years down the line.

Second, there simply aren't enough trained transplant surgeons in Nepal. For kidneys, there are only two. Dr Asarfi Shah and Dr Ashok Rana. Dr Shah performed three successful kidney transplants in 1996 "within the limited perimeters of the law" at the Everest Nursing Home. Dr Shah says that the problem isn't just that the law is vague, but that it is unlikely to be changed. "The people who can change the regulations to allow legal, safe kidney transplants do not do so because the mafia that controls the illegal trade in kidneys is too powerful," says Dr Shah. He mentions that foreign investors interested in transplant operations

Mandala House Larury Apartments at Comfortable Rate



faced the legal challenges. At the very least, say doctors who work with kidney failure, the government could ensure that the medication is produced domestically, which would significantly reduce the

financial burden on patients. Dr Shah says he is so frustrated, he plans to make his voice heard by contesting the next elections as an independent

ment. It is precisely when they formulate laws on things like medical matters that professional advice is necessary," explains Dr Shah. He says he doesn't have political ambitions, but merely wants to be able to practice medicine with full freedom.

candidate, just as he did in the last

elections in 1999. "There needs to

be a professional voice in parlia-

Unless things change, in the law

like Dhana and Icet will continue to be forced to hustle, despite their illness, and find ways to raise the millions they don't have that are needed for dialysis and prohibitively expensive medication. Alternatively, they will be have to get involved in a murky struggle to find an illegal donor, or go to India for expensive

books and on the ground, people

A Sensour On Air Quality Management of Kathmandu Valley: Challenges & Opportunities 19th June 2002

asyronests of the air potation with particles in Rothmonds voltay does by the Ministry of Population and Environment and the MAMERA - Environment Sector Programme Support (ESPS) once process 2001 have shown that the consentration of particles in the air of the valley is main higher than the loss rature recommended by the World Health Chipertention (WHC). A trip part of the postules measured corner from exhausts from the design and potent vehicles plying in the variety because of the postule from the remaining propulation in the valley and the residing increase in the number of whiches and other polluting satisfies there is a risk that the quality of the air in the valley will defectionly further in the number guess.

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to Electrical Vehicle Association of Major (EVAN) has been very order in protecting Zero Enriquent Electric Vehicles (EV) as an alternative solution to the transportation requirements of commuters within the volley. EVs. main as the "lints Tempora" have no much already been established as the elementary rais policing putter transportation vollets in Waltergrade Volley, James offers and Helford and the cost according arga is riseded if the long sains scatalisability of these non-polaring solution that are operating on electric produced by hydro proper plants in Napal, shall be arrained.

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makaban paradis ahould apply with a short description of their bedspround will why they are interested in participating in the santoner to the following Facilitation or email addresses

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Senate support

ive US funds to support the fight against the Manists, A 29 May report of the US Senate Committee on Appropriation notes that the US administration proposes to provide funds to Nepal to support the government's campaign against "a ruthless Maoist insurgency". The report further states that, "the Committee is not aware of any nformation tving this insurgency to al Qaeda, but shares the administrathe report condemns the atrocities committed by the Magist querrillas, it expresses concern about human rights violations by Nepali armed forces

Aid worker killed

The execution of a Nepali aid worker by Maoists in Bajhang has sent shock waves through Nepal's development community. News filtering in from the western district says that IL Joshi, PLAN International's Baihang program manager, was taken from his residence at 2.30 AM on 31 May and executed later that day near the Rayal PLAN office. Joshi had worked for PLAN International for more than a decade. The Maoists had earlier attacked the seven development units Plan was operating in the district, following which all staff had been evacuated from the area.

Help Nepal

HELP NEPAL Network, a charity supported by Nepalis living around the world, organised a HELP NEPAL Day simultaneously in the UK, Australia, Italy and Nepal last weekend, raising over £2,000 for future projects.

Established in 1999 to encourage Nepalis abroad to give back to the country, HELP NEPAL Network has raised some £19,000 for charitable causes in Negal and beloed build schools and libraries in remote districts like Dolpa, Dang and Pyuthan, and organised health camps in Chitwan

Getting the vote

The date for the mid-term polls is fixed, but voters still don't have their IDs. If the government goes ahead with its initial plan of allowing only the voters' ID holders to cast their ballots, 3.4 million eligible Nepalis will not be able to vote. The government had planned to issue 4.2 million voter IDs by the end of the current fiscal year, but only about 820,000 have been handed out so far. The teams assigned to photograph voters for their cards have been unable to get to rural areas in 43 districts due to the insurgency. The Election Commission is undecided on its course of action. If, as in previous elections, it recognises that all adult Nepalis with citizenship certificates may vote, the government needs to promulgate an ordinance to legalise the decision.

to dissolve the house was taken to court

have to plan for every contingency. To

those who wonder how a government

that was forced to put off the local elections could hold the parliamentary

polls on schedule, the comrades point to

that basic civic duty: trust your leader. (I

vernment could afford to postpone the

the constitution.) If their official doctrine of

leaders would be telling us wonderful stories

about the magnificent power of belief. UML leaders know they wouldn't be

Jepali Congress had heeded Koirala's

one-man-two-posts counsel. That's why

they are closely observing every act in the

ruling party. What does the Kangresi

Koirala's visit to China was planned

patriarch have up his sleeves now? Sure,

before the latest crisis. But that doesn't

obscure a crucial fact. For the first time

since Dr KI Singh trudged up north after

the Rakshya Dal uprising in January 1952

has a politician in the middle of a political

Every time someone christens a

storm taken a trans-Himalayan trip

preparing for elections today if the

personally resent the comparison. The

local elections because it didn't endanger

atheism hadn't stood in the way, UML

in 1995. UMI luminaries know they

Comradely conduct

What's behind the UML's calm rationality in dealing with this political crisis?



ach time Prime Minister Sher
Bahadur Deuba and N Bahadur Deuba and Nepali Congress president Girija Prasad Koirala pause to lighten their larynxes, their designated spokesmen, Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta and Arjun Narsingh KC, sten in to provide enough firenower to maintain the momentum of the war of words. It was the spokesman of the main opposition party, however, who had the most heart-warming thing to say about the current political crisis. The UML was always in favour of mid-term polls, Pradeep Nepal said, but couldn't demand one because of the burden it would put

Those distressed by the UML's growing irrelevance to oppositional politics are indeed delighted by the comrades' abiding respect for the people's will. You have to study the context to grasp the real significance of their stance. In the post-Deuba council of ministers being worked out under Koirala's broader democratic alliance, the job of deputy prime minister-complete with the home portfolio-was to have gone to the UML. Having been in power during two of the last three elections, the UML was looking forward to the benefits of incumbency ahead of the fourth. (Remember: reassigning top administration and police officials is the second important pre-election task, after the designation of polling centres, and comes under the home minister.) With Deuba's pre-emptive strike, the UML lost the perks, privileges and prestige that comes

with being the second largest party in parliament. Although they were entitled to raising the loudest voice against Deuba, UML leaders chose to be even-handed Sure the prime minister had blundered badly in dissolving the lower house on the eve of the budget session without informing his finance minister. But wasn't the ruling party being a little too pushy?

While Koirala was seeing conspiracies

of all colours and Deuba was telling us

how long he was behind bars fighting for our freedoms, UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal cautioned Nepalis to think with cooler minds. A country desensitised by a decade of distrust shouldn't pay attention to another plotagainst-democracy story without sufficient corroborating evidence. The UML's self-assurance stands in sharp contrast to its street-fighting and desk-banging trademark. And this has raised new questions. How could a group of rational ople be so certain about the inevitability of elections before the Supreme Court ruled on the lawsuit challenging Deuba's late-night feat? Moreover, how could opposition leaders be so sure that the netary positions on 13 November would be propitious to a free and fair assessment of the people's will?

modern-day Tulsi Giri in the Nepali It's easy to see how a newly reunified Congress, the people tend to turn left UML saw a clear advantage in the midand look for a Ravamaihi. That makes term poll and jumped for it. But there's our comrades uneasy, especially since our more to the comrades' stance than meets original Dr Keshar Jung became the first the eye. Having burnt their fingers head of a constitutional body to have relying so much on precedent when prime come out in full support of Deuba's minister Man Mohan Adhikary's decision determination •

Hang economics

Stop thinking about the economy. Watch football instead

witty-repartee-hueu processed dohori catches on in restaurants in the capital, the dohori between the stalwarts of the Nepali Congress proves that they remain very much of the people, capable of trading veiled and open insults in the best bucolic tradition. A number of readers have asked the Bood to see where the economy is going, in light of the

Elections mean one thing above all else to the some of us: spending spending, spending. Administering polls is an enormous drain on the coffers of the state anyway, and the fact that the elections will undoubt edly be staggered over a few days, together with the additional nding on security, means that the elections this year will probably be the most expensive ever for Nepal.

The parties will no doubt find it difficult to gamer the funds they need to fight the elections—business has been bad and businessmen will be terribly reluctant to fund candidates. There are very few deals in sight for anyone. But the real fear lies in rural areas and insurpency-hit areas—it will be virtually impossible to raise any funds to contest polls there, and there is a real possibility that the political parties will take the extortion route that has proven so successful in the past. None of this will do anything to make people more committed to

democratic party politics. Everything gets complicated when

there is no Finance Minister in a country which needs to lobby hard ternationally to fund its gaping deficit. The speeches and loud promises to punish revenue evaders he vows to put our fiscal house in order-all this succumbed to the demands made by party ideologies and whimsical diktats issued by crotchety politicians. Perhaps, when it pecomes clear that we need more than one person to put the country' finances in order, not a single person is enthused enough to raise is or her hand for the job

The Beed is told that the budget is ready for promulgation and that with no parliament in place, no debates are necessary. The corridors of nower in Bagh Darbar will have a free hand, but should we even waste our energy being concerned. After all, as has been pointed out in this column more than once, budgets are increasingly becoming meaningless for Nepal, in part because revenue and expendiure figures are revised so often. Already subject to new, befuddling taxes, the business community now truly fears the unpredictability of the coming budget, and year.

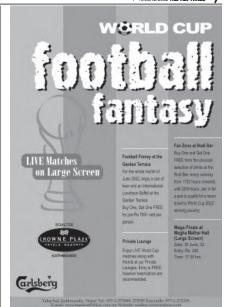
Nepal has managed to draw international attention to its problems, and some countries are willing to help. Unfortunately, then are no plans in place through which we can help ourselves, or channel any aid we might get. If \$100 million were to pour in right now no one knows where, apart from

funding the attendance of cadre at dohori parties, it would go. Every bilateral and multilateral agency in town has been going on about good governance, and seeing the lack of ogress on that front, they are understandably chary of pouring in more money here. The window of opportunity to gamer much-needed funds is short. As the global focus shifts to our almost-warring neighbours, it's getting harder to keen Nepal on anyone's radar

Nepal's leaders are myopic politically, and they display the same unfortunate defect in vision when it comes to economics. We can look forward to more of the sameentertaining, but ultimately irrelevant rumours about grand designs, the threat to democracy, expansionist agendas and their opposite. The Beed is able to this time also, as always, point to a distinctly shing edge to all of this. In the economic ranking of nations, things should oon stop going from bad to worse for Nepal-we only need to slip down four more positions.

So, instead of contemplatin economic doomsday, your columnist will now, with your leave, devote some quality time to a large-screen television And after the World Cun is over, perhaps we can talk about Nepali football. Thereby, too, hangs a grim tale.

(Readers may post their views at





We join the nation in extending our loyalty to HIS MAJESTY KING GYANENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV and HER MAJESTY QUEEN KOMAL RAJYA LAXMI DEVI SHAH on the auspicious occasion of the first anniversary of enthronement. Our best wishes for the peace, prosperity and progress of our country under His Majesty's dynamic leadership.



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MISSING SIGNALS

Kanak Mani Dixit or the army and the people

Slicing India: The 1954 Kumbha Mela

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market was picking up and by November 1992 our factory had begun producing. In December 1992 the then Prime Minister PV Narashima Rao visited Nepal and eased the procedural delays in export by allowing His Majesty's Government to certify material content (50 percent). This was an opportunity, and in 1993 we began with major expansion. The renewal of the treaty in 1996 was another impetus. We purchased a local fruit juice factory and that was the beginning of Real juices, which are now the

is one of South Asia's largest juice manufacturing units, with a capacity of

How much, in total, have you invested in Nepal? We have invested Rs 1.1 billion and now the annual turnover is around Rs 2.6 billion, we are aiming at Rs 3 billion next year. We export about 92 percent of our products; local sales are about Rs 220 million. Investments made for the long term are beneficial to both company and the country as a whole.

What motivated you to come to Nepal?

Medicinal plants are widely available in Nepal. We not only collect them in the wild, we also plant them because we know they are a resource that will finish one day. We have a unique state-of-the-art greenhouse that produces three million saplings of medicinal plants and herbs every year. We are cultivating the saplings in 12 locations like Marpha, Manang, Jumla, Sindhupalchowk. Dolakha and in the tarai. We give farmers saplings with buy-back guarantee. We have also done well with chiraito, which even scientists said could not be raised in a greenhouse. Then there is the Tayus baccata. We have our own plantations on leased lands that grow over 800,000 saplings. In five-six years we may be collecting from our own plantations. We estimate we need about 10 million trees for that.

What happened to your saffron trials in Jumla? We distributed 320 000 saffron bulbs in Jumla last year but we could stay

there only for four or five months to oversee cultivation. We think that can do well in Jumla, Humla many other places. Marpha has been another good experiment. We grow medicinal herbs in between apple trees and as we care for the plants, the apple trees also benefit. Where on one plot the owner got 18 tons of apples before we began growing berbs, a year later be got about 30 tons. Last year the yield was 40 tons. We also took about half-a-dozen beehives there, which helped pollination.

Have you been affected by the recent spurt in violence?

Not very badly. Local projects are looked after by locals, our staff only make supervisory visits. In one place one of our staff members was beaten up. Jumla is badly affected. I think we haven't been attacked because everyone understands that what we are doing is good for the people and country.'
We've helped improve the socio-economic conditions of the farmers. In the Besisahar area you can see the change for yourself. The lives of the people have changed after we began collecting Taxus baccata leaves.

Nepal must be a major success story, even for Dabur.

Yes, It can be for anyone who wants to tan annuforestry products and make long term investments. Our business is long-term, it has backward integration helicopters to transfer saplings to planting areas.

Are you planning more value addition in Nepal?

Frankly, we are hesitant. The benefits we get in many Indian states are now much better than those we get in Nepal. We were planning to make pineapple and tomato concentrate in Nepal. Last week we were approached by West Bengal state and given a unique package—capital subsidy of 25 percent, interest subsidy of 60 percent for seven years-and we have decided to take the plant to Siliguri. We decided to go there because of

what they were giving us. Government has to accept that companies like ours help the economic growth of Nepal. You get a sense the bureaucracy feels that industries just loot the country, motivated by profits, Well, everybody is motivated by profit: we purchase cheaper goods in the market and make a profit, even if it is only psychological. Profit isn't a had word. Second, government should be willing to go out of its way to help any industry that wants to come here. All industries have a multiplier effect and boost the economy. There's another factor: we wanted some forest land, and we didn't get it. After waiting for many years, we are now thinking of shifting the plantations to

How will the new Nepal-India treaty affect Dabur? Is Nepal still attract tive to Indian investors?

We won't be affected. I think there's still room to invest here. If any industry says it cannot achieve 30 percent value addition, I think it is doing something wrong. People shouldn't worry about the value addition. On the matter of surge of the five items, we have the guota system. I feel canalisa tion has caused some problems and India must do something about it. Copper has been affected. The entire copper industry shouldn't be penalised. I think the Indian government will look into this

So we still can do business in Nepal?

res, provided Nepal cleans up its house and makes the right policies. Now there's an export duty, the new industrial policy takes out tax holidays. there's also talk of freezing royalty payments. The basic problem here is that we make policies, laws and rules copying developed countries. We should make rules and regulations suitable for us.

Have the Indian quarantine rules been a problem for you?

Yes. We hope there will be at least two more checkpoints, in Birgani and one in Nepalganj. Now we have to send saplings all the way to Panitanki to send them to Indian markets. Saplings are very fragile and cannot survive such trips. Even within Nepal the logistics are difficult and we've been using



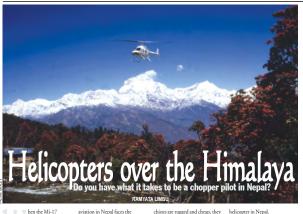
Dabur Nepal produces over 20 products at its factories in Nepal, including some of the most successful brands of its parent Indian company. But Director TK Gupta tells us the company could have done a lot more with better support from the government.

have been your main achievements?
TK Gupta: We began company registration in 1989 because the Himalaya local market for our products. We wanted to sell about Rs 80 million worth selling at double our price. I told management that our market here was

We began trading in May 1991. In February 1992 we realised the leading fruit juices in India. All the products sold there go from Nepal. This

Nepali Times: You have been in Nepal for more than 10 years, what

is a storehouse of herbs and medicinal plants and also because there was a of products and collect medicinal plants and herbs. I came here first in February 1991 and found that we were selling Rs 8-9 million worth of goods a year. I was passing through Asan and saw Dabur products on the footpath



hen the Mi-17 helicopter on a ferry flight from Makalu Base Camp failed to arrive in pilots misjudging altitude or Lukla on Friday morning last week, Asian Airlines staff felt tain in poor visibility. But the the first twinges of concern. A group of Spanish climbers also what makes helicopters are

had just come in, and the chopper had gone back to bring The Russian-built Mi-17 has the rest of the expedition. But in the past ten years become the pre-monsoon clouds were Tata truck of the airways in closing in over the high passes Nepal. Asian Airlines was a pioneer in introducing these versatile heavy-lift helicopters, guarding the remote Barun Valley in eastern Nepal. The Russian pilot, A Grevenikov, but has now lost both its craft, was a veteran of flying in the one last week, and the other Caucases and the Himalava and destroyed by Maoists in Surkher familiar with the terrain. last year. "There's nothing to Search and rescue flights match the lifting capacity and cost-effectiveness of the Mi-17,"

have been hampered by cloud says Ang Tshering Sherpa, chairman of Asian Airlines. Sherpa cover, and only able to fly from dawn until 9AM, around when the clouds move in By now it is is planning to add three more elicopters, one Mi- 17, and two crashed into one of the mounversions of the same certified to tains, and that even if some of carry passengers. With its the six passengers and four crew capacity to carry four tons of survived the initial impact, they cargo or 24 passengers, the Mi-17 are unlikely to still be alive. rries everything from hydro-The accident came as we power turbines and construction material to remote parts of the

were preparing this survey of helicopter transport in Nepal and once more underlined the dangers of flying in Himalayan terrain in had weather. Aside from Maoist sabotage and

country. The Mi-17 has also become the mainstay of many untaineering expeditions and the ferrying of grain to food deficit districts

chines are rugged and cheap, they chronic hazards of what aviation are no match for the altitude experts call controlled flight into performance of another popular terrain (CFIT)—the possibility of model in Nepal: the French-built Ecureil AS 350, which is operated position and flying into a mounby the army. Karnali Air and others. Although much smaller same dangerous vertical terrain is than the Mi-17 or even the Kawasaki BK-117, the Ecureil has so indispensable in the Himalaya carried out helicopter rescues of mountaineers at record altitudes,

such as Madan KC's dramatic For Captain Sabin Basnyat flight pick up of a climber from 25, flying choppers is a passion 20,000 ft on Mt Everest in 1996. "Flying in Nepal is addictive. The That record was broken by adventure, the mountains, the Captain BN Sharma who in diverse terrain, it is a thrill you October 2000 landed on Island get hooked on to." In March this Peak at 22,000 ft in a daring year, Basnyat, a pilot with Karnali rescue of a Greek trekker Air, flew a French group to Manang to reconnoitre possibili-These rescues are hazardous The treacherous winds in thin air ties of heli-skiing on the slopes means that helicopters are easily south of Hunde airport. "Basibuffeted and toppled over. A cally you fly skiers up to the slope and once they descend you pick Karnali Air Ecureil came to grief at Makalu Base camp last month them up and fly them up again.

to order.

The Royal Nepal Army itself

s opted for Mi-17s and

ansport troops in its counter-

insurgency operations. It is now

seeking to add more helicopters

to its fleet, and may even need to

hire commercial pilots to fly the

additional helicopters it wants

It's pretty taxing and one requires

high altitude experience," says

operates three of these to

rescue in the spring of 2000. Basnyar The inaccessibility of Nepal's Basnyat is among many rugged mountainous terrain commercial pilots who are already makes helicopters the ideal mode flying charter flights for emerof transport, but for decades they ncy rescue after Maoist raids. Pemba Sherpa of Dynasty Air is were out of bounds to everyone but the army and the Royal another. He says: "When I Flight. Today, thanks to the 1990 decided to train as a helicopter egulation of the domestic pilot, I never thought I'd be flying airline industry, private helicopter n combat zones, transporting operators are issued licenses and dead bodies."

and Madan KC himself hit the

Khumbu Glacier on an earlier

"The army would probably require more manpower," says Captain BN Sharma, General Manager of Karnali Air. "If there was no emergency, business would definitely have been better or us. But so far, we haven't been hit hard like many of the fixed

wing airlines. Karnali Air was the first rivate helicopter company to be et up by a former army pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Pun who is now looking at India and Bhutan to spread his wings.

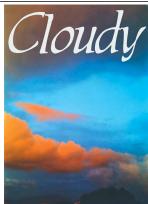
Clockwise from left: A rescue flight at 19,600 ft on the Western Cwm; a jet ranger prepares to land at Ghorepani; rescue flight to Tengboche; an Asian Airlines chopper hovers above Lukla airport; a Kamali Air copter takes off following a rescue; a climber watches a Karnali Air craft annroaching











n the satellite pictures they appear as large dark masses of cloud travelling up from the Bay of Bengal. The TV forecasters warn you that "there is a bit of had weather moving up to the Himalaya". Bad weather?

Nothing could be better than a good, healthy monsoon For three months in a year, the Himalaya from Kashmir to Assam act as a gigantic atmospheric dam to store water vapour. The mountains are such an effective barrier that the Tibetan plateau to the north is

left literally high and dry in the rain shadow.

Pre-monsoon showers are cataclysmic events. Pumped by the heat, huge convection currents send cauldrons of cumulus rising vertically into the atmospher sometimes more than 50,000 feet Up there in the stratosphere, the et stream smears their tops into wild angry cobra heads. On one pre-monsoon afternoon. Lonce watched the entire Ganesh massif dwarfed in the shadow of one of these big cauliflowers of moisture The convection system rose out of the Buri Gandaki Valley to ride on flashing neon legs of purple

advanced from the west The wind nicked up, the poplars bent like bows: their

agitated leaves giving the quicken-

ng air a voice. Plastic bags, startled birds and leaves were snatched by the flying yellow dust. The storm edged closer until the flash and crash became simultaneous. A delicate din approached as hailstones hit roofs of houses in the bazaar below. By evening, the pyrothechnics were over, the storm had moved over to the east briefly framed in a double rainbow over the holy ridges of Gosainkunda. The varnished leaves dripped, the tree trunks sweated, the wet water buffaloes were shiny. If a pre-monsoon thunder

nary a "friendly" squeeze or pinch. Of course, most of you

have probably already touched your forehead to the altar of

located right above a fashion boutique, making it easy for

more lily-livered people to lie about their real destination.

Femilines, a collaboration between two young

are moving with the time in every which way, thought

those who fancy a touch of the Barbara Cartland.

shower is an opera, then the arrival

lightning. From high up on a ridge of the monsoon itself a few weeks above Dhunche we watched later is a Smetana symphony. You transfixed as the afternoon sun was can smell the rain long before it blotted out, and the snowy slopes actually arrives. From the pass of Langtang Lirung lost their light. above Pokhara, the clouds mow It suddenly became dark and silent about among the Annapumas like like an eclipse. Animals, humans, the little curly puffs you see on and even the thirsty plants waited thangka paintings. The sudden nervously as a veil of violet rain change in high-altitude wind direction precisely between 10-15

> will soon burst. By evening, the air suddenly turns humid, a smell of warm wetness swells up from the valley below. A vellow moor rises from behind a range of mountainous clouds to the east They glow in the moonlight, and the inside of the clouds are ncandescent with silent lightning. By nightfall, there is a sudden sharp coolness as the moisture turns into mist, and the mist in turn into a fine gauze of rain. The Nepali vocabulary has many onomatopoeic words to describe different kinds of rain: at midnight it turns from

June over central Nepal every year

is the first sign that the monsoon

drizzly sim-sime to heavier

darkane and by early morning is is a torrential musal-dhare.

Forget what the guidebooks y. Visit Nepal in the monsoon Everywhere, there is the sound of falling water: big waterfalls that thunder right across the valleys, little ones gurgle behind every bend in the track, the deep drone of rivers as they cut ever-deeper gorges. These rivers are older than the mountains and they have been slicing through the rising rock for 60 million years. By ten in the morning, the first clouds chug up the valley, the forerunner of an ocean of vapour lapping at the ridges below. They mov up silently through the junipers snaking the lichens with droplets of condensation Before noon, the rain starts falling steadily in that mara

and stops abruptly at dawn. By late August, the rain ebbs as the monsoon starts to lose its momentum, the sun comes out again. The sky is navy blue and dotted with kites and in the terraces the golden rice is ripening in the sun.

thon-like pace of no-nonsense

long-term rain. It falls continu-

ously into afternoon, all night,

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

oking around a new kind of Kathmandu store these days, one would think that not all feminists burnt their bras back in the day. And that those who did are now looking for desperate measures to control the drooping effects of the tug of war between mother nature and father gravity.

An informal survey of some two dozen women between the ages of 20-35 in the capital revealed one certain fact: paying attention to women's underclothing is about as au courant as it gets here Everyone's doing it For one, a woman in her mid-20s told us in all seriousness, "When you're wearing something really raunchy underneath you boring work clothes, it gives you the strength to take anything, files thrown at you, the relentless nose-picking of your lovelom office attendant. You feel like Supergirl." For another, it is very unhin in Kathmandu these days to wear intimates that might slow the progress of meandering eyes and roving hands, or not send the requisite suggestive signals to the interested, usually male, brain,

And finally, there's the matter of a current fashion statement that perhaps owes more to male hip-hop trends than anything else: "posterior cleavage". Fashion is a strange, fickle beast-women have been completely shamed out of the Visible Panty Line that causes others so much offence but the top of a thone sitting squely on a woman's waist even as her hip-huggers barely skim her hips is now the epitome of cool.

As a writer in an online publication said recently, "Girls in low-slung jeans sit insouciantly on bar stools, "presenting" their rears like primates in heat. The jeans tug



Drying your laundered of crack blooms above the belt loops. ... Others brandish gstrings, which ride above the waistband...." A trendy undies in public young Kathmandu woman dismissed it with a flick of the wrist: "It's cool, you can do more wearing less." She was perched on a bar stool, displaying what looked like a needn't be cause for piece of string tattooed onto her hips. No, there wasn't embarrassment much to her trousers.

Enter the lingerie store, a place for Nepali women and men to walk into, head held high and mind open to all the suggestions that sequin-spangled thongs throw up, in the certainty that there will be no lewd comments, no ogling,

Femilines on Pulchowk. This little matchbox of an outlet is trepreneurs, Jyotsana Shrestha, and Ajita Shakya, was opened early this year with the express aim of taking the sleaze out of women's underclothing. Kathmandu women ioned greasy men will snap at you.

alternative is buying equally unscintillating stuff from greasy men on footpaths who believe—and repeatedly also mainstream western brands such as Marks and lemonstrate—that the greatest virtue of any kind of Spencer, Jockey, Blazon and Lovable. There are other, maller lingerie shops in Suraj Arcade and Bishal Bazar, And so Femilines resembles a cross between the waiting but these, while they stock a decent range of international room of a trendy hair and nail salon, and milady's boudoi brands as well as Chinese no-logos, won't give you the circa 1965. The first little room holds a vast array of decadent buzz that Femilines does. For Ivotsana and nightclothes—comfy percale pyjama sets and practical vest and shorts as well as barely-there teddies and babydolls, Ajita all the pre-opening anxiety has been worth it. Everyday the shop is abuzz with beginners buying faux-fur trimmed peignoirs, and satin floorsweepers for beginner bras, teenagers trying hard to pay more fo less, honeymooning couples casually fingering a lacy But go through to the next room and ahem. There are ightgown, and grandmas hoping to find that elusive the lacy thongs so very popular among teenagers and 20-48 D. "People are ready for change and we offer them iomethings, all the better to wear their low-rise hiphuggers

with, racerback bras for those who just can't be bothered, animal prints for the quiet, feral woman, nursing bras to pay the price for having worn too many of those in the past, push-up bras (with and without jello) for the woman (or cross-dressing man) who simply wants to be understood. There are scrappy wisps of nylon that make you wonder why anyone should bother, the usual complement of Gstrings with little embroidered hearts on the front, the mos outrageously spangled, tawdry, truly unmentionables. Of course, there are also plenty of practical, comfortable, pure cotton options, including orthopaedic-looking grandma panties, all far more appealing than anything the aforemen Most of the choices here are from China, Thailand, and

India, which is a good thing for your wallet, but there are choices," say the two, beaming at their bras.





Thimphu – The Bhutanese capital saw celebrations attended by

hundreds of Bhutanese in traditional dress last weekend and

28 years of King Jigme

The case for refugees

GENEVA - The UN High Commissioner for Refugees issued a statement Friday expressing concern about the current "over-heated" debate in Europe on asylum-seekers, and suggests that it could have dangerous sequences for foreigners seeking help in the region. The UN agence



published figures on the refugees arriving in the EU in the last 10 years that show a sharp decline in the total last year with respect to the number recorded in 1992. The report shows that the totals are quite low in some countries narticularly those most

outspoken—such as Spain and Britain-in their support for drastic restrictions on the number of refugees to be accepted. In contrast, developing countries receive refugees numbering in the hundreds of thousands, or, in Iran and Pakistan, millions, said Rupert Colville, UNHCR spokesman.

The number of people protected under the UNHCR mandate worldwide is nearly 22 million, distributed among Asia, where there are 8.5 million asylum-seekers, Africa (6.1 million), Europe (5.6 million), North America (one million), Latin America and the Caribbean (600.000). and in Oceania (76,000). The UN agency's data indicates that the number of asylum requests received in 30 industrialised countries have remained stable in the last decade, at 350,000 to 400,000 asylum.

FELICITATIONS



His Majesty King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev On the auspicious occations of first anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne of The Kingdom of Nepal



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Social Science Research Council South Asia Regional Fellowship Program Second Announcement, June 2002

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC, New York) is pleased to announce the availability of short-term fellow ships (3-4 months) for research in any discipline of the social sciences and humanities related to the theme Resources and Society. Twenty research fellowships are available for junior and senior scholars from South Asia to begin new research, continue ongoing research or write up completed research. The objective of the SSRC Regional Fellowship Program is to strengthen links between teaching and research; the competition is open to all full-time university and college lecturers, readers and professors Eligibility is restricted to faculty with PhDs presently teaching in an accredited college or university in South Asia. Fello will be expected to attend a workshop in January 2003 before they begin their fellowship period. Junior fellows will receive up to \$2,200, senior fellows up to \$3,000. Application materials and more information can be obtained from: SSRC Fellowship Program, Himal Association, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur (phone: 542544; email: ssrc@himalassociation.org.) or you may download the forms from the SSRC website www.ssrc.org/fellowships/southasia The deadline for receiving applications is August 3, 2002. Announcements of fellows will be made in October 2002. This program is supported by a grant from the Ford

What really matters \$\text{\text{\$\exitt{\$\xitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\xitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\xitt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xitt{\$\xittt{\$\xittt{\$\xitt{\$\xittt{\$\exittt{\$\xittt{\$\xittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt{\$\xittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt{\$\exitt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exittt{\$\exitt



Putin needs support from the Russian people, not the elite.

rhin Russia. President Putin appears to be an isolated island, at least among the Russian elite who have singularly failed to embrace his decision to anchor Russia firmly to the west. The elite's gripes about Putin's been marked: America withdrew from foreign policy are many, but they the 1972 ABM Treaty and forced centre mostly on the notion that Putin to accept a vague disarmament America is running roughshod ove Russian interests. American troops they complain, are on the ground in the former Soviet republics of Georgia Kyrgizstan, Tadjikistan, and Uzbekistan. The next wave of NATO expansion promises to lap onto Russia's border and indeed surpass the old Soviet borders by taking in the Baltic states. Foreign investment has scarcely increased. Putin, they alless has surrendered Russia's traditiona notions of security and received alliance doesn't bring tangible benefits nothing from the west in return. The to Russia soon, there is a fear that the

crimes they attribute to Putin sound loss of confidence in Putin may like the indictment for a treason trial. weaken him fatally. There's an eerie After his hold moves towards the sonse of deix vu Khrushchev Gorbachev and Yeltsin saw their hold west after 11 September, Putin on power and influence among the Russian power elite undermined when undoubtedly expected praise and favours. The west's ingratitude has

agreement at the summit between Yeltsin's early postcommunist Russia. Under Khrushchev and Gorbachev Putin and President George W Bush last month in Russia. The new agreement allows the US to not destroy (and also Yeltsin), Russia was an surplus missiles and warheads, just autocratic society in which control of put them in cold storage. Even Putin's Defence Minister the elite was the key to power. Civil society didn't matter or even exist. Sergei Ivanov, a former KGB colleague That elite, the old politburo, was often considered Putin's closest united by homogenised opinions. You advisor, does not fully agree with him on the terms of collaboration with thought and word and deed. Chang America, If the Russian-western upsetting the apple cart, even if the

interest groups. Democracy is not unded on what the elite think; it's what the people think that matters, o at least what a contending rabble of rival interests think. Russians, now free to think believe Putin is looking after Russian interests, which includ being an unconditional part of the west. Yes, Putin cares that the elite are keeping their distance from his foreign policy. But he also knows that Russia's people endorse his policies The elite may retard Putin's

efforts from behind the scenes but

obstructing is not overthrowing. Putin may be as isolated, as my grandfather Nikita Khrushchev was in 1964, when Leonid Brezhnev organised his palace coup against him. But he is nowhere near as vulnerable, thanks to his widespread Russians. In the old days, Russia relied on its strength, mostly military, to determine its self-image. Russia's elite still believes this. But after the disasters of the last two decades, including the military debacle in Afghanistan and the ruinous barbarity of the Chechen war which has blown back its violence into Russia's cities, ordinary Russians are less enamoured of military might They still want the world to respect their country. But what matters to them is respect for Russia's culture The obsession with power and prestige that galvanises Russia's elite doesn't Russian society today is diversified and democratic, and its support for Putin is stronger than the grudges Russia's elite hold against

(Nina Khrushcheva is professor of international relations at the New School University.)

they sought to please or placate the

west only to receive nothing in return. But there's a critical difference

etween the Russia of today and even

ept power by sticking together in

apples were rotten, was anathema.

Today Russia has a diversity of

Scientific follies



entists take enormous pride in their avowals of intellectual impartiality. They profess to regard all concepts as equal in weight or significance until new evidence decrees otherwise Tronically, though, among the innumerole kinds of human errors, bias is a relentless nemesis to which scientists are as likely to succumb as anyone else. Given a problem, they are quick to urge the

interly to succumo as anyone ease. Given a protoent, they are quick to tage the solution that promotes or appears to be demanded by their most cherished ideas. Recall the exaggerated influence vouchsafed, not too long ago, to psychoanartic theory. Sigmund Freud taught that no act of daily life is ever trivial or neaningless, and so theoretical schemes were extended beyond reason. Roper aillois (1913-1978) ironically mocked such thinking. I forget my umbrella a X's house because I feel a subconscious sympathy for X. My apparent lapse was "in reality" a pretext to return to see X, and reward my secret affection. I had left ny umbrella at Y's, who I cordially detest, my slip was a desire for selfunishment. I atone for experiencing this antipathy, or for wishing Y's disap pearance. But what if I forget my umbrella at Z's house, towards whom I am ndifferent. Here, the psychoanalyst tells me I am mistaken. "In reality" I either ove or hate Z, and with uncommon vehemence to boot. The proof is that I forgot he umbrella! In this system, nothing escapes definitive interpretation

Caillois' ironic point was well taken. Psychoanalysis grew into a formidable, intimidating logic. In the above example, absent-mindedness is first a symptom of a subconscious feeling. Then, the latter becomes what the ancients called the petitio principii—we name it begging the question. Nothing resisted the sychoanalytic exegesis. Politics, sociology, history, or medicine: all were grist for he psychoanalyst's mill. Agrarian communism was viewed as a return to the

Science needs a good, healthy dose of the humanities.

maternal womb. The capitalist economy was linked to a sado-masochistic anal

complex. The communist slogan "Proletarians of the world, unite!" was inter-preted by some as a sublimated expression of homosexuality. In Soviet Russia, Marxism-Leninism incurred comparable excess. Everything and to do with the class struggle. Marxist theoreticians said that even romantic love between a man and a woman was a desire for possession and domination, which mirrored the bourgeoisie oppression of the proletariat. Even biological

facts were distorted by ideological bias. When orthodox genetics was discarded in favour of the ruling ideological doctrines, as was done by Stalin's favourite Trofim Lysenko (1898-1976), the results were disastrous. In the west, Charles Darwin's theories suffered no less egregious distortions at the hands of supposed acolytes. It is now a common place that evolutionary theory was used to justify capitalist injustice. Illegality and wrongdoing were artfully cloaked as an ontrovertible, science-tested natural law, "the survival of the fittest.

Every new, powerful scientific formulation goes through a period of abusive application. Today, it is molecular genetics. Temperament, obesity, heart disease, elligence, homosexuality or criminal behaviour: everything resides in the genes. Distinguished scientists proclaim that our destiny is inscribed in DNA. and science-popularisers assert that human beings are just "programmed" entities. The genome contains the complete set of instructions, and is therefore named The Holy Grail, The Book of Man. When thoroughly deciphered, it is said, the essence of human nature will be fully understood.

A healthy humanism limits these claims. No science can completely explicate human nature: all sciences, even the most exact, are partial endeavours. A man or a woman is more than his or her psyche or biochemistry or social identity. Man is more than his genes—he is also his past, his present and his future. Man is more than himself, because the specifically human qualities can only be fully deployed in society. Thus, the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) could truthfully state that "the I of Man is immersed precisely in what is not himself, in the pure other that is his circumstance." As long as scientists, absorbed in research and fascinated by technology, forget this profound teaching of the humanities, they will continue to fall prey to bias. • (Project Syndical

(FGonzalez-Crussi is Emeritus Professor of pathology at th University of Chicago.)

Thou shalt not nuke thy neighbour

Virgin Clubhouse at Heathrow on Friday night looked at us, her eyes brimming with sympathy, her voice down to hugh Did we know that the British government had just issued an advisory asking all British citizens to leave India as well as Pakistan because of an impending war that could go nuclear? She looked bemused when we began to laugh. We were going home, we said; and if that was the way the cookie

exploded, well, what could be don about it. I am pleased to report that ours was not a singular reaction. The Virgin flight to Delhi was full. I learnt that Air India, flying at about the same time, had been forced to offload 40 passengers

My very reliable guide to matters of life and death, Veenu Sandal, informs me that on 15 May something happened in the heavens

that made this a dangerous place. Mars, Mercury, Moon, Venus, Sun Saturn and the ever-up omfortable Rahu were in Taurus In 1942 something similar happened and the sky fell over the British in Singapore and the Russians across a wide front in Europe. This turmoil in the skies will last through June. There may be a story to tell after that if India and Pakistan don't blow each other

The conflict between the two is a war between frustration and hypocrisy. India is frustrated by its inability to settle its longest and most cancerous problem, the status of Kashmir; and Pakistan has spent more than fifty years using this to spread the cancer across the region. Given the values of our age, it is in order that hypocrisy hold the edge. Our prime minister often resorts to poetry to express his frustration, although it is a moot point how

Less poetically, he's suggested that the restraint he showed when suicide missionaries from Pakistan nearly destroyed India's parliament on 13 December was a mistake. The famous million soldiers were then mobilised along the world's most dangerous border. They've remained immobile since, itself ar unstable fact. Armies stare at each other only up to a point without someone squeezing a trigger. India and Pakistan would likely

verse. Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee does

give the impression that he would

rather be a poet than a prime

minister, a useful suggestion in a

country that prefers power to be

leavened by some degree of self-

denial. At times of crisis he whips

out his own poems, hoping they

When dealing with the terrorist

supported by Pakistan, there was a

point when he could not see any

war clouds, but just in case you

went away relieved he added that

lightning could always strike from

are of some therapeutic value

attacks launched by elements

have finished their fifth war by now had they not been nuclear powers. There is still hope that the prospect of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) will maintain the peace, but there is also the fear. that someone may be too mad to worry about MAD. There are whispers from hawks on both sides that the nuclear option was created to be used. There is enough residual, continuing hostility to make this a real possibility Pakistan has a first-strike policy that it does not hide, and has said. it will implement it if India's forces succeed in a conventional war. So India loses if it wins, with animaginable consequences when it

The present crisis is a continue ation of the one in December, but with significant differences. General Pervez Musharraf brought the

candour was even more impressiv than its courage. He accepted that fundamentalists and terrorists had created a "state within a state" in Pakistan and warned that they were as much a threat to his Pakistan as to India. He arrested hundreds, banned their organisations and set the mood for a new phase of relations between the warring

But a paradox has overwhelmed him—in January Musharraf was a man of glory. By May he was just another general who had stolen a country. The central purpose of General Musharraf's policies and nolitics this year has been survival

This time the generals of Islamabad have help from the hawks flapping at the outer region of the ruling BIP in Delhi. These hardliners have taken control of the agenda ever since they cowed down the prime minister over Gujarat, and prevented him from changing Narendra Modi for fomenting riot against Muslims.

The world would probably not bother too much if India and Pakistan destroyed each other if they did not also threaten to contaminat the oil-rich world around them. In the past the world has waited for the two to exhaust their ammunition and return to sense, but the first sign of nuclear war came in 1999 when Bill Cilnton informed then prime minister Naway Sharif that some generals were planning a nuclear attack on India during the brief but intense conflict over Kargil. Sharif stopped the fighting and ordered Pakistani infiltrators to return home. One of the chief. rchitects of that war was Pervez Musharraf

It's safe to assume the antago nists will heed advice from abroad before they pursue more dramatic ontions Relief comes a week at a time on the subcontinent. But the threat of war has already interna tionalised the Kashmir problem. •

early this week in honour of King Jigme Singve Wangchuk's 28th

jubilee. The king is so deeply admired that his proposals to relinquish his powers and turn Bhutan into a constitutional monarchy have been strongly resisted by government ministers King Jigme says his priority is bringing his country into the 21st century without undermining Bhutanese culture. He is fiercely proud of the country's Buddhist heritage and is determined that its wide array of plant and wildlife should be protected from the ravages of too much tourism.



War and the law

Mass killing is being normalised, and international institutions of justice are weaker than ever.

RAI AKRISHNAN RAJAGOPAI

rs has become the age of threats. India threatens Pakistan with a "limited rar" and a complete nuclear annihilation if it uses nuclear weapons first. Pakistan openly threatens India with "first strike" if it moves its forces an inch across the Line of Control. Hindu fundamentalists threaten Muslim Indians with annihilation if they don't behave. Israel routinely threatens military force against Palestinians, who threaten retaliation through suicide bombings. President George Bush, the originator of all threats, threatens the entire world—"if you are not with us, you are against us"—and specific countries and groups through his "axis of evil". Terrorists threaten innocents and their governments around the world. Threats are now a routine way of conducting international affairs.

No longer do countries or groups express disagreements in the language of law or even civilised politics. International relations today resembles classic European state behaviour 200 years ago when large powers bullied and threatened each other and peace was the accidental by-product of alliances and balance of power. The cosmopolitan internationalism of the late Victorian and post-World War I period, embodied in a commitment to non-aggression, peaceful settlement of disputes, and institutions of dispute-resolution and peace making such as the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council, appears to be seriously challenged. The threatening postures of major powers aren't condemna as violations of the UN Charter, which explicitly prevents threats as well as the use of force in international affairs

It isn't just war that is being routinised. Mass killings of human beings and brutalities are casually mentioned by would-be combatants and major pov that is normal and legal. The New York Times reported a Pentagon "estimate" that seven to 12 million people would die in a nuclear war between India and Pakistan. Many Indians and Pakistanis are reported to be calling for "finishing off' the Kashmir problem. Indian leaders dismiss the state-sponsored porrom in Gujarat that saw the death of almost 2,000 Muslims and the rape of countless women. Defence Minister George Fernandes, calls rape and brutalisation of pregnant women as "nothing new" on the floor of parliament, and the head of the

Vishwa Hindu Parishad ralks with pride about what happened in Guiarat Pakistan casually mentions it is prepared to use nuclear weapons offensively inst Indian cities while justifying the mass killings committed by jehadi fighters as "freedom struggle." Indian strategists calmly discuss how India can "absorb" a nuclear strike by Pakistan and the destruction of the entire populatio of Pakistan in retaliation. Pakistan's UN Ambassador is quoted in the New York Times as saying that the UN Charter does not prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. While this is textually correct, international law isn't just the UN Charter, but includes the judgements of the ICJ as well as other treaties and customary international law. In its advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in 1996, the ICJ clearly states that unless the very survival of the state is threatened, the use of nuclear weapons is unlawful even in defence. Pakistan's stated "first strike" policy would

entirely violate international law. India's assertion that it is entitled to use nukes massively in retaliation contradicts its own stated position before the ICJ in 1996 as well as the judge ment itself. In its written pleadings before the court, India asserted that "even where a wrongful act involved the use of a nuclear weapon, the reprisal action cannot involve the use of a nuclear weapon without violating certain fundamental principles of humanitarian law... In view of the above, use of nuclear weapons by way of reprisal or retaliation appears to be unlawful." How then can India justify using nukes even in retaliation?

In the contest between "war talk" and "law talk," the former appears to be inning. If we are not to lose the entire edifice of peace making that has been nainstakinoly built over more than 100 years, we must begin opposing "war talk." We need to revive "law talk" in international relations and tantly, prevent the normalisation of war and total destruction. The people of the subcontinent depend on it. • (The Hindu)

(The writer is professor of law and development, and director of the MIT Program on Human Rights and Justice.)

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NEPALITERATURE

ver since Gopal Prasad Rimal broke traditional form and wrote poems in

have taken up free verse with gusto, not

always with memorable results. Reading the

multitudes of poems being published today, it is

possible to conclude that most of them are min

essays (or worse, mini-lectures) with broken

lines. They look like poems on the page, but they

lack rhythm, they lack tonal complexity, they lack

stodginess of the verse form. By not taking itself

relax and enjoy its main offering, which is, in the

too seriously, the poem allows the reader to

end, its story

emotional and intellectual charge. (For example

disarmingly simple language, Nepal's poets

Pratibha Rana is a Rastriva Prajatantra Party leader, and mother-in-law of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba In an interview with Deshantar Rana talks about the infighting in the Nepali Congress and the role of the prime minister

How do you feel about the Prime Ministerís decision to dissolve parliament and announce elections? Was his action appropriate? There was no way out, apart from announcing elections.



The [Congress] party says the prime minister has made a mockery of the multiparty systemÖ According to what we read in the papers, the prime minister informed the party president. When the latter didn't show any

signs of objection, the prime minister registered the proposal to extend the emergency with parliament People are speculating that there may be a icoupî, a constitutional coup. Is that possible?

That's laughable. It's like a baby breaking a toy that he didn't know how to play with in the first place, and then bawling at his parents. Ever since democracy was established, only the monarchy has abided by the constitution. The present king has reiterated that he is a constitutional monarch. Desnite his repeated assertions that he respects the constitution and multiparty democracy, people say there's going to be a coup. There can never be a coup in Nepal. A river can't flow upstream. Time past doesn't return. The rumours regarding a coup were started to mislead the people, they were started by leaders who want to cover up their wrongs.

Some say the monarch needs to be more active. Do you think this is appropriate or necessary?

All the [political] parties have said so. But how active they mean, I can't understand. This is a country of rumours. Someone said this! Someone did that! I don't believe in rumours. Times are changing. If you cannot flow with the times, you walk the wrong road. There's no possibility of playing a more active role

Do you think, contrary to what people say, none of Deubais ministers are corrupt?

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

As long as there's no legal proof, we can't say whether or not

Clear politics Editorial in Chalphal, 2 June

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALL PRESS

epeated. We have to challenge

winning elections to face fair polls

mechanisms needed to ensure free

election practices are one of the

country to this pass, and those

weapons we aimed at others in the

past may backfire on us now. What

is happening in the Congress now is

also, in a manner of speaking, the

Heartbreaking

It seems amoving to think that even in

this day and age people can be clapped

where they eat, sleep, and excrete like

animals But 35-year-old Indeanessad

Asasti (Murari) from Gerkhu VDC

Nuwakot district, has been made to

done because Indraprasad is mentally

retarded. Every time Indraprasad sees

free, his eyes fill with tears. "It's been

the goats and kids running around

20 years since I have been made to

else, he would have gone crazy by

suffer this torture. If it were someone

now," he says. Indraprasad's mother

Balkumari Agasti says he attacks members of the family, and so cannot

be freed. "I, too, cannot bear to look

at my son chained like this, but what

can I do, we can't take any more of hi

behaviour," she says, looking at her

son. This correspondent could not

this simply because his mental

"It isn't right to chain him like

condition is unreliable. It's better to

leave a man who is mentally unstable

free," says neighbour Jayaram Rimal.

"One would go crazy chained up like

this even if one weren't in the first

place. If we talk to his father about

this, there is a fight. We have to keep

of the family, says, "Every time we

speak with his father about spending

not bring up the subject anymore.

What can we do? It is heartbreaking

doesn't even accept her suggestion

that Indraprasad be moved from the

Whenever Murari sees a passerb

to see him like this." The family

ne peers from an eyehole in the

us he said, "When I saw you I

thought you must either be the

police or human rights activists."

He says he has never met anyone

from a law-enforcement agency, or

human rights activist, or even local

administrators. Indraprasad says

that he is not mentally unstable,

and that if he is freed, he can be a

normal, productive person. The conditions in the stable are

the ticks and the bed bugs, but the

in the same place that makes it so

unhygienic and inhuman. "No one

marks left by the chains on his hands

"I can't even shoo away the mosqui-

a daughter, but his wife married

her maternal home

toes." Murari is married and even has

someone else and left their daughter in

"This is the 21s century, people

cares for me," he says showing the

morbid. It isn't just the mosquitoes,

fact that Murari has to eat and excret

window of the stables, hoping they

will come and free him. Talking to

stables to the front lawn

some money to cure him, he tells us t

Minkumari Lamichane, a relative

meet the father

quiet," he adds.

His family members say this was

near Bidur, the headquarters of

live like this for close to 20 years.

in iron chains and kept in stables

गोरंटाध्य

Biswamitra Khanal in

Gorkhapatra, 30 May

problems.

those who are used to simply

We also need to put in place all the . The people should be enabled to vote for the party of their choice and fair elections. Undemocratic without fear or barassment Everyone needs to be serious about factors that have brought the creating that kind of environment, because it is the minimum needed in a democratic society. People must be allowed, through impartial elections, to be the decisionmakers. Sweet talk alone cannot result of such practices. The lack of help in this regard, we have to show a clean political process within the our commitment in our actions party has been one of the major reasons for its never-ending

The government that sought the people's mandate is also responsible for conducting free impartial elections. There will be nothing more deplorable than if it is unable to fulfil the commitments it made. The existence of this nation will be threatened if, for any reason, impartial, democratic elections are not held. That is why we must all be vigilant in this regard. We cannot allow the mistakes

of past elections to be repeated this

time. We have to get rid of all those weaknesses. The country's crisis can come to an end when we begin to function democratically and address issues in the economic and social sectors. That is what we need today to take the country out of the present crisis. Whoever may have caused it, our main problem today is lack of peace and security. The country has been terrorised by murder, terrorism, violence and acts of looting. The Congress government professes to be democratic, but it is not so in practice. It is dictatorial, and it has ignored the people's concerns. motivated as it has been in the past by the desire to win elections at an cost. It used the communications infrastructure and other government facilities to support the candidacy of particular factions within its own party. It misused state machinery and past elections

were not impartial. So this time around all sectors should initiate actions to prevent past malpractice from being

I have fought for multiparty system all my life, I am not going to stay partyless

- Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in Tarun National Weekly. 3 June



Pot: Party "It won't break. I'm sure it won't break. Don't you believe me? OK, watch!

Partner of Concess Himalaya Times, 2 June

are talking about animal rights it's a shame that not one human right organisation or activist, the law and its keepers, the administratio has paid any attention to this case," says a local schoolteacher

The party line Chalphal, 2 June

Excernts from an interview with Ral Rahadur Rai, member of the disciplinary committee of the Nepali Congress that expelled Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

As a member of the party disciplinary committee, would you say the



decision to expel the prime minister from the party was an independent one, or was it by the party president? Bal Bahadur Rai; We investigated the issue on the direction of the party, but the decision on the

nunitive action stemmed from our independent discretion. We are obliged to follow party directives, but the disciplinary committee is an active, independent, able and responsible agency within the party We understand the party constitution and tradition, our decree is base on party values

Do you think the punishment meted out to the prime minister was fair? Our recommendation is fair Given the kind of mistake the prime minister made, he deserves it.

What will you do about the ministers who did not resign from their cabinet positions as per the party's ruling? I am not in a position to say what kind of action will be taken against these ministers vet, but the bottom line is that anyone who goes against party guideline is subject to punish-

Who do you think could have advised the prime minister on his move [to dissolve parliament! Do you think his advisors have the welfare of the nation in mind? I don't want to name his advisors in public yet. But it is obvious that he prime minister is not acting alone, he has a group to advise him. And it is obvious that the ho has been trapped by those who want to end democracy here, otherwise they would not have advised him to dissolve parliament

Don't you think punishing the prime minister and other ministers will split the party? Those members who are faithful would not consider splitting the party, others might break away rom it. The Nepali Congress is a party with a proud history, but we cannot help it if somebody wants

Of Krishna Prasad Rhattarai and Giriia Prasad Koirala who is a better strategist? Both are equally good. Koirala is very straight forward, and stubborn too. But there is no better leader to head the Congress. It is because of him that our party is strong.

Koirala as leader of the party? I have not seen an appropriate successor to him in the party leadership yet, but I am optimistic the party will be able to nurture a new leader.

You have been criticised by your party for not having very good academic qualifications, how do you feel about that? Academic qualifications aren't all that is needed to develop political vision and leadership abilities. A professor has never headed this country. One has to be determined to serve the people and have good moral conduct, in order to be a good leader. If academic qualifications taught leadership qualities to individuals then how come the well-educated ministers are involved in corruption? I might not have academic qualifications, but I have all the qualities needed to lead the country, and I am against all sorts of corruption.

Jailed iournalist Editorial in Jana Aastha, 5 June

Ambika Bhandari, a member of the Dhankuta district committee of the Nepal Working Journalists Association and correspondent for Jana Aastha, has still not been freed, six months after she was detained. The police brutally tortured Bhandari when she was taken into custody from her lodgings in Dhankuta on 16 December without a warrant or any proof. She was arrested around 7PM and then taken to Dhankuta's district police office, where she was beaten with pipes and kicked for almost two hours, until she fainted. From 17-21 December the police kept Bhandari on the cold cement floor blindfolded, handcuffed. She was not even given water to drink

It is said that Bhandari was arrested because she went to watch a mass meeting organised by the Maoists and also sheltered some insurgents. Of the people arrested in Dhankuta [around the same time] two journalists are still in detention. Professor, advocate and journalist Thakur Baral is also completing some six months in detention When representatives of the International Red Cross went to meet them, the administration hid all the politica detainees in a storage room. There has been much talk about human rights abuses on a large scale in Sunsari and Sankhuwasabha, but the situation in Dhankuta is equally bad, local intellectuals tell us. They talk about how mentally unstable people, wandering musicians, pregnant women, and even septuagenarians have been beaten to within inches of death People bear physical traces of

beatings and electrocution even four months after the fact. Innocent people have been victimised by security forces for allegedly being Maoist supporters. On the other hand, the ministration has been unable to take any action against people who have joined or support the Maoists lured by the prospect of financial or political gain, or simply from fear of retribution. This has increased speculation that even the administra tion is not free from prejudice.

Who do you think will succeed

'My tears flow at all this poverty/ So much poverty/ Have we no heart?" would pass as a noem today). Poems should be layered, resonant expressions, suggestive and rich and compressed; but reading most of today's free verse, it would seem as though Rimal did us all a disfavour by licensing hoards of slack, flat doggerel. Raiav, who is at his best writing stories, has taken up the challenge of free verse head-on in the poem translated below, but without compromising his storytelling impulse. His is clearly a narrative sensibility; the poem below could have been written in prose form. Yet the content does gain by being a poem; there is a comic effect to many of the line breaks, and the lightness of the tone is well served by the slight, guick movements of the lines. Indeed, the un-poetic content and 'artless' style seem to poke fun at the

SETUDIOS.

A LIFE-THREATENING COLD Important persons in the office have come down with colds This is why these important persons are not performing any work now The important persons who have come down with colds are the peon the boss.

> the whole office got into a muddle. No signs of approval were scrawled on the No stamps were affixed on the letters Lacking the boss's signature all outgoing letters were halted. All visits ended for those not dealing in cash The only thing to leave the boss's room were his sneezes: ha-chinal Those who asked "What's that?" were told: "The boss's nose caught a cold." Dreadfull The peon has also caught a cold. He's shuffling in and out wiping snot from his nose, sneezing, bringing the boss drinks of hot lemor and serving tea to the boss's visitors.

As soon as the boss caught a cold

The cold has made no difference to the Wiping snot from his nose and sneezing: ha-chioo! he continues with the boss's assignments. To cure his fever he came without eating his meal. He's famished but this hasn't dampened his zeal.

The cold has affected the office, though, Office matters aren't moving ahead.
The boss hasn't signed all the letters. only those that bring him some cash The cold has earned him a tidy income.

"The boss has caught a cold. Come tomorrow. No files will be approved today Leave now Don't crowd around. say the boss's emissaries as



they have the papers signed of those who whisper in their ears about money The cold-embattled boss wines snot from his nose with cash and scolds the peon. This ass's cold spread to me Oh! How my nose itches!" Rubbing his nose he eyes all the papers that bring in no cash. "Take all these away. Bring them back another day Oho! What I cold I've caught. It spread to me from this ass

Proud at having caught the boss's cold he pinches his nose and tells everyone "The boss passed on his cold to me What to do? Sneezing: ha-chioo! and enjoying himself he tells everyone he meets. "What to do? I'm ruined. I caught the boss's cold."

Outside, the peon starts bragging,

"I caught the boss's cold."

Those who overhear him tell on him to the boss, and the boss rages like Jung Bahadur of the olden days: "What? He says I gave him my cold? He gave me his cold! Call him in!"

The peon is fetched. Sneezing five times he offers a humble namaste Without acknowledging his greetings the boss rages: "I gave you my cold? This is what you claim?" "No haioor. I haven't said that. I haven't said that No haioon

I haven't said that I haven't said that, haioor, The peon adds, "Rather, I gave you my cold." Then he gets leave from the boss's And again he starts to feel proud Pinching his nose and wiping away the snot he starts to brag "I gave my cold to the boss!"

Pleased at having given his cold to the boss he now says, "See, I caught a cold and passed it along to the boss." The boss hears about this too

and again the peon is fetched. The boss rages like a double Jung Bahadur: "You gave me your cold?" "No haioor. No haioor. No hainne After saying reams and reams of the peon understands all, at last and says. "I don't even have a Pleased that his is a highly original cold as befitting his station the boss wipes snot from his nose

Now the peon sneezes: ha-chioo! vigorously wipes snot from his but never mentions that he's caught a cold. Rather he prays in silence: Eh Kashi. may I never catch a cold that proves life-threatening to my employment.

and after sneezing, snaps.

"I wonder whose cold I caught?"

by MANJUSHREE THAPA ENCOUNTERS My brotherin-law's wives

es, she's like that. She stands with her hands on her hips puffing away at hand-rolled cheroots called "paper" bought at he local pasal at Rs 3 for a bundle of 20

She wears Hong Kong nylon saris, pink flowered ones with metallic gold borders over canary yellow frilled petticoats. She slings an imitation D&G bag over her shoulder, and wears Chinese velvet strapped shoes, size 27. She is whipcord thin, but eats enough for two and believes in viewing metropolitan Kathmandu perched precariously on the balcony wall. She is my relative from the village am the urban sister-in-law. I must now forego my gas stove in the kitchen to cook kilos of rice in smoky wood fire kitchens.

Lwho had read of Vests and Kests must now have to try and find inspiration in separating chaff from grain, try to visualise those visitations of the Muse, while she lets out a raucous cackle of delight at the mechanical gyrations on Channel V. One never stops learning in the socialisation processes

She is the fifth, the Pyari Kanchhi wife of my brother-in-law She can charm him and harm him, and twist him round her little callused finger. While I, the modern emancipated woman, figures out ways to extricate herself from a convoluted relationship, mired in liberation theology and feminist crosstalk.

She has no hesitations about making decisions, no dithering, no filial affectations. She commands the other shared partner, the poor pathetic, anaemic, barren Maili wife like a brigade commander Lucky are the other three who are long dead, hopefully in Valhalla. who have not tasted the whiplash of her acerbic tongue. She magnanimously hands out one and two rupee notes to her stepdaughters with a benevolent "Ja, ke, kini kha"

But she will not let life be easier for poor cowering Maili. We like to say we tation of Chandi in it's truest form until she has been appeased, has her blood sacrifice in char anni ko eyarling or tickets to see

Husband dare not offer a word are a patriarchal come to pass, then its manifes- society, why then do we look down with such disdain at our own?

Thulodai, depending upon the intensity of wrong done.

She will not let me buy steel utensils for the house, which I in my naïve altruistic way thought would lessen Maili's drudgery, who has to torture chapped fingers scrubbing ancestral Manipure thalis with kitchen ash in the cold waters of the Himal. She says I'll spoil her I must learn. If you want to assert your authority you must always try and maintain your upper hand. Be assertive, otherwise you are fated to a life of misery. How does one grasp these pearls of wisdom? No more the accommodating, self-effacing, devoted and doting wife. Where are the gender roles, the divisions of labour and the power-constructs? It is just women vs women. We like to say we are a patriarchal society, why then do we look down with such

We discriminate against the childless, barren women and call them aputali, We look at the widow and ostracise her, calling her anshagun. The baby is called alachinna because it's a she. If we haven't already killed her before she is born by having her sonographed. Having been born, we load her with the sins of our mothers we overwork her, do not treat her equal to our sons, bring her down to our downtrodden level and we talk of rights of the girl child. We look at the poor relative as someone who can be employed as potential domestic help, all in the name of charity. How nany of these poor relatives are there who are serving time, in these family prisons? When will women understand the need to be understood as women

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7 - 13 JUNE 2002 NEPALLTIMES

7-13 JUNE 2002 **NEPALI TIMES** 15

Football and the Nepali mind

talk about football

Argentina-Nigeria match with about 50 male undergraduates. The atmosphere was certainly different-Friday night's uni formed waiters replaced by a backroom kitchen staff, and travs of hors d'oeuvres and whisky swapped out for institutionalsized vats of daal bhaat and shortorders of egg chowmein. And all the students were vociferously supporting the heavily-favoured South Americans.

improve their own football skills During the game, I heard "luv-ly pass" more than any other comment, which is exactly what these guys say incessantly when they're on the football field themselves. But there was still plenty of flag-waving (Argentina's sky-blue and white stripes) and chanting: "Ar...Gen...Tina!

KU is holding exams this but that's all."

But as addicted as these Nepali fans are, I wondered if things wouldn't be 10 times worse if their own national team were in the tournament. In a recent editorial, the Kathmandu something like 50 years before



atisfied with the one football federation most countries bumble along with, Nepal has two. They have different presidents, each of whom seems to spend an inordi nate amount of time making sure

that is officially recognised by the rest of the world, rather than developing the game.

speculates that national character

player of whom there can be only one—and install someone of their particular ideological stripe, even if that person is in fact an inferior choice. Sound familiar? (Bill Brewster an Ameri can living in Dhulikhel,

might manifest itself in absurdity

on the field of play—left backs

would pass only to left midfielders, and right midfielders

would look to set up only the

team by scoring deliberate own

goals in an attempt to remove

right wing. And both camps night plot to bring down the

provides Nepali Times readers with a weekly football World Cup, column from Japan and Korea)







SPORT SUCKER FOR SOCCER

The Dybbuk of the Holy Apple Field Yossi Somer, Israel, 1997. Russian Cultural Centre, Kamalpokhari, 9 June, 5.30 PM. Inter-Cultural Film Society.

Three Men's Perspective A three-man exhibition of photographic art 9-27 June, 10AM-5PM, except Saturdays, Park Gallery, Pulchowk. 522307 Iconographic Calligraphy by Poosapati Parameshwar Raju. Until 12 June, Siddhartha Art Gallery, 11AM-6PM, except Saturdays. 411122

- Art of the Past Exhibition of sculptures. Until 12 June, Siddhartha Art Gallery, 11AM-6PM, except

- Bookie's Bar Watch World Cup games, win free buffets and other prizes with every match. Free entrance, everyday at the Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- * Word Cup Football Show All the World Cup matches on the Summit big screen. Free Entry 521810
- World Cup Watch St Xavier's alumni watch World Cup matches from quarter finals onwards on big screen for Rs 240, including free popcorn and a year's membership at the GAA. Includes the 7 June England vs Argentina match. All at GAA,
- Football on show Posters, national team jerseys, equipment, football newspapers and magazines. stamps, memorabilia, photographs and lots more. Also surf websites of the Negal Football Fan Club the British Council, and World Cup sites. From 26 May, British Council, Lainchour.

- Skill development workshops Telephone Skills and Welcoming Visitors Workshop 10-14 June, 7AM-9AM, Rs 4,000. Negotiation Skills/Conflict Resolution 11-13 June, 10AM-4PM, Rs 6,000. eld@wlink.com.np. 524202
- Mike's Breakfast; Cooking in Nepal and then some Book launch of Mike Frame's memoir
- published by Mera Publications. Mike's Breakfast/Indigo Gallery, Naxal, 10 June, 7PM.

 Friends of the Bagmati A group of activities aiming to clean up the Bagmati River. Email
- friendsofthebagmatinepal@vahoo.com for details. Namaste Banepa education project is looking for volunteers to provide input and ideas. wavetex@wlink.com.np.

- Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526
- Down Memory Lane Wednesday nights with Teesta. The Rox Bar at the Hyatt Regency
- ♦ Live music by Catch 22 Friday nights at the 40 000 ½ ft Bar. Rum Dondle Restaurant. Thamel

- Fusion Bar Now open at Dwarika's Hotel. Live blues and jazz music, European ambience. 479488 Metre of Malts Single malt exhibition and tasting. Twelve single malts for Rs 999. Evenings, Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- Mountain Madness Cocktails, happy hour everyday 4PM-8 PM, two for the price of one at Rs 250. Kilrov's of Kathmandu Thamel 250440

- British Week British speciality food. 2-9 June at Summit Hotel 12.30 PM 9.30 PM and Patan Museum Café 1.230PM 4.30 PM. 521810
- Monsoon Madness Barbecue every weekend from 6:30 PM onwards at Rs 250. Kilroy's of Kathmandu Thamel 250440
- The Tharu Kitchen Dikhri (steamed rice dumplings) with special jungle sauces and hot coriander chutney. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com. 061-25954
- Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café. Thamel.
- Weekend Brunch Rs 350 per head, special package available with bowling. Oriental and continental lunch or dinner by the pond. 1905 Boardwalk, Kantipath. 225272
- Vegetarian Specialties and clay-oven pizzas at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha.

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

- Jolly Jomsom Stopover Package One night, airport/ resort transfers, return airfare Pokhara/ Jomsom. ACAP permit, airport taxes extra. Resident expats \$150 per head, Indian nationals, IRs 4,999 per head, Nepalis NRs 4,999 per head, taxes included. Until 31 August at the Jomsom Mountain Resort., 496110 imr@soi.wlink.com.np
- Overnight and short stay packages at Dwarika's Hotel. Unbeatable prices. 479488
- The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner, 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort. 560675
- Chiso Chiso Hawama with Rusty Nails. Live band every Friday at the Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort. Rs 1,500 per person with twin-sharing. For Nepalis and expats only, Club Himalaya Nagarkot.

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





WTO, South Asia and Nepal Dr Shyam K Shrestha and Niranjan Baral Book Palace, Karhmandu, 2002.

The authors, a professor at Tribhuvan University and a joint secretary with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, detail the main purposes and tasks of the WTO and the Uruguay round of negotiations as it relates to least developed countries, and finally, track Nepal's preparations, independontly and through SAARC, for accession to the trade body. They also set out a vision and practical propostions for Nepal's accession

> Business of Bureaucracy Madhu Raman Acharya Phulchoki Enterprises, Kathmandu, 1996/2002

Acharya discusses public administration, management and development administration with reference to Nepal. He specifically addresses notions of good governance, transparency and accountability, and explores the differences between generalists and specialists. Acharya then explains how value addition to eople, and economic, conflict and disaster management can all benefit from reforms in the administrative and organisational structures.



Good Governance and Decentralization in Nepal Dev Rai Dahal. Hari Uprervand Phanindra Subba Centre for Good Governance and Development Studies with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Kathmandu, 2002 The authors explore the state, the market and civil society as crucial vectors of good governance, and detail

the links between good governance and decentralisation. They propose a typology of decentralisation in Nepal and ask how Nepal's political economy and institutional framework for local self-governance can work, with cooperation from donors, to create new conditions and policy options for decentralisation here

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

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two min from Bishalnagar Chowk (turn right and Landrover Defender 110 1990, 146,000 kms. Duty not paid. Price negotiable. Contact 521105 between 10AM-12 noon

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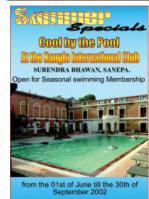
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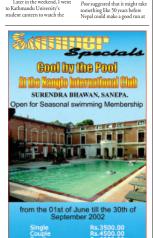
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The Dabur Nepal Family



KOREA APAN y the time you read this I'll be in Japan, but I spent most of the first week of the World Cup watching games in Nepal. Last Friday, I headed out to a Lazimpat hotel for a fancyschmancy opening night party. I despite the Rs 1 000 ticket, the mom was packed, with hardly an expat in sight; and second,

virtually everyone in the room was cheering at the top of their lungs for underdog Senegal. It's much more common, in my experience, for sports fans from countries with poor teams to root for countries with great teams. But Nepalis don't seem to revere defending world champion France as much as Argentina. Brazil and England. The lone

goal, by Senegal, was total slop and France was extremely unlucky to hit the posts and crossbar several times, but a win is a win and the shirt-and-tie crowd at the party was more than happy to spend a couple hours shouting at the big screen in support of Senegal. Karna Thapa, an educational consultant from Kathmandu, was in a philosophical mood after the match and said that the result was "very nice-France is very powerful and even

they can lose a game. Every team has to keep improving; no one knows what will be tomorrow. Later in the weekend, I went

qualifying for the finals, but a few of the exuberant fans I spoke with were much more optimistic, saying they could see it happening within 8-16 years

sure we'd all watch their matches

and scream our heads off in hope

Even though they're not,

from beginning to end.

the sports sociologists roll out of the background to talk about how football is the primary vehicle through which modern nations Many of the students seemed express nationalism, and if Nepal were competing this month I'm

focused on watching the game to

month, and Umesh KC, 20, from Banena, says he's trying to salvage his school year by watching only the matches of Brazil, Argentina, England, France, and Italy (which still means he's booked for over 40 hours of TV time this month). Regardless, his studies are taking a beating. "[Saturday] I watched football all day and I had a math test today," he said. "I passed,

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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Man of the match

n the studio now I have Bhaichung Bhutia, and we are watching the Brazil vs Turkey match. Tell me, Bhaichung, was that a performance by Rivaldo

Bhaichung: "Well, Gary, to be honest, I couldn't

agree less."
Thank you Bhischung, Now, back to Buratik Run,
Rivaldon, mn. Cam Rivaldon and Yes, Rivaldo carrum. Cam
Rivaldon and Yes, Rivaldon and Yes, Rivaldo and Yes, Rivaldon and Yes, Rival

Oxar for Box Axor in a Loding Role. With all those clothrion running around all over our IV screens for a month virus go percent that they are mortally injured, it is sometimes difficult to self the difference between the Foodball Woold Cap. and the annual Costns. But with all the other world event scoring for a transition, it has been comparing for a transition, it has been comparing for a transition, it has been seen inspearing for IFIA. World Cap came within evelal the very large of the properties of the pro

FIFA's Governing Body, being a democracy, is also distracted by its own politicking, threats of a split within the ruling politburo,

allegations of corruption, vote-buying and rumours of a coup. But it must rise above these petty governance issues and take immediate steps to ensure that there are more

goals. In this day and age how can you sustain viewer interest with a game in which, on average, there is only one goal per match? (Except if the Saudis are playing.) Here are some ways to get more goals into a game.

- Double the width of the goalposts.
- Eliminate goal-keepers.
 Allow offsides.
- 4. Increase the number of players on each side from 11
- Reduce the ball size to that of a tennis ball.
 In this manner, football will be much more exciting.

and it would not be inconceivable to have a Brazil-China match with a score of 43-21. More goals also means more time to have commercial breaks, which

to have commercial breaks, which means there will be enough sponsors to have the World Cup every year instead of every four year.

The other thing that slows football down is the rule that you can only hit the ball with ware from or your bead. Look at the

Americans, they took a boring game, changed

the shape of the ball from a round object into something sensemble ansacradi was to would bounce much more cazally, and then allowed That-sive boxing wreeding, and than 4-se-hand combat in the field. Secure, in comparison, is a siesy and avolvand game because pulvers are banned from using their gard-given hands. FIFA has made a start by considering legisling bodlegation in the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation in the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation in the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by considering legisling bodlegation with the control of the start by control o

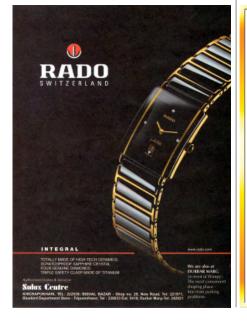
Bhaichung: "I want to know why I have to wear this suit. Not only is it tight around the armpits, but I look like a total dork."

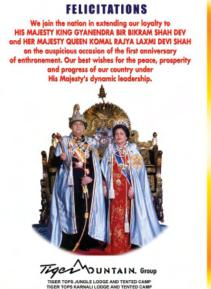
HEARTY FELICITATIONS



We extend our hearty felicitations to
HIS MAJESTY KING GYANENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV
on the auspicious occasion of the first anniversary
of His Majesty's accession to the throne of
the Kingdom of Nepal.







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