



South and North

It is still as King Prithvi Narayan Shah said: Nepal is a yam between two stones. This week, his descendant, King Gyanendra has completed important visits to



India and China. The king has sought and got support from both for the government's counter-insurgency campaign. "China supports the efforts of King Gvanendra and the Nepali government in cracking down on armed anti-government forces," Chinese president Jiang Zemin said after meeting the king on 12 July Chinese leaders refuse to call them Maoists, and say the rebels are besmirching the name of the Great Helmsman.

No grass, no roots

The cabinet decision on Monday not to extend the terms of elected village and district councils has made a lot of people angry. They see the hand of Deuba's allpowerful home minister, Khum Bahadur Khadka, to gerrymande elections.

The LIMI which dominates local bodies has the most to lose. and the party's Rajendra Prasad Pandey can harely hide his fury "This is what the Maoists wanted all along, Deuba has done it for them."

Donors are also livid. One diplomat told us: "This decision creates a vacuum, it is clear the Maoists are going to fill it." Last Friday, donors jointly wrote a terse letter to Deuba warning him that such a decision would only help the Maoists.

UNDP, German GTZ and Dutch SNV work at the VDC level in 60 Editorial p2 districts, as well as the Norwe-

gians and the Danes who support these programmes. The projects will be directly impacted by the dissolution of local bodies. "It is a problematic decision," the UNDP's Henning Karcher told us guardedly The best solution now would be to have both elections together."

TIMES nepalnews.com Q. Should it be a national holiday each time

Total votes: 2456

Weekly Internet Poll #44 To yote on to wave negatimes con Q. Do you approve of the cabinet decision to dissolve local government units?

ARUNA UPRETY in DOTI he woman had visited the health post with her sick baby. The health worker gave her some tablets and told ner to give them to the child after meals. Two days later, the health worker asked her how the baby was doing. "I haven't been able to give her the medicine because you had told me to give it after food," the woman

The Maoist insurgency in western Nepal is taking its toll on the health of villagers, and the conflict is eroding many of the gains of the past decades in immunisation, maternal and child health. But the crisis goes beyond lack of medicines and vaccines: there is a danger of widespread malnutrition as the conflict makes food scarce with repercussions on children and their mothers.

replied. "I have no food at home,

and we haven't eaten for days."

We were in Doti to organise a follow-up training of auxiliary midwives and staff nurses and

and a health emergency. Women and

children are affected the most.

also run a health clinic. (See "Women are dying in the farwest" by Aruna Uprety, #52). Thirty-five health workers from Accham and Doti were to take part. Only half of that number attended because they just didn't get the message. The phones are down, the postal service doesn't work, the buses don't ply. And then the poignant

question put to us by a nurse from Achham, for which we had no answer: "As a health worker, am I of any use in this situation? Most of my patients don't need medicines, they need food." The mule trains that traditionally transported food to Accham are stopped by both the security forces and the Maoists. "They should leave the locals alone," said one nurse.

"We don't know what will happen when the potato and

grains are exhausted." Most health workers say they will abandon their health posts once food supplies run out. They have no choice. This could create a humanitarian crisis in a region where services were poor even at the best of times. Even by Nepal's dismal human development standards, the west is the worst The far-west has traditionally had the poorest maternal and infant mortality statistics in Nepal. The status of women in society is lower here than elsewhere, and female literacy is only nine percent. So. although no one is healthy here, the burden of disease tends to be heavier for women because of lack of access to health care. All this is now made much worse because of the conflict see 🖒 p5



"The answer is no."



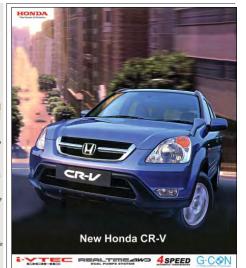
In a candid interview with the Nepali Times, Ken Ohashi, World Bank director in Kathmandu. discusses his concerns about budgetery support, banking reforms, and decentralisation, and the Bank's priorities.

NEPALI TIMES: What do you make of the government's spending plan for 2002/03, vis-‡-vis the goals and policy statements? KEN OHASHI: Commenting on HMG's spending plan has been a hazardous exercise, because the actual spending typically has differed much from the budget. However, this year, HMG has gone through quite a serious process of prioritising expenditures in most sectors. The 2002/03 budget reflects this effort pretty well. So I feel it is consistent with HMG's poverty reduction objective. Of course, the proof of the budget is in actual spending.

But is it good enough for donors to extend budgetary support? Well, no matter how polite I try to be, the answer is no. The budget is only a plan. We cannot assume that the actual spending will be close to the plan. In a pre-election period, there may be a lot of pressure to divert funds to lower priority projects that are nonetheless politically attractive. To Prime Minister Deuba's credit, he did overcome severe political resistance to cuts in unproductive spending. The true test, however, will be whether he and HMG more generally can stick to their guns, in a manner of speaking.

There are two basic requirements before donors will consider

budget support seriously. First, HMG must show that it is now able to keep actual spending close to the budget. Spending it well is quite another matter. The basic problem of public spending in Nepal has been the quality of spending, more than its quantity. The second requirement is effective implementation of the Immediate Action Plan. If these two things happen, then I think donors should get ready to offer



plenum during the first week of July

vas, from all we can tell, not so

unications between between local

smooth. To begin with, there were

logistical hurdles caused by impaired

cells. All signs point to the plenum being

divisions about both strategy and tactics in

view of recent political developments in

Kathmandu, especially the dissolution of

Congress and the announcement of genera

From the hardline statement made by

held in secret safe havens somewhere in

northern India. The conference itself

appears to have brought out sharp

parliament, the split in the Nepali

Maoist supremo Prachanda after the

have kept their long-term strategy of

plenum, we can conclude that the rebels

"encircling the capital", and continuing

major morale-boosting raids on military

garrisons. Prachanda predicts with some

bravado that he can cut the army down

to size "in two months" if Britain and

the US do not come to the govern-

ment's aid. Intriguingly, Prachanda

India came to the rescue

UNDERCOVER

cantured or killed

doesn't mention what would happen if

All this could be posturing. After all, the

Maoist rank-and-file are taking a beating.

With the army's undercover work, senior

Dolakha who was taken out by operatives

at the border while re-entering Nepal

after the party plenum. In central Nepal

the middle and top echelon leaders of

village and district peoples' committees

and local commanders have either been

Maoists are preparing for a high-profile

would target garrisons or bases in the

central region or near the Valley where

showcase attack. And it is logical that they

they have suffered heavy losses. This would

boost the morale of their own cadre, as

government by exposing its vulnerability.

well as deliver a psychological blow to the

This is why it is conceivable that the

killed, the latest being Rit Bahadur

Khadka, popular political cadre from

One great leap forward, two leaps back?



19-25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES 3

ACT LOCALLY

o, what if the Maoists started with their destruction of onethird of all VDCs in the country, this government has third of all VDCs in the country, and government the finished off. It has gone ahead and done exactly what the Maoists wanted.

Through a cabinet decision this week, it dissolved elected councils at the village and district levels. That the government is legally entitled to take that decision is not the point. The point is that after dismantling parliament to save his own skin in response to an intra-party feud, prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has now effectively dismantled democracy at the grassroots as well. After the Congress solit, this has not just become a partyless government, but a country without elected leaders (except the house speaker). And how can VDC secretaries run village councils when one third of them have fled because of Maoist threats?

The government had a lot of other options, the most logical being the legal extension of the term of local bodies by another year. Since local officials are so important at election time (for the wrong reasons) Deuba kangresis probably think it will help them to have bureaucrats in charge. Such narrow, short-term thinking is just what we have come to expect from our politicians. In that sense this is nothing new It is nothing new

that state radio and television have become the blatant propaganda arms of the faction-in-power. It is nothing new that a plane carrying members of a rival faction is not given clearance to land. We don't really need any more proof about the pettiness of our politicians, but recent testimonies to their petulance has crossed all norms of

Deuba's cronies are now going around using the disingenuous argument that the UML came to dominate local bodies because thenhome minister Bam Dev Gautam rigged the local elections of 1997. If this reasoning was not so specious, it would be quite funny. Because it essentially means: "They cheated, now it's our turn to cheat,

We have in this space given Sher Bahadur Deuba a lot of benefit of doubt. But the decisions he has taken in the past months really force us to question his motives. We have also argued that if there was one thing that worked in Nepal after 1990, it was grassroots democracy. Party-based village and district-level elections had generally forced local political leaders to focus on development rather than on raw power



It doesn't matter in Tinpiple VDC if you are UML, Nepali Congress. RPP (or even a Maoist), the citizens want the same thing: safe drinking water, a health post with a doctor in attendance, schools with roofs and text books, or roads to provide access to market for local produce. Locally elected leaders had started delivering these services because they were judged, and re-elected, on the basis of their performance.

Now, with one cynical and politicised decision in Singha Darbar callous national-level politicians have wrecked what took 12 years to build. They may have suffered for democracy, but these fellows obviously don't believe in it anymore. They only believe in sticking on to power by hook or by crook. Mainly the latter

The federation of DDCs, grassroots leaders and the opposition parties are understandably up in arms. You would expect the UML to oppose this move, since they are the ones who would politically stand to loose the most

Ignoring everything else they have done if there is one action of these fractious kangresis that shows extreme hypocrisy and myopia it is the fact that after saying local elections are not possible because of the security situation, they did not hesitate for a moment to dissolve parliament and call for general elections. Legally, Deuba could

have extended the term of parliament also by a year. If general elections are going to be held, as the Deuba government is saving, then we strongly urge that the delayed local elections now be held in conjunction with general elections in November. It would be the logical thing to do; it would save money, it would restore the peoples' faith in local leadership, and it would give the polity back

But maybe logic doesn't work here anymore



Jottings from a junket in Bangkok with lameduck mayors.

this city of 10 million people will be still

that the new airport hopes to handle

liveable enough for the millions of visitors

Many Nepali passengers rush through

dearth of junketeers like us. Keshav Sthapit

of Kathmandu, Budhhi Rai Bairacharva of

Paran, and Balaram Sharma of Surkhet are

organized by ESCAP, Accompanying then

consultants. Strangely, all the three mayors

are from the opposition party, and none is

Dhungana, an ESCAP official and a long

time resident here, the mayors' entourag

has a gala time. Mayor Sthapit is joking and

But Mayor Sharma's mind seems to be back

Sharma says it is a heads-I-win, tails

in Nepal where the future of the local

you-lose situation for the UML, which

controls most of the VDCs, DDCs and

the existing bodies nor let them lapse

of the present government to make the

impossible look routine. The government

municipalities at present. He says that the

government can neither extend the term o

government units remains uncertain

ing. Mayor Bajracharya chooses to sing

sure of the fate that awaits them back home

At a Nepali evening hosted by Bhabani

are their administrators and a clutch of

with local polls in limbo

here for the Asian Mayors' Conference

the transit at the Bangkok airport to catch

their connecting flight to Malavsia where

they hope to find work. But there is no

BANGKOK - For Asian junketeers, the Siamese City of Angels is a favourite destination these days. The rich of South Asia find Thai private hospitals reasonably priced. Middle-class East Asians come her release their tension at health spas offering tactile pleasures of all varieties and shades of grey. The poor of Indochina flock here to escape the drudgery back home in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. And the Burmese are here in force, escaping their nation's time warp. But for everyone fron everywhere, this is the metropolis of mammon. This is where you go into a mall and waste three hours instead of wasting it in a traffic jam.

Thais take very seriously the importance of tourism to their economy. Every effort is made to make visitors feel comfor able in this awfully uncomfortable place. And this is not a forced effort, Thais don't have to be forced to be nice to tourists, everyone

intrinsically knows that it is their lifeline. The floating market must have begun out of necessity in an area prone to flooding. Farmers of the Mekong basin must have had no choice other than taking their produce to the market in canoes or bamboo oats. But the things that the vendors sell during the traffic-iams in the network of

canals these days are tourist trinkets. Thai entrepreneurs have turned apparent disadvantages into assets of tourist attraction by careful infrastructure improvements and intelligent marketing. The water in the canals that once made Bangkok known as the Venice of the Fast is now dirty (let's not compare it to the Bagmati, though) but its legends continue to be repeated during guided tours in airconditioned coaches. Even a ride on the sky-train is suggested not as a necessity but as a tourist experience. It's so hot and humid that the entire city is big sauna at this time of the year, but hotels boast of the sauna facilities at

their premises. After Singapore's Changi, it's the turn of the Thais to dream of a regional hub. Once complete, Subamabhoomi, Bangkok's new international airport, wil be one of the most modern in the world Being built at a breakneck speed, it will replace the overcrowded Don Muang

which has been over-run by urban sprawl. can simply let things linger, just as it has apanese contractors expect to complete the been doing with every other major decision and disclosure in recent months. job within next three years. Presumably

It's almost midnight when we finish, but on the car ride back we notice the wholesale fruit-market is bustling. The Thai economy seems to have put the recession of 1997 behind Construction cranes the indicators of the hubble economy are back

by CK LAL

The classified section of The Bangkok Post has no distress sale ads. What it has in abundance are job openings and package tour promotions. The Thai economy is running a surplus, and the baht is getting stronger. Buoyed by signs of recovery, the Thai premier talks about Asian Cooperation Dialogue to generate more trade within the region. Malaysia's on-again-off-again Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed was so alarmed by Thailand's new-found confi dence that he hurried to dismiss the idea with impolite haste last week.

A Thai friend reads my mind and tries sure me, "Don't worry. If you work hard and save money, you can build better sky-trains and motorways. But no matter how much money we have, we can't build Mount Everest or Lumbini in Thailand." Had such a comment come from a westerner, it would have sounded patronis ing. From a fellow rice-eater, it's reassuring to

hear that our destiny is what we make of it Thais have made mistakes in the past by trying to achieve too much too fast. It's without shooting itself in the foot. But what ary and police personnel aren't Sharma doesn't seem to realise is the ability universally loved-their image is associated with the atrocities and corruption of junta

rule. There is still much socio-economic disparity, and comuniton must be as rampant as the editorials in the daily testify. Thais look towards Korea for nspiration, and have begun to plan the ov the Koreans did in the seventies

For harder lessons, we in Nepal must look towards countries that have ecently gone through with what we are experiencing now. As a monarchy, as a mer dictatorship, as a country that depends on tourism and agriculture. Nepal could learn a lot from recent Thai history Maybe the Mayors' Conference will turn out to be more than a junket, our elected city fathers have realised the importance of looking east.

cordon and search operations. However, there are logistical and numerical limita tions to an operation of this size and duration. The result is that the security forces have been forced to spread themselves thin, and not been able to take the battle to the Maoists too often.

It has in fact been the rebels who determine where and when to fight. The Maoists have made best use of the terrain, climate and the open border with India There appears to be a strategy to keep the security forces on a reactive mode, and to keep them guessing about where the next dhakka (strike) will be. The rebel leadership relies on decentralised campaigns with central planning, decentralised implementa tion of centralised policy-making. The government's approach seems just the opposite: centralised command and tralised implementation.

Even CDOs say they come to know of the day's incidents in their own districts through Radio Nepal bulletins. The other factor that hobbles the government campaign is its inability to use the media o its advantage, despite the fact that the Maoist propaganda machine has been effectively silenced

The Maoists are now concentrating their presence in the mid-western neartland. They have used superior knowledge of terrain and local support to slip out, attack a base, disperse, and slip back to their base areas under cover of darkness. They follow the Maoist dictum: "Keep the enemy away from

But lately the Maoists have started making mistakes. The two botched attempts to over-run the ISDP outpost in Khara in early June could have two reasons: either their communications with the central command were severed or they were trying to create a diversion while targetting some other base.

The Maoists were pushed back from Khara largely because of timely and adequate aerial support. All these have useful lessons for the army: the Maoists are difficult to beat on the ground and

The Maoists have used the political confusion in Kathmandu to re-strategise their "forward leap". But there may be factors they haven't taken into account.

ment. Party politics is in disarray, the

public's trust in government at an all-time low. Few believe free and fair elections can

taking the country down. The confusion in

to re-strategise and begin political activities.

ernment has provided space for Maoists

he held in November, and most people

generally blame parliamentary parties for

The party plenum seems to have

feelers to the government, taking part in a

interim government. The Maoists have also

future constituent assembly or even an

cashed in on the public outrage of the

disappearance and probably killing of pro-

Maoist journalist, Krishna Sen, and has

For the army, hardware support has

become a matter of some urgency. But

tion, and the government's inability to

perceptions of bad governance and corrup

assure donors of reforms that have delayed

this support. The morale of the security

forces is still high, but publicity about

declared a bandh on 16 August.



ner hand in the war

The Manists are on the defensive in the central region. They have declared Kathmandu Valley a zone for "legitimate" struggle and one ripe for making the decisive forward leap. But the security forces have conducted successful intelligence breakthroughs in the valley, and extracted valuable information from detainees. For the present, the Maoists are

avoiding local-level confrontations. The tend to suffer casualties because of the army's superior firepower and air support. They reason this would also delay them in their objective of a final "forward leap" which they think will propel them to capture state power. They are quite confident—maybe unrealistically so—that they can do this with a careful selection of targets, careful preparation, and concen-

The weak link in all this is the civil

LETTERS

and délays in foreign support could change things.

Then there is the India wild-card. Indian home miniser Lal Krishna Advani's statement on the eve of th royal visit that Islamic militants were sheltering in Nepal was one of the most direct statements by a senior Indian leader. The timing was interesting, given that high on the list of King Gyanendra's talking points with Indian leaders was curbs on activities of Nepali Maoists in

Then last week the Indian envoy in Kathmandu, Ashok Kumar, said pointedly in Bhairawa that Nepali politicians new where the Maoists were hiding in ndia since they all went to meet then

New Delhi's strategy of using the Maoists as a bargaining chip vis-à-vis Kathmandu doesn't seem to have changed. From a military point of view, the open border will mean that however effective the government's campaign against the rebels, the Manists have strategic denth and will always have a

CLOUD COVER

In the field, the army's limited use of air power will be further curtailed by cloud over for the next two months. Besides. discussed the option of extending new peace Maoists now have captured weapons that can threaten low-flying choppers. Although time is on the side of the

Maoists, they now need to give a concrete time-frame for their "forward lean" since they cannot take the military pressure, the shortage of food and money or much longer. The Maoists will need to make their presence felt, and they will want to do this sooner rather than later by bringing the conflict to the capital. For their part, the security forces will want to make some intelligence breakthroughs to capture top leaders and break the movement's momentum.

TREE POACHERS

Further to Lhakpa Sherpa's article on the 25th anniversary of the Sagarmatha National Park ("Sagarmatha National Park turns 25", #99), I offer documer tary proof of the timber poaching



going on outside the park daries to feed the demand for logs in Namche Bazar and other towns. Here is a picture recently took at Phakding of timber for sale in Namche and Khumiung. The logs are all from the Ponya forest in Jubing.

> Solu-Khumbu ARSENIC

We are engineers at the Denartment of Water Supply & Sewerage (DWSS), and were glad to read "Poisoned Wells" by Avidit Acharva (#102), We would like to clarify a few points. The National Steering Committee on Arsenic has decided to paint black cross or white background on arsenic

Pasang Gelzen Sherpa.

the public aware that water from such tuhewells should not be used for drinking and cooking purposes. But it can be used for washing. It is therefore not necessary to close down arsenic contaminated tubewells. But people need alternatives for drinking water, and the best option is to find arsenic-free tubewells nearby. It is therefore necessary to test all the tuhewells, Household level arsenic removal techniques have also been tested using locally available materials for distribution in those communities, where arsenic free tubewells are not vailable nearby. Of the 20 tara districts studied so far. Nawalparasi, Rautahat, Parsa. Bara and Kailali have the highest incidence of groundwater

> Nirmal Tandukar and Amar Neku DWSS, Panipokhari

KANGRESIS I read the opinion piece by Dr Ram Sharan Mahat ("Cheques and balances", #100) and then Saga SJB Rana's rebuttal ("Deuba was

given no choice", #101) and I was

impressed with the legal sophisti-

contaminated with arsenic

contaminated tubewells to make cation both used to justify their positions. Both are honest committed politicians who should be able to rise above petty quarrels within their party However, Dr Mahat and Mr Rana both show that they cannot. And therein lies the tragedy of the Nepali Congress, which is also the tragedy of this country. lamely, no one can see beyond their own narrow self-interest Lalita Sharma, New Delhi

HARA KIRI

Your editorial "Déià vu" (#102) laments the slow choking death of democracy in Nepal, Yes, the sovereignty lies with the people. however, our leadership whether radical, left, centre or right of the country have failed us gravely.

strive for security and stability, then, only the people will exercis their fundamental rights and duties as a polity. Security and stability is the key to growth and development of an economy. Growth leads to employment and income for the people. When people's income rise, then, there is growth of the middle class which is the

back bone of a functioning

In the natural state, people

societal structure. The power of the people also functions due to self-interest. Therefore, it is only natural for the people to either support or acquiesce in the old or any regime that can provide stability. The average Ram, Shyam, Hari, Rita or Sita does not have the luxury of thinking of the merits of democracy. They are

in their bhancha. It is not the sovereign power of the people that is at risk here. it's the political elite and the parties of the multiparty system The leaders have committed hara-kiri to democracy. The sovereign power of the people like the all mighty bear is in hibernation-it will rise up again

when there is hunger and the

merely interested in having food

right season. Suharna Rhattacha

Thank you for your daring editorial. I couldn't agree with you more that it is not democracy that has failed, but politicians who have handed this country over to the Manists, So, the answer to the Maoist problem is to make

democracy function more efficiently, so that it is truly epresentative of the overal needs of Nepal's majority popula tion that is poor, neglected and marginalised. That is the only way. A rightwing dictatorship now, will only hasten the day when we will have a leftwing dictatorship.

Hari Gautam, Kathmandu

Amar Thapa, Lazimpat

MORE HOLIDAYS

In case the powers-that-be missed it, buried in Under My Hat ("Crooks R Us", #101) was a serious point. A barb aimed at those yes-men bureaucrats who waste two full working days for this nation when King Gvanendra travels abroad. Can this country afford this sort of waste? Who ecides about such things? Maybe the king himself should put a stop to this sort of nonsense.

Kansas IISA

 The hureaucracy is turning sycophantic. The government should not declare holidays on the day that King Gyanendra leaves or returns from a foreign trip. If the king himself took that practical decision, his "no nonsense attitude would be lauded by the public who want to respond to his forward. The palace would also do well to take domestic royal image-building more seriously by presenting the affable, approachable and friendly image of King Gyanendra that was projected in the Indian media during his recent visit there. Also, the royal couple are already grandparents, but the public hasn't yet seen them, or the girl's parents for that matte with the little princess. What a boost it would do to the royal image, especially after last year's tragedy, if their majestic were to be seen in public carrying or holding on to their granddaughter. What a powerful message that would send in Nepal's patriarchial society about

exhortation to take the country

the importance of the girl child. Rupa Joshi, Kathmandu

 Thank you. Nepali Times. for being bold and professiona in telling us readers what is really going on in the countryside during these difficult times. Your role during the emergency is much like what the Indian Express did in India during their emergency. Please keep the light

Mangal Shrestha, Bangkok

NATION

money, and the security people

accused us of feeding the Maoists.

It is the same story everywhere: as the conflict drags on, ordinary

people like her are caught in the

ddle. Most of the time at the

health clinic, we were counsellors

and not doctors. Listening to the

patients' problems with the lack

of food for themselves and their

Travel has become difficult

checknoints everywhere. There is

your own provisions. But there is

no food, so you have to carry

no guarantee that your food

checkpoint. There are unofficia

town, "unofficial" because it they

aren't announced anywhere, news

of them travels by word of mouth.

Curfew violators are taken in, even

warned us to eat and go to bed by

shot. The lodge-owner in Doti

7PM. Outside there is a deep

silence punctuated by a barking dog, and the rustle of leaves. There

neace" here in far-western

And as in all conflicts every

children who are most vulnerable

The VDCs had been mobilised to

spread the word, and sick women

came from surrounding districts,

some walking or being carried fo

10 hours. Others came all the

This time, with the VDC

network all but non-existent, word

of the camp couldn't get around.

home. The logistical difficulties in

communications meant that we

were able to treat less than 600, all

people from nearby villages. It's no

people—they just couldn't get to

medicine supplies to Kathmandu

In the government's scheme of

us. We brought back half our

because we could not dispense

things, the security emergency

takes precedence over medical

emergencies. "We just pray to god

that nothing happens to anyone at night when there is a curfew," says

them to the sick and needs

travel kent most sick women at

getting to us, and the lack of

that there weren't more sick

And even if it did, the difficulties of

way from Dailekh district,

carrying their own food.

At last year's clinic in Doti, we were swamped with 2,000 patient

Nepal, but it is a deathly peace

where, it is the women and

dawn to dusk curfews in every

won't be confiscated at a

children, all we could suggest

were simple remedies and

and dangerous. There are

prevention methods.

It was the first township in Nepal to have urban planning, it had one of the first airfields in the tarai. And while other border cities like Birgani and Biratnaga surged ahead, Rajbiraj was bypassed by the east-west highway and became a backwater

You wouldn't know it when visiting this sleepy, dusty town in the vicinity of Biratnagar that Raibirai is the zonal headquarter of Sagarmatha Zone, named after the world's highest mountain. It is also an indication of Nepal's vertical topography that Mr Everest, 8.848m high is barely 150 km from this town, located at barely 100 m above sea level

Ánju Jha, a resident of Rajbiraj for more than two decades was recently confronted with an agonising dilemma; whether to stay on in her ancestral town or escape in search of better opportunities. The absence of proper educational facilities for her growing children coupled with lack of future prospects for her husband compelled the family to migrate to Kathmandu.

Anju is not an isolated example With general stagnation in Rajbiraj, more people from diverse backgrounds have been moving our of town for over two decades. Though this phenomenon is prevalent elsewhere in Nepal, Rajbiraj is an extreme example.

The district headquarters of

the cradle of the democracy

movement, where the anti-Rana

agitations began with the jail break

by political prisoners of the nearby

Hanumannagar Prison, How could

a place, which had everything going

Even northern Bihar has better

for it, fall behind so dramatically

health and education services, so

across the border. While newer

grown and thrived, Rajbiraj play

politics and economy. Jagannath

Das, the Rajbiraj mayor admits:

The pace of development in

people of Raibirai have moved

tarai towns like Birganj have

a peripheral role in national

Saptari, Raibirai was the earliest planned township in the country Systematically designed in 1938, it was declared a municipality in 1959. Rajbiraj served as a trade centre, occupying a prominent place in the economy due to the Hulaki highway. Rajbiraj was also

and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)

down with the ebbing of any momentary madness. So long as feudal

exploitation continues and the local administration sides with the affluent

landlords in their dispute with the landless poor, the cause for such ultra-

left extremism will exist. The ongoing bloody confrontation between the

lean communist activist, still recovering from a heart attack in a small

That man was Charu Mazumdar. He drafted the first of his eight

CPI (ML) factions in the tribal belts of Iharkhand, Bihar,

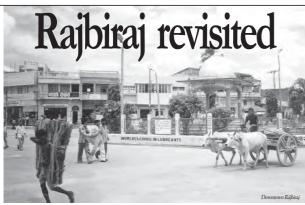
town at the Himalayan foothills, came out with a radical thesis in 1965.

political documents in his Siliguri home on 28 January that year. The

document he prepared still has its echoes in every act of daring of the

Against the backdrop of a worsening food crisis and political unrest, a

Maoists and the authorities in Nepal attests to this.



The tarai town that missed the bus. Is a revival possible? Rajbiraj has been a lot slower

than it should have been. There seems to be a consensu here that the construction of the east-west highway which by-passed played a major role in the town's lecline. Renu Yadav, MP from the area, believes that Rajbiraj would be a thriving economic centre if the

road had passed the town, instead it went through the tiny village of Lahan, to its north, Lahan has nov sprung up as a major township and development. Citing prejudice way junction. The town used to have an the capital-centric attitude of industrial estate, which has now this neglect. "Development is

been reduced to a cowshed. Industrialists are reluctant to invest in Rajbiraj because of the lack of infrastructure, and other basic services. This is a Catch 22 situation: there will be no need to invest in highways, electricity and water unless there are industries.

Farming fares no better. Ideally, irrigation, and its location on the border Raibirai should have been a major hub for trade in cash crops But harvests are stagnant and there is very little innovation. Dirt-poor peasants are just struggling to rvive from season-to-seasor

a shortage of leaders committed Municipal officials, for their to development in our town," part, blame discriminatory policies save Dr Ashokanand Mishra at of the central government for slow the Sagarmatha Zonal Hospital This rings true in the face of against the tarai, Mayor Das sees glaring political squabbles. Member of parliament, Yaday and Mayor Das, for example trade Kathmandu-based bureaucrats and politicians as the main reason for allegations of incompetence, and pass on the blame for Raibirai's confined to the valley," Das told us. decay on each other. While these might well be

Kumar Upadhyay, a consultan who has worked extensively in the intelligentsia is quick to point to region believes that the citizens of the failure of the political leadership Raibirai must take a share of the blame. Citing statistics, he says that

"Unfortunately, there has been

6,500 cases are filed anually in the district court at Rajbiraj compared to 3,500 cases in neighbouring districts and a mere 150 in the hills "This illustrates the myonic mindset of the people in Raibirai They prefer to go to court over petty issues instead of resolving disputes amicably and workin

towards development," he says Despite the general gloom and despondency, there may be a glimmer of hope if immediate ction is taken. Kuber Sharma, a Green Party member whose family is from Rajbiraj, suggests the following steps may revive the sagging fortunes of his town: Begin a management school of excellence in Saptari, which would attract students and improve the general state of education Strive to make Raibirai a software centre by supporting

- Develop local agro-industries for instance fish farming
- Get the Indians to bring a railhead at Kunauli, across th borderd in Ribar

"Operating an industrial area along with institutionalising better o-ordination among various government agencies is a must if any revival is to take place," says Sharma. But even more essentia local leadership and the citizens to work unitedly for progress.

If that does not happen Mishra at the zonal hospital oresees Rajbiraj once more missing the bus. "We could become the development hub of the region, but we will be nushed to near anonymity if w don't act." he told us

While this may be an extreme scenario, it reflects the pessimism of the residents and explains why more people like Anju are migrating. To stop this there is a need for a concerted effort by civil society and government to launch multinged interventions. However the big question remains: will Raibiraians themselves rise up to

India's Maoists

ntributing factors, Rajbiraj's

locally as well.

The Indian state is ignoring a peril that will not just die out.



Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The radical thesis sowed the seeds of a million mutinies and expectedly caused acute

Rejecting the agitational aggression of the established communis parties, Mazumdar proposed that every party worker form a five-man secre roup as part of revolutionary activity. Laying major emphasis on underground political training, he prepared an outline of revolution on the basis of agrarian inequalities, borrowing heavily from Mao Zedong's experimen in China. In these theses, he made a radical departure from the established practices of the conventional left by dismissing trade union activity and farmer's agitation as a mere way of getting marginal economic benefits.

Instead of a large-scale campaign to seize political power, he directed his followers to create liberated zones by armed struggle. The "secret active groups", the fourth document said, would play a crucial role in organising "revolutionary violence to counter reactionary violence" and fight the police forces.

Mazumdar surmised that it would be impossible for the police to zero on the workers participating in the secret groups. In the fifth document, he directly attacked the mainstream communists, accusing them of using unarmed people as "cannon fodder" instead of training them in guerrilla warfare. In the remaining three documents he criticised the established left for adhering to the path of parliamentary democracy and participating in

the non-Congress coalition governments in some states in 196 Charu Mazumdar's call for area-wise liberation armies and eliminating "class enemies" had an adventurous appeal for a section of youths and farm workers. Though the uprising was brutally crushed by the state machinery with active support from the cadres of the mainline communist parties Mazumdar's documents survived as pointer to an alternative political

More than 35 years after he wrote his first radical document Mazumdar's idea of revolutionary violence, liberated zones and armed campaign are still being put into practice by the MCC and PWG activists.

Despite the heavy toll of lives exacted by this violence, and its threat to parliamentary democracy, we have seen no perceptible urgency anywhere in the political establishment to understand the cause of this warfare and evolve an effective response. \(\text{(The Times of India)} \)

(Daniel Lak is away on holiday and will return next week.)

There is peace in western Nepal, a deathly peace.



Clockwise from top, left: young mothers line up for their check-up

one social worker from Kailali, and adds with a hint of sarcasm in her voice: "No emergency is more urgen





than the state of emergency." •

Advertising to win the hearts, minds and souls...









visit our website and see how good design pays www.water-comm.com

design. The feam comprise of professionals Graduate in Advertising and Graphic Design from India and Nepal. We are providing following services ADVERTISING PROMOTION VISUAL IDENTITY EDITORIAL DESIGN PRINT PRODUCTION TRADE SHOW WEB DESIGN



DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Former MP missing after 'arrest'

In an appeal to the National Human Rights Commission dated 17 July, the family of Tsewang Lama, former MP from Humla, has asked the commission to look into Lama's disappearance. A 14 July news item in The Kathmandu Post says that Lama was arrested by the Chinese authorities while in Tibet on suspicion of being associated with Maoist activities, and was handed over to the Royal Negal Army

Lama's family and friends don't buy it. They say Lama, who also goes by the name Chakka Bahadur Lama, had returned from Kailash to Humla district headquarters in Simikot by helicopter on 11 July with an Indian tourist group. There, they say, he was apparently asked by local security and government officials to stay for a few days in Simikot before return ing to his home in Torpa village. There has been no official news about Lama, and his family has not heard from him since, Lama's son Riniin has appealed to the commission, human rights organisations, and political parties, asking them to help ensure his father's safety

A former member of Baburam Bhattarai's Samvukta Jan Morcha. Lama gave up politics in 1994 and was managing an NGO, the Humla Conservation and Development Committee. Before his disappearance he was also preparing to visit Kathmandu to launch his guidebook on Humla, Kailash Mandala: A Pilgrim's Trekking Guide (Bookworm, #101).

Constituency update

The Constituency Delineation Commission has reduced the number of constituencies in Palpa to two from the previous three, and in Jhana the number is down to six from seven. The changes, which come into effect in the November mid-term polls, also include an increase in the number of constituencies in Udayapur and Kailali by one each. The Election Area Delineation Act requires that constituencies be redrawn every ten years to incorporate the changes in population distribution, and the diversity of the population. The present changes are based on the findings of the

Humane image

The Royal Nepal Army headquarters has set up a human rights branch under the Department of the Adjutant General to look into adherence to or violation of the prevailing human rights and humanitarian laws that might occur during military operations, and handle public complaints.

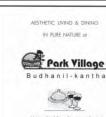
On 14 July, after driving for two days over 1.200 km from Kathmandu to Dhaka in a VW Beetle, editor of Himal South Asian magazine Kanak Mani Dixit and his team were greeted by 100 disabled men, women and children at the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Dhaka (see pic). "I have two missions—to raise awareness about spina injury in Bangladesh and in my country where a lot of people, mostly poor, suffer from it. Second, to tell people that driving from Kathmandu to Dhaka isn't all that difficult." Dixit was quoted as saving in Bangladesh's The Daily Star.

Dixit drove to Dhaka to raise funds for the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre in Jorpati. He has already raised Rs 800 000 of the Rs 1.2 million the centre needs for a year. Opened by Edmund Hillary on 7 April, the centre draws on the experience of the 20-yearold CRP in Bangladesh. Dixit survived a serious spinal injury in a 60 m fall in Lamjung in 2000. (See "Standing up to spinal injury", #91.)

Matching donations for HIV

The Save the Children (UK) country office says that for each donation made by an individual Nepali donor to PRERANA, an NGO initiated in 1997 by HIV/AIDS positive people, it will offer a matching donation. This pledge lasts until 25 July and is valid for donations up to Rs 100,000.

PRERANA works to create greater awareness about HIV/AIDS, and also provides counselling and support for positive people. Due to financial constraints. PRERANA is faced with closure. Interested donors can contact the organisation at 412912.



Master Chef Sher Singh and Govinda prepare elaborate

Saturday Gorkhali Brunch - Rs. 295.00 Sunday Continental Lunch - Rs. 325.00 ichildren under 12 Years net 50% discounts

For reservation Tel: 375280

NAGARKOT

"Chiso chiso hawama"

ONE NIGHT TWO DAYS PACKAGE

Rs. 1500/- net per person (twin sharing)

PACKAGE COMES ALONG WITH

Kathmandu Office: Hotel Ambassador, Lazimnat, Tel: 410432.414432

email: club@mos.com .np

ACE HOTELS & RESORTS

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Helvetas is looking for a Programme Officer to join the

small central country programme office team

The PO is responsible for providing support and guidance to al

Helvetas projects in Nepal, including many civil society partners. A team of three professional staff design and monitor programmes

and various organizational policies across the country. We are

looking for a fourth team member with rich proven hands-or experience and clearly demonstrated leadership qualities.

Provide a proactive backstopping role for social, economic and technical activities in the sectors of Rural Infrastructure;

Facilitate practical learning/complementary linkages within and between own progammes, and with other actors.

Green Sector; Skill's Training and Business Promotion.

management of a Learning Through Monitoring System

Act as watchdog and support person for qualitative vectors

across all programmes.

Continue to improve and manage support modalities for

Qualification and Experience:

Good common sense, good judgement and an ability to

Willing and able to work long hours, independently and

Flexibility to take on new responsibilities when required.

and openness to help other colleagues at all times.

Ability to liaise, and support partners and Helvetas projects

in a mature and highly professional manner.

At least 5 years experience in a similar position, and at least 3 years full time work directly in the village.

Excellent knowledge of English and Nepali, both written and

Excellent knowledge of computer application, or willingness

Good negotiating skills and smart strategic thinking

A Master's degree would be an appropriate qualifi

In order to balance the current team, we will be giving

preference to women (especially) and men from less

rested candidates should send their C.V., two references a

a passport size photograph to Helvetas. Only short listed candidates will be called for interview. Telephone enquiries will

cents and programmes for the organization

civil society, private sector and government partners.

Work with the programme team in developing new con-

Provide other forms of conceptual and managerial support,

Take responsibility to the continuing development and

Major responsibilities:

as required.

think logically

Candidate Profile:

represented ethnic groups.

(PO) in Kathmandu

Breukfast . Dinner . Glass of wine . Transportati

hostile territory. (Even if the more

precious nuggets to offer, would the

to the same set of supporters he did

Sections of the intelligence

community yearn for the predict-

ability of the Panchayat decades.

Spymasters then scouted college

ampuses to recruit the best and

the brightest. With most ideologi-

cally attuned students either in jai

exile or underground, it was easy to

indoctrinate the rest in the virtues of

reneration panchas honed their skills

in the only legal student organisation

he Rastrabadi Swatantra Vidvarthi

Mandal (RSVM), adapting some of

'mandales' are leading luminaries in

today's multiparty politics, which is

not something to be terribly worked

up about. The former Cold War rivals

are today led by a former KGB agent

It's important, though, not to

decline after restive students force

the government to ban the RSVM

in 1979 (Which establishes, albei

tentatively, the student-sleuth

linkage.) A decade later, middle

ranking leaders of the people's

ement could not only evade

The panchas thought all those

arrest but also contact the supremo

ommander under house arrest

top comrades in jail were senio

functionaries in the Marxist-

Leninist hierarchy and tried to instigate them against the Kanøresis

Days after the fall of the partyless

edifice, Madan Bhandari surfaced in a four-column New Delhi-datelined

nterview in The Times of India. He

was followed by a beay of little-known

names that would go on to adom his

To be sure, the challenges have

grown enormously since the days

when rookie special agents spent

hours pretending they were playing

cards in front of the homes of leading

pro-multiparty leaders. Gone are the

ombs from bales of vegetables was

onsidered the most hazardous bear

An NID team travelled to the

attacks. An ambitious endeavour, you

might say, considering how American

school trainees from a particular part

take-off and landing procedures. But

there's the first lesson: never forget

to connect the dots even when i

seems they're not there. There's a

Mandala House

Prime Minister's Rd, Baluwatar, P.O.Box 1222, Ktm, let: 444444, 412412, Fax: 977-1-4211

reason why intelligence, in the

lexicon of espionage, is both a

quality and a commodity. •

of the planet were so listless about

nts failed to figure out why flight-

United States last month to learn better ways of anticipating terrorist

ays when sniffing out Kangresi

central committee roster

for instructions

and a son of a former CIA director

over-rate the panchayati intelli-

gence apparatus. It went into

nation's needs. Some former

rism is unfair. For one

thing, the department has become

the principal dumping ground for

supporters of the home minister of

the day With that kind of person.

nel policy, even the most chronic

motivation to keep their eyes wide

insomniacs would have little

open. Perpetual funding and

logistical problems force intelli

creativity of fiction writers. When

allegations of being an informant

penalty in the Maoist rulebook, you

are enough to invite the death

gence gatherers to adopt the

the Gestapo's virulent methods to the

partylessness. Countless second

Home Minister be ready to listen

so much to silence?)

enterprising special agents had

achievements simply reaffirms the

dominated tradition and culture, the

pervasive flaws of our Hindu-

handsome, elegantly-dressed from a momentary flash on TV. When don't recognise him?" He turned out o be a celebrated doctor whom I'd

quaintance narrowed his eyes and tons of money. Enough for three enerations." I remonstrated weakly that I had heard the doctor was a selfmade man who'd worked very hard to achieve his material and professional status. But for my acquaintance, the doctor's unforgivable sin was that he transcended his rural childhood overty and was now strutting about the nation's capital with too much of

Lused to think that such corrosive Panchayat era, such caustic observations were daily fare, especially regarding the mandarins of the Panchayat regime. Nepali society remained caught in the culture of

Back then, one's ambition and unward mobility especially in His Majesty's Governmen service, was linked to one's family background

whether one was a humble, fussy pundit in a powerful household or had a grandfather who'd been a

and family connections to secure a pick and choose among a variety of private sector. The Kathmandu elite 30 years ago. Its monopoly over ower, status and wealth have oosened When it has resisted

through its enclosure It is true that in these times of chaotic anarchy, masquerading as democracy, corruption, graft and "source-force" remain powerful ager to propel one towards wealth and status. So, walking by a gaudy. posing residence, one instantly thinks that the owner must be a smuggler, a crooked businessman or a corrupt politician. How else could he (rarely ever she) afford such a luxurious lifestyle in perpetually impoverished Nepal? We can't accept that people with such possessions worked hard to achieve what he so proudly flaunts. When confronted

with conspicuous wealth, our visceral reaction is to think it is subterfuse.

and thus deserving of contempt. Our instinctive contempt for succeed. Others

must fail " 🌢 (Rajendra Khadka is a

BIZ N NRB directives

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has issued new directives to govern the operations of 34 cooperatives with permission that have been permitted to do limited banking. The 12 July central bank directives require these institutions to hold on to 10 percent of their capital. Seven percent of the deposits are for capital adequacy, one percent in an account with the central bank and the remaining two percent as total liquid funds in vaults or in current accounts at a commercial

Paid vacation

Nepal Tourism Board and the tourism industry department at the rested and fresh from a vacation in Olangchunggola?

The Bank of Scotland of which the ICC Bank is part began work aimed at turning around the Nepal Bank Limited this week. The management consultants will replace the bank's top management and take over the day-to-day functions, while also updating accounts and trying to shore up the ailing bank. The management consultants are required by contract to prepare a detailed action plan within 45 days of beginning work, which will be implemented after it is approved by the central bank. Similar reforms at the Rastriya Banijya Bank remain up in the air following the decision of Deloitte Touche Tomahatsu (DTT) to not take up the job.

The Agricultural Development Bank Nepal (ADB/N)—a government-run bank whose books are to be scrutinised by foreign auditors this year-reports profits for two consecutive years. Early this week, its general manager said that profits in 2000/01 totalled about Rs 93 million, slightly Rs 1.45 billion. The rest is owned by the Nepal Rastra Bank, co-operatives and individual shareholders. The ADB/N, like the Rastra Bank and the Rastriya Banijya Bank, the two other large banks that involve government, is said to have a backlog of unpaid, politically-motivated loans, poor bookkeeping and excessive government influence in day-to-day operations. The bank's rural branches and outreach projects have also come under Maoist attacks in recent

FCONOMY

ministry are pushing to activate a 1998-idea to send government officials on weeklong paid vacations to boost domestic tourism. The proposal has been sent to the Finance Ministry, and is likely to be included in the 10th plan. Government officials use examples from India and China to justify the idea, and see it as a way to keep the tourism industry running in bad times. For now, no one is talking about productivity issues, or about the unsustainably long list of public holidays our government employees are already entitled to. Does this mean productivity will go up because civil servants will come back

NBL reforms

higher than the figure for 1999/00. The government owns 93.7 percent of the ADB/N's equity of months. ADB/N employs 4,615 people in its 546 offices.

China has announced it is giving Rs 780 million for three projects in Nepal—the 18 km Rasuwa-Syabrubesi road to the Tibetan border, a hospital for government employees, and a polytechnic institute in Banena.

There is more than meets the eve in Kathmandu these days.

Nothing is what it seems

t a recent social event. I saw a European car. He looked vaguely familiar, one of those faces one recalls I asked an acquaintance to identify the man, he looked incredulous. "You indeed heard about but never met

I was saving something sincerely appreciative about the doctor when my whispered conspiratorially, "He's made everything-wealth, status and, surely,

envy (if not character assassination) was on the decline among the Kathmandu sonhisticates, and so was disturbed by my naiveté. During the pusillanimous chakariand

material/professional

ninor functionary in the Rana

most conspicuous being caste division. Many bahuns and chhetris can't stomach the achievements of thos Today the educated person doesn't have to rely upon government service. from the lower caste and class who have now "made it" by, say, going abroad to work and earn. And so when position. A well-qualified person can the son of a hardworking sarki returns available professions, especially in the after a few years of hard labour in a Gulf fiefdom, buys land and builds: home, to his upper caste neighbours sn't as tiny and incestmous as it was he isn't a role model, but that wretched sarki's son showing off. audacious people have simply crashed

Few will admire the fact that the ing man worked hard and earned his wealth honestly, amidst tremen dous hardships. The horror, contempt and avoidance of physical work hav led us to scorn achievement. Corrupted by our deep-rooted culture of patronage, we seem totally unable to acept that there are many among us who have indeed pulled themselves up by their bootstraps and worked to achieve their dreams, even if what they have achieved may appear to many vulgar and kitschy. The next time you're going

walkabout in Kathmandu and you se a magnificent mansion or some sleek chap in a shiny new car, stop, think about your thoughts. For there is mor than meets the eye in Kathmandu these days. Or you might be blinded with

envious rage, echoing the words of an 1 observant writer who remarked, "It isn't enough to

> freelance facilitator in Kathmandu.)

"Dissolving local councils is a serious setback..."



from p1

What other expectations do you have for budgetary support? We are looking for evidence that HMG is substantially improving its ability to deliver public services and is implementing some key reforms to which it had committed. I think there are three sets of actions we look for, First, the vigorous implementation of the Immediate Action Plan, including the transfer of the first batch of at least 100 nublic primary schools to full community management and putting a certain number of sub-health posts under community oversight. The Plan also includes important funding rules for development expenditures whereby the release of budget for P1 is tied to performance indicators and P2 and P3 projects will get funding only after funding of P1 projects are assured. Second is bringing RBB (and NBL) under external management teams. This has been the key "trigger" for raising the overall lending level by the World Bank, Without HMG following through on its commitment in this area, it will be difficult to consider budget support. Third, strong and concrete actions to demonstrate HMG is truly committed to fighting corruption. With elections coming, there is a

heightened concern about abuse of public resources. What about projections on revenues, foreign aid and loans: I think the projections are still on the optimistic side. In 2001-02, revenues grew a meager 3 percent, because of a sharp economic slowdown. The new udget projects revenue growth of 13 percent, which implicitly assumes a

fairly healthy economic turnaround. I hope that will happen, but I do not

think it is wise to assume that. Since HMG will be short of cash in 2002-03

donor-assisted projects, I also think the projected levels of aid inflows may be too high. This leads us to the perennial concern of an unrealistic development budget. As in the past, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) may have to impose the real budget constraint by limiting the "release" of budget, thereby making the budget figures fairly meaningless. Are we back to business as usual? Not quite. HMG has come up with a sensible and important innovation. This budget specifies a small number of priority projects ("P1" projects), which amount to only about Rs 17 billion. This should give MOF a tool to allocate limited money on important develop ment projects on a priority basis.

Are you satisfied with the numbers, quality of projects and

prioritisation in the budget?
I think the list of 100 P1 projects is good. One can argue about whether ertain projects should be really P1, but my sense is by and large this is a credible list. I understand that some donors are unhappy that "their projects are relegated to P2 or P3. There is also speculation that some ninistries deliberately put some donor-assisted project in P2 or P3 lists and their favorite projects in the P1 list, figuring that donors would put pressure on government to fund their P2/P3 projects anyway.

Well, this is a learning process. Ministries may make mistakes. They may play games. But the best response by donors is to respect HMG decisions. Even if HMG makes some mistakes, unless donors respect its priorities, HMG will never become accountable for its own decisions.

Generally, the World Bank seems to have become very selective about the projects you fund.

I am glad that you have noticed how selective we have become. We want fund broadly two types of projects. First, projects where, things are happening in the way of reform. Second, we want to fund community pased projects on the belief that empowered communities will make things happen. We hope to be able to fund three or so new projects: a financial sector reform project; to support the reform of RBB and NBL; and a rural water project, which promotes community-based water schemes and a power project, to support reform of NEA, creation of a system to bring private power generators on a competitive basis, and community-based micro hydro schemes. If conditions are right, then a budget support

What about Melamchi? Why arenit you involved? Well, those are exactly the questions we have been asking ourselves. I people view Melamchi as the solution to all their water problems. We elieve that important options have not been explored to utilise the water resources available within the valley. First order of business is to fix the distribution system, and start charging prices to reflect the scarcity of water. Only then, one can find out how serious the alleged water shortage is. It may turn out that a shortage does not exist, at least for many years.

Besides, without fixing the distribution system, Melamchi water will have no place to go but into the Bagmati River. Now you may ask why the World Bank is reluctant to fund rehabilitation of the system. You need only to look at the history of the four projects we did try to support over the last two decades to realise that it was money down the Bagmati. The question that begs to be asked before spending about 10 percent of GDF on this project, which benefits arguably the richest 5 percent of the population, is about its necessity and priority relative to the vast needs of the poor who live outside the valley. Some have argued that higher water charges will pay for Melamchi and hence this project does not affect HMG's ability to implement more poverty focused projects. I question that assertion. This project costs over \$400 (Rs 31,000) per valley resident. Do you really think people are ready for that kind of invest nent? Also, in 2002-03 budget, inclusion of Melamchi as P1 did displace Rs 1.8 billion worth of other priority projects.

How are donors reacting to the government/s decision not to extend the terms of local councils?

I think donors are deeply concerned. DDCs and VDCs are meant to represent the interest of the people through local electoral processes Many donors have supported DDCs and VDCs precisely because they believed that such processes are likely to make them more accountable to the people. Although the process of decentralisation is far from complete or satisfactory, there is evidence it has been changing the governance dynamics locally. The latest development is a serious

How has DTT is no show delayed the financial sector reform program? We are exploring with HMG alternative ways to address the problems of RBB (Rastriya Banijya Bank). The introduction of an external management team at NRI (Nenal Bank Limited) is in itself a very important ster in reforming the ailing commercial banking sector, So. DTT (Deloitte, Touche Tomahatsu) or not, we will be prepared to support HMG

Everyday a Celebration

politicians and officials had

tioned the government well in

advance that something was afoot

in and around Mangalsen and

Sathariya earlier this year. The

security forces went on to suffe

heavy blows from the Maoists

suspicious human movements.

because the state saw little reason

to investigate the sudden increase in

The National Investigation

Department (NID) and other spy

agencies have come under fire for

their soporific tendencies. Much of

The core flaw in Nepali espionage is information overload.

The return of the spooks



SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

he state of emergency may have turned statecraft into an overt

rought our private eyes under full

public scrutiny. Count the column

devoted to Nepal's espionage

inches newspapers and magazines have

capabilities in recent months, and you

get a clear sense that snooping around

is on its way to becoming a promising

really spected at in a society with an

what-to-whom political prattle. For

Not that notiness was ever

insatiable appetite for who-did-

decades, New Road's peepal bot

coarse information. True, some of

the things that came your way were

wild rumour, informed speculation

were bound to get all the news that

government dailies published right

comprised a sizeable section of the

strategy. Agent provocateurs used a

careful mixture of whispering and

brayado to start conversations on

of 12 years of democracy hasn't

ity. The juicy spoken word still

commands greater consideration

than the most creatively drafted

Home Ministry clarification.

ore flaw in Nepali espionage

sensitive subjects. The transparency

diminished the grapevine's popular-

This directly leads us into the

ning assemblage, many ready to

next door. Professional sleuths

test their latest disinformation

and outright innuendo. But you

wasn't fit to print in the two

was the pre-eminent source of

6:00 p.m onwards

There's no question why the Olive Garden continues to be a favorite dining spot:a warm, dimly lit interior refurbished tastefully, cordial and prompt service, and a variety of offerings

elegantly laid tables with gentle Italian opera iting an atmosphere of luxurious dining. Choose from a wide selection of appetizers soups and salads. The main courses offer a good selection of meat and vegetable dishes with an emphasis on Seafood - Queen Scallons Calamari, Baby Octopus & Salmor

Offers exclusive packages for couples and families. Special arrangements for those memorable occasions like

Radisson

 ♦ helvetas Nepal ▶ to rantalize the taste buds



8 HERITAGE 19-25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES 9 19 - 25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



nclusive of Kathmandu-Shanghai roundtrip airfare seven nights eight days full board in three star hotels. Tour of Shanghai, Beijing and other places with English



7.2 million people visit nepalnews.com every year.



Mercantile Communications Pvt. Ltd

GPO Box 876, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal Phone: 240920, Fax: +977-1-225407. os.com.np, URL:http://www.mos.com.np

I he red palace

The history of Lal Darbar is like a fairy tale with legends, rumours of gold, and resident ghosts.



also had a hankering for Belgian

mirrors, which are in evidence still

and all of the chandeliers are from

Murano. Walk into Bir Sumshere's

bedroom and you see what an extreme

concentration of riches and includent

nation's money went, all of it. That

crystal and glass is sheer brilliance, and

makes the rooms glow with a kind of

grandeur that we will probably never

Building somewhat over the top,

tastes can do: this is where the

said, the combination of marble

see attempted in our lifetime

super-luxurious palaces became

met Queen Victoria, cried copious tears at the opera, and developed a taste for high living. Suddenly there was a spate of palaces all built in the neo-classical style, most with wellproportioned columns ornamenting the elegant white stucco facades housing the maharajas, their wives, mistresses and numerous progeny

Lal Darbar, probably the best example of this kind of thing, is surrounded by its fair share of tall stories and anecdotes. It is said that Bir Sumshere built the palace for his favourite son Indu Sumshere, the offspring of his oldest legal wife. When it was built, Indu Sumshere is believed to have got more than just a palaceon the grounds were three wells, one



full of gold bullion, one other with silver and the third with jewellery

The palace also housed an aviary stables, cowsheds, numerous rooms and dressing rooms for the various men and women living there, a naachghaar (theatre) and a separate luxurious garden for the wives and concubines to saunter in. A pity that the mongrel phrase high sancho hadn't been invented b then. It would have described the style of living perfectly. The Lal Darbar's fascinatin

Chimney restaurant are also a part history does not peter out with the of Boris's legacy. end of the Rana regime. The palace what is now the Yak & Yeti Hotel. lay derelict and unused till 1970, and it was only with the birth of the Eventually Boris would withdraw from restaurant called the Yak & Yeti. ooking at the restaurant, and the which was housed in what is presently hotel would continue towards it growth as a five-star property. The called the Naachøhar, that the eccentricity and decadence came full hotel acquired the remainder of the circle. The restaurant was founded by Lal Darbar in the early 1970s, but did a Russian émigré called Boris not start renovations on it until 1994. Lissanevitch who has generated as many rumours and myths as some of the more infamous and oddball Rana rulers. They say be was a ballet

dancer, a cook, a soldier who ran

he had been recruited by King

Fribhuvan himself who brought h

way from the Russian army, and that

rom Calcutta where he had founded

Lal Darbar as a conference room and banquet hall. The thorough restoration is a remarkable job, and remains faithful to the original details and nake up. The restorers who work for the hotel report that the rooms themselves were in surprisingly good condition and only needed a few careful touches of paint in order to brought back to their original splendour. The chief engineer at th Yak & Yeti, Devasis Basu, credits t original architects of the Lal Darbar with making the job of restoring the rooms much easier. "The foundation

the famous 300 Club. The Yak & Yeti

important people in Nepal, as well

as members of the royal family dined

Maila Budhathoki, a waiter who

has worked at The Yak & Yeti since

its humble restaurant beginnings, and

who joined Boris at the Royal Hotel,

says that his boss would put a dash of

alcohol in everything he cooked and

that he made his own peach and plum

wine. Boris had a knack of flamboy-

Romanovs?), and he added his own

"Kathmandu Baroque" of the old

in the Naachohar restaurant were

by Boris, and the magnificently

carved Nepali windows in the

Rana Darbars. The present chandelier

brought from Belgium and installed

And thus were sown the seeds of

Today, the Yak & Yeti uses the

antly carrying on the extravagant traditions of the Ranas (and the

touch to what he deemed the

on borsht and other exotic Boris

Darbar from the insidious damp

of art themselves.

that would otherwise have wreaked

havor on the walls, which are works

the palace to the modern part of the

hotel by means of a clever passagewa

susceptible tourists, and connects th

lobby with the atrium that is in turn

that now houses the Casino and the

iewellery and textiles to tempt

The Yak & Yeti Hotel has annexed

restaurant was where the most

floor was mud, and there was a shallow rectangular pool in the middle atrium itself is a graceful structure where Bir Sumshere could take a din to cool himself down during the

adorned with portraits of the various ing visitors up to the Regency and Dynasty rooms are wonderful plassed-in shownieces. As they ascend you get a view of the atrium, but when the doors open on the first floor there are more treasures. The Resency Room ornamented with gilt paint and a garden of light. Step out of the

dizzyingly beautiful. The chandeliers are even more lavish, the ceilings are alive with patterns in gold and other colours, and there are mirrors all around, each crowned with the picture of a wife or mistress. Ouite:

treat for the eyes, though you might that houses exotic intricately-worked come away feeling a little disoriented The Naachghar is a well-equipped modern theatre with a raised stage and lots of very interesting lighting connected to the Lal Darbar complex devices. In Bir Sumshere's day the room was a little more primitive. The

and vaguely baroque décor of the rest of the room. There's something about thi

décor that positively encourages slightly over-the-top behaviour. Of course, there's no telling what things these walls and mirrors have seen, and these wedding-cake light fixtures have illuminated, but it seems that the ghosts of indiscretions past have not yet been laid to rest. The people who work in the Regency and Dynasty rooms swear that the very heavy doors

doesn't think too highly of their baroque ornateness. As Pashupati Sumshere JB Rana says in his book Kathmandu: A Living Heritage "Whether they conform to one's particular taste or not, the Rana alaces are a part of our cultural heritage." Ignoring or destroying

reminders of history are not a way o The Yak & Yeti hotel has found a perfect way to live with its physical surroundings. They have restored their building to its former glory and

dealing with it.



swinging shut, all by themselves, as the last man of the cleaning crew leaves after a function that has taken place there. The Naachghar has its own summer as he watched the enter ment. In the evenings he would sit a ghosts. Either that or the crystal one end while the entertainers stood handeliers vibrate of their own

across the room performing their accord. The Naachghaar staff tell us various dance and song routines. It is that even when everything else is still. and there is no ody in the room above easy to imagine Bir Sumshere turning chandeliers shake, making tinkling and other such activities. People who It's a shame that such graceful work at the Naachohaar swear that



Babar Mahal Revisited, and the Keshar Mahal Garden ("Garden dreams", #43), are good markers for the future of Kathmandu's aesthetic and commercial life

a casino, banquet hall and to promote tourism. Projects like this.

Available at all leading pharmacies

MERCANTILE



Ask for this brand new collection of Kunda Dixit's Under Mv Hat columns at a bookshop near you Rs 200 To order

email: subscription@himalmedia.com

call (01) 543333-7 and just give your phone number and address.



Language
All entries must be in English

men carried cars, through the hills

xample of the decadence of that era.

although it presently exists as bits and

pieces of the Yak & Yeti Hotel. The

remains of the palace now enclose a

Regency Room on the second floo

and the Dynasty Room on the third,

architects working on the restoration

casino on the lower level, the

top floor. The engineers and

surrounding the Valley.



The right to say 'I do'

OTTAWA - Rights activists celebrated last Friday as a panel of senio judges unanimously ordered the government of Ontario, the country's most populous province, to register gay and lesbian marriages. It wa the first such decision in Canada and is expected to set a precedent Recently, Turkey assumed from Britain command of the International Security Assistthroughout the country. The panel of the Ontario Superior Court, which has jurisdiction over 10 million people, said prohibiting gave couples from marrying violates the Canadian constitution's Charter of ance Force in Afghanistan. Typically, Rights and Freedoms. While the court does not have jurisdiction hardly anyone noticed. Turkey's beyond Ontario, the unanimous ruling will likely be taken into troubles—be they financial crises or account in similar actions across the country. Canada already recognises some rights to same-sey henefits, but not gay and leshiar the current illness of Prime Minister marriages. The court has given the federal government, which has Bulent Ecevit-erab headlines Its jurisdiction over family law and the definition of marriage, two years to extend marriage rights to same-sex couples, Judge Heather Smith reported, get buried in the back page acknowledged that parliament needs time to redefine "marriage" in of the world's newspapers. But in the world forged by the applicable legislation. (IPS)

Zero tolerance? Not quite

September, the identity, and the CANBERRA - Frantic attempts by the New Zealand government to choices and alliances that Turkey made in its historical quest to become defuse a politically damaging crisis over the import of genetically modern, have acquired greate modified (GM) corn seed have unravelled, with the conservative significance than ever before Turkey's opposition party backing calls for an inquiry into the affair. In the book Seeds of Distrust by New Zealand investigative journalist Nicky leadership of the peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan, something hugel Hager, he cites government documents showing that in November popular among Turks, highlights one 2000, a 5.6 tonne consignment of sweet corn seeds imported by more the fact that Turkey is the only Novartis from the United States was contaminated with GE seeds. (In Muslim member of NATO, Turkey's mid-November 2000, Novartis merged with AstraZeneca to become Sygenta.) New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark initially favoured straddling of Islam and the west makes the country's domestic and internathe removal of the plants and the non-use of the remaining seed in tional politics intriguing. Many Turks the shipment. But before they could be destroyed, a major lobbying view their country's development as a campaign led by the public relations lobbyist for Novartis persuaded compelling rejoinder to any idea of an inevitable "clash of civilisations" the government to backtrack on its earlier plan, Hager says. Stunned by these revelations just two weeks away from the 27 July between Islam and the west.

election, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark has denied there was any cover-up or that GM contaminated crops were illegally allowed to be grown, harvested and used in food products for domes tic and export markets. A spokesman for the Minister for Environment Marian Hobbs, told IPS that the government had a 'zero tolerance' policy on GM contamination and that while the tests revealed 'low levels of contamination, there were legal considerations that it could not be proven to be GM contamination. "What it comes down to is that officials could not stand up in court and say 'we have evidence that this seed is contaminated therefore it must be destroyed'." (IPS)

AIDS vaccine?

BARCELONA - An experimental "therapeutic" vaccine against AIDS. produced and tested with some success in Spain, was presented last week at the 14th International AIDS Conference in this northeastern Spanish city. The head of the immunology service at the Gregorio Marañón Hospital in Madrid, Eduardo Fernández Cruz, reported the positive results obtained so far in Phase II of clinical tests involving 243 patients in 13 hospitals in Spain over three years. The Remuni vaccine developed by the US-based Immune Response Corporation would be especially useful in the developing world, as it would be less costly than existing antiretroviral drugs, and would be easier to administer, while it checked the advance of HIV, the AIDS virus, the researcher told participants in the conference. Fernández Cruz explained that Remune was the first "therapeutic" vaccine-in other words, a treatment option designed to boost the immune systems of neonle already infected with HIV in combination with antiretroviral

Britain gets charitable

LONDON - The British government has decided to increase its aid budget to 0.4 per cent of its GNP from 0.32 per cent. Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) Gordon Brown announced the raise in London Monday. It means that aid to combat global poverty will be hiked over the next four years to \$7.7 billion a year from the \$5.2 billion a year. The announcement was welcomed by NGOs in Britain, but they said the aid budget is still short of the 0.7 per cent of GNP recommended by the UN. George Gelber, head of public policy with the aid group CAFOD said, "It is particularly significant that the UK increases its aid budget when other rich countries such as Denmark and Ireland are cutting theirs."

The \$2.5 billion increase means that the British government wil have substantial new resources to support a wide range of aid projects. NGOs are demanding careful planning of where the additional money is spent, and a renewed focus on front-line services like health and education, BOND, a network of some 260 British NGOs in nternational development, welcomed the increase. But said Cliff Allum, BOND chair, "Following recent attempts to link aid to other political agendas, it's imperative that any additional aid resources not be siphoned off and spent on foreign policy, security or antiimmigration policies." (IPS)



errorist attacks on America last

The logic of Turkish support for

America's war against terrorism was

quick to appear. In the terrorist attacks

inst the US, many Turks found

vindication of their decades-long effort

to draw the world's attention—and in

scourge of terror. By supporting

America's operation in Afghanistar

and at the same time speaking out

against efforts to vilify Islam, the

mment managed to reconcile

Modern, Muslim Turkey



Turkey, which lies in both Europe and Asia, might be the mediator between Islam and the west.

wing secular opposition to US policy kept the debate from focusing solel on Islam. At the same time, Turke hosted a two-day "dialogue of civilisations" last February between th Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union. Participants from both sides found common cause expressing their doubt about American policies. Turkey remains concerned that

Iraq may be America's next target. Iraq is the single issue on which American and Turkish interests diverge sharply Neither the Turkish military nor the Turkish government nor public opinion supports an American campaign against Iraq. The best the Turks could get from Vice President Dick Cheney, during his visit last March, was a tepid assurance that no American military attack was

Turkey's strategic interests and its Officially, Turkey is concerned Endless talk show debates on that Saddam Hussein's fall could result in the irreparable fracturing of Turkish television demonstrated that there was plenty of reflective thinking the Iraqi state. Below the surface lurk taking place. To the extent that some longstanding Turkish anxieties about Islamists did not reject outright Kurdish nationalism, and how this violence against civilians, they seem to might threaten Turkish unity from have lost public support, and leftacross the borders of a newly-shattered

Iraq. But at the end of the day, few Turks doubt that if the US decides to send ground forces into Iraq, Turkey will provide the launching pad, and may even participate Elsewhere in the Middle East,

Turkey's generally positive relations with Israel have come under strain as a result of Israel's "Operation Defensive Shield". In the face of public anger with Israel Turkey's military continued building its security relationship with the Jewish state, and recently awarded Israel a lucrative tank modernisation contract A May public opinion poll found

nearly two-thirds of the public under careful watch by the military opposed Turkey's stance on the which has repeatedly intervened in Turkish politics to defend Turkey's Israeli-Palestinian fighting But this is mitigated at times by public revulsion r suicide bombing attacks in Israel. A further element that caught the public's eye was the lethal assault in Hebron against an international observer team that included two Turkish officers. The Turkish military believes that the attack, which killed Major Cengiz Toytunc, was carried out by Palestinians Most of Turkey's

public objects to drawing links

between Islam and mindless terrorist

secular political identity. But the Islamist parties also recognise the strength of popular support for Turkey as a modern country, poised to represent Islam's modern face in today's world. • (Project Syndicate) (Soli Ozel, professor of

international relations at Istanbul Bilgi University, edits the Turkishlanguage edition of Foreign Policy 1

violence. The government's emphasis

on Turkey's secular state and Islamic

is a strong feeling that Turkey car

mediate between the west and the

Islamic world. Islamist parties, their

political fortunes reviving as secular

parties suffer yet another crisis of public confidence, have been careful

not to exploit popular resentments

September, Tayip Erdogan, the leade

that may have developed since 11

of one Islamist party, argued that

attacks on innocent civilians could

never be justified in religious terms

Of course, the Islamists are kept

No final solutions

BERKELEY - In their frustration with the maddening inconclusiveness of the conflicts that bedevil their nations, politicians from Washington to Jerusalem, New Delhi to Karachi, Paris to Amsterdam are being inexorably driven by forces both within and beyond their control to demand final solutions

India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee calls for "decisive victory" in his country's half-century argument with Pakistan. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon seeks total destruction of Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority Radical Islamists call for iihads to cleanse the planet of infidels. Even socia democratic Western Europe finds its progress towards a multicultural society suddenly disrupted by disaffected "losers" who fear being further marginalised by enterprising immigrants. Most influential of all, President Bush sets the tone

with an apocalyptic politics that demands an irrevocable hoice between US and Them. The terms and contexts vary, but the aim and obsession are alike. Out of a world of disconcerting change and blurring boundaries emerges an irrational yearning for certainty and finality.

We should know better. The most massive and monstrous social experiments of the 20th century, fascism and communism, were based on the pernicious premise that there was an end to history, a final solution to chronic social conflicts. And this wasn't always dictated by historical inevitability but by the personal delusions of a power-driven individual or cabal that brooked no dissent. Tens of millions of corpses later, we emerged from the rubble of their false promises to realise that any such final statement on history is bound to do catastrophic violence to the innate disorder of human evolution.

So it is all the more ominous that in a moment of unbearable uncertainties, politicians and certain factions among their own peoples are again demanding total solutions based on danger ously partial understandings. The opening of the new millennium is marked by the emergence of two competing totalist ideologies-religious fundamentalism and corporate capitalism. In its fierce rejection of all other beliefs and cultures, us fundamentalism is more readily identifiable as a dead-end final solutior whether it takes the form of Islamic Christian Jewish or Hindu zealotts

Corporate capitalism views itself as inherently tolerant, inclusive flexible, multicultural. But in a post-cold war era dominated by a sole superpower, it has become increasingly airtight, suffocating independen

Millions of corpses later we still can't see that there is no 'end' to history.

hought and imagination as effectively as any other orthodoxy. One can indeed be brown, black or yellow and still play the game, but one must unfailingly embrace the privatisation of the planet.

The challenge of these distressingly uncertain times is to resist final solutions Not in deference to the hopelessly compromised politics of the "vile centre"— whose abandonment of principle only breeds cynicism and a desperate search for

absolute answers-but by embracing a truth that includes both self and other, us and them, in a restless, imperfect but indissoluble union. Like it or not, we are bound together in a common fate. Final solutions are not possible, but fundamental reframings of the relationship essential. And out of them may emerge final settlements balanced and flexible enough to withstand the

suffeting of history. The difference between final solutions and fina ettlements is fundamental. Any final solution based or the annihilation of the other or denial of legitimate needs will fail, and curse both parties for generations. But a final settlement based on meeting the core interests of each part and achieving an equitable balance between their sacrifices and benefits rewards both and all. So it was that Hitler's inal Solution brought ruin to his nation and the world while the enlightened self-interest of the postwar Marshall Plan produced a durable peace between a democratised

Germany and its former enemies. When George Bush declares a grand reprise of the triumph over fascism in his self-styled terror war, he reveals an absolutist impulse of his own, as the final solution he pursues is based on a fatally arrogan assumption of exclusive moral rectitude. We would all do well to distance lives from such delusions and seek instead the balanced final settlements that are the sole basis for an enduring peace. • (IPS)

(Mark Sommer, author and internationally syndicated columnist, focuses on new approaches to long-standing global challenges.)

A proposed Historical present security and emergency bill in Japan brings back unpleasant memories.

SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI

ment is determined to push through parliament a set of bills aimed at expanding the country's military powers, but opposition parties and activist groups are as set to thwart the move. Four opposition parties are already boycotting deliberations on the bills, which would give the country's Self-Defend Forces (SDF) sweeping powers to deal with emergency situations during a foreign military attack. Observers like media commentator Koichi Ishiyam predict that the bills will probably be shelved considering the widening

The proposed laws consist of the main emergency bill, and the so-called support bills on information disclosure and freedom of informa tion. In February, Koizumi had urved the Diet to adopt the bills not only in the wake of the 11 September attacks, but security concerns such as the December 2001 Japanese Coast

Guard shooting of a suspected North Korean spy ship in the East China Sea By April, the government had nitted an outline of a set of three bills designed to allow the SDF to cope with an external military attack.

The proposed laws would be the first time post-war Japan has attempted to lay the framework for how the nation should defend itself during a security crisis. Critics say that the proposed s encourage Japan to get entangled with US military operations in Asia, a clear shift from concerns of mere defence of the country as enshrined in the country's Peace Constitution afte the Second World War Debate has also zeroed in on a clause in the emergency bill that says authorises the ier in an emergency situation to override any local government's or public organisation's opposition to nobilise the SDF to ensure public safety. It also calls for fines or iail time

for those refusing to support the SDF Tamotsu Suzuki, the 77-year-old head of a group of people that is suing the US Atsugi Air Base for noise

pollution says that the emergency bill eminds him of the past fascist Japan whose military gover ment forced citizens to support the Tokyo war machine. He adds that any attack by a foreign power on Japan can be dealt with by the SDF as it is now Keizo Nabeshima, who writes on defence for Kyodo News Agency, points out that Japan already has the third highest defence budget in the world following the United States and Russia-an

annual \$43 billion dollars The public uproar has also been over the accompanying bills that also demand full cooperation from citizens to ensure the smooth working of the SDF in a "security crisis". The bills mean that once the government declares an emergency, citizens can be ordered to evacuate their homes without being provided information as to why this is being done. Privately owned land can be confiscated for SDF activities in the name of protecting citizens. The government can als order a media clampdown and withhold information from journalists

One legal expert says this gags the press and facilitates arrests and searches without prior warrants from judges. The Mainichi newspaper has said that the two information bills "weaken the media's watchdog authority". But the bills are arousing more deep seared fears. Himko Mizuhara spokeswoman for the Japanes nsumers' Union, which is

leading a movement against the hills, says: "I was ten and remember the hardship (during military rule during the World War II) vividly. No Japanese wants their country to descend into that tumultuous eriod ever again."

Despite the Peace Constitution changes have come to the SDF in the last few years. For instance, it has been allowed to participate in peacekeeping activities overseas. In 2000, Japan and the US signed a new security pact that expanded SDF support for the US military. In October, Japan enacted an anti terrorism bill that allowed the SDF to assist the US military in the war against terrorism.

Katsuhiro Shigemoto, head of Act, a move that many developing countries are livid about. the 1,300-strong Foundation for Rice is the mainstay of Thailand's agriculture sector. The country is the world's leading rice exporter and shipped some 6.5 million tonnes Global Peace and Environment, says last year. Over 3.5 million in this country of 63 million people are rice of the draft emergency law: "It is farmers (IPS) time for Japan to stop following the United States and make clear its role to promote peace," he says. Bureaucrat power Nabeshima, for his part, says that NEW DELHI - Ten days after the power supply in India's capital was the proposed laws must be carefully reviewed against the recent changes involving the SDF, that legislators hould talk to and involve neigh bours like South Korea and Southeast Asian countries, to assure them of Japan's benign intentions.

handed over to private companies to tackle the serious problem of theft, it is apparent this attempt at privatisation will be very hard. These were 10 trying days and nights for Delhi's 13 million residents. Many of them are beginning to walk around like zombies for lack of sleep in July's sweltering, heat-wave conditions unrelieved by the whirr Even employees of the Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB), the government Remarks Naheshima: "Gisen utility privatised early this month, are saving that there is a serious Japan's historical militarism, it is move on to scuttle the privatisation plan. "Many of us simply can't do better the government expand the without the illegal incomes to be made by looking the other way as people steal electricity," an employee told IPS. Some \$300 million emergency security law to a comprehensive system to include worth of the electricity-over 50 percent of the capital's supply-is other Asian countries " 4 (IPS) siphoned away to industries and upmarket colonies, in theft facilitated

by corrupt officials and politicians. But Delhi's Chief Minister Sheila Divit and the state's Power Minister Ajay Maken swear that there is no going back on privatisation because power reforms were an election promise made to users who pay for their electricity. The government is also working towards "antitheft" legislation as demanded by the Tata Power Company and the Rombay State Flectricity Services (RSFS), the two companies that have taken over electricity supply from the DVB.

19-25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES 11

64.80

Thailand stays in the game

next 10 years. "If the EU reduces

subsidies to farmers, it would boost the

Suvarn Valaisathien, deputy commerce

minister, said in the English-language

ing concern, especially about the EU

retaining its Common Agriculture

justification for CAP. It is part of the

protectionism that co-exists with EU

demands that the developing countries

lower barriers in their manufacturing

editorial in The Nation last week. The

CAP allows European farmers gain from

selling their products at prices that do

'Fortress Europe' policy of unfair

and services sectors " argued an

Thailand has of late been express-

daily The Nation Friday

export prices of agriculture products

m Thailand to the EU market,"

BANGKOK - Thai trade officials are cautiously optimistic about the EU decision last week to reform Europe's hefty farm subsidies, saving Thai

farmers stand to gain from the move. They are especially relieved by

Farm Act in mid-May. While the EU's announcement aims to cut by 21

percent its current \$39.45 billion a year in farm subsidies, the new US

law would give \$180 billion in subsidies to American farmers over the

not reflect the true cost, and European-subsidised produce in the world

market drives down prices. Similar trends would arise from the US Farm

the FLI proposal after worrying in the wake of the passage of the LIS

Meanwhile, there are signs that unless the power companies do something drastic about ensuring steady power supplies, riots could break out. Recently police had to intervene recently to save officials of the former DVB from being beaten up by consumers angry because

Re-occupying Palestine

JERUSALEM - The Israeli military raid on 9 July of Al-Quds University and the closure of the offices of the president, Sari Nusseibeh, is an extreme measure and yet another worrisome indication of the scope and direction of the current Israeli military operation. Nusseibeh is one of the most outspoken moderates among prominent Palestinians, criticising suicide bombings and asking his people to give up their long-standing demand for the right of all Palestinian refusees to return to their original homes in Israel. With tank-enforced blockades on seven of the eight major West Bank urban

centres, Israel has reoccupied more Palestinian cities than in the prior military campaign, placing 700,000 citizens under house arrest, essentially turning the territories into massive open-air prisons. Nevertheless, "Operation Determined Path", which began on 18 June, is portrayed as a kinder, gentler action than its predecessor, "Operation Defensive Shield".

Unlike the reoccupation in April, this time the Israeli army is here to stay. Sharon is well on the way to obliterating the eight years of Palestinian self-rule under the Oslo peace accord. Settlement construction continues apace, with over 35 new corriements built in the last coven months. Shann's government has resumed its policy of political assassinations, sanctioned a massive military onslaught in Gaza, approved in principle the deportation of families of Palestiniar suicide bombers, and begun construction of a "security fence" that effectively annexes parts of the West Bank to Israel and reinforces the ongoing closure of the Occupied Territories that is crippling the Palestinian economy.

The current reoccupation has been far easier than previous efforts. Most fighters from Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades are either dead, on the run, or among the 1,700 Palestinians who were rounded up during the last campaign. The Israeli forces have avoided dramatic standoffs like those at the Church of the Nativity and Arafat's compound. The first thing the Israeli force did when they entered Bethlehem this time, even before they dispersed troops throughout the city, was to seal off the Holy Quarters. While clamping down on journalists, the military also turned away at the airport hundreds internationals who have arrived over the last two weeks, coordinated by the International Solidarity Movement, which aims to obstruct and publicise the

Among Palestinians throughout the West Bank, the prevailing reaction to the initiation of Operation Determined Path and Bush's subsequent speech was demoralised shock. When the speech was broadcast, the joke among Jenin residents was that the real reason for the delay in Bush's speech was that it first had to be translated from Hebrew. Few could discern the concrete ingredients of the US plan for peace. Even fewer could understand why President Bush believes mocratic multi-party elections in the West Bank and Gaza, currently impossible within the context of the reoccupation, would under any circumstances ever produce a more acquiescent Palestinian leadership. It is far more likely that if Palestinians did remove Arafat, it would be a result not only of

There are no plans for peace, only violent coercion and isolation.



his being thoroughly corrupt, but also his being overly compliant. In all probability, a newly-elected leadership would be from the resistance, not one that ntends to squelch it.

For many Palestinians in the camps and elsewhere, widespread demoralisation seems to have given way to a self-imposed discipline and tacit resignation toward the reoccupation. Outraged indignation had spread across Ramallah to greet the April arrival of Israeli troops, but now Ramallah residents were quick to show off their stocked pantries, bragging of the preparations they had made ahead of time.

The lingering question for many Palestinian and Israeli anti-occupation isations is whether Sharon's so-called Determined Path actually has an exit to it. There is a hint of an answer in Gilo, a massive settlement on the southwest side of Jerusalem. At the rim of a line of spectacular new houses, a crew of urers are working tirelessly to extend a several hundred metre-long barricade Built of the same type of ten-foot-high concrete slabs that made up the Berlin Wall, the barrier provides security for the settlers by physically separating them from the neighbouring community metres away. If extended much further, the barricade will also isolate Beit Jala from the rest of Jerusalem. The painful irony is the colourful mural on the inside of the wall. With elaborately decorated houses but few actual people, the mural depicts Beit Jala. ♦ (IPS)

(Ian Urbina associate editor of the Middle Fast Report is with the Middle East Research and Information Project, an independent think tank in Washington DC.)

40.0001/2ft.BAR



. Where the tales are as tall as the mountains

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



. A number of children started to be affected directly by the conflict after the start of the armed insurgency. And the numbers have grown faster after the government declared a state of emergency in

Many children are suspected to have been killed in clashes hetween the Manists and the security forces after the emergency was imposed, but the government has not commented on this Although officials have admitted that some children in the Maoists ranks may have been killed, there are no concrete numbers.

According to Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), in 1996 three children were "affected" by the conflict, which grew to eight in 1997, 64 in 1998, 48 in 1990, 48 in 2000, 55 in 2001 and so far this year 50

...Children are killed or disabled in all conflicts and as bad are the long-term effects that conflicts have on the psychology of children. They do not only affect them only at the moment, but tend to also have longer-term impacts, psychologists tell us.



public meeting where a child around 10 or 12 years old was seen sitting down, clutching a muzzleloader. He was also sporting a cap with a red star. Later someone who was introduced to us as Comrade Gambhir told us. "The boy might have borrowed his brother's cap and gun, he is not our soldier. We don't have child soldiers, we have a policy not to have them

Sometime later the human rights activists with us asked a girl who brought us water how old she was. They were given an instant response: "17 years". But no one present elieved her, and estimated unexplained. that she was most probably should get out of that 'who knows 15 years old or under.

Two years ago when human rights organisations had said that the Manists were using child soldiers, party Chairman Prachanda issued a statement saying that his group was

against recruiting children as soldiers. Professor Kapil Shrestha, a member of the Nepal Human Rights Commission who has visited the insurgency-hit districts several times, estimates that as much as 25 percent of the Maoist forces. could be children. It is difficult to confirm this, he says, but based on travelling with them and observing them, we can say that about 25 percent are children. He adds, "I have seen students in school uniform providing security to the Maoist commanders."

Besides, many more children are associated with the Maoists as cooks, security guards, and messengers, as well as in the role of members of their cultural troupes. The repeated abductions of school students [by the Maoists] and also the attraction that the rebels have for students also testify to the presence of child soldiers.

Khoi ke bhavo

Excerpts of Girija Prasad Koirala's speech, 14 July "In a constitutional monarchy we

uphold that 'the king does not em and we take responsibility for any nistakes made. We should not expos the monarch and say the king did this at least the prime minister should stor saving that. The prime minister came to see me at my house after dissolving parliament and declaring the miderm elections. I asked him, 'Sher Bahadurji, what have you done. I had said that you should keep the government running. I had told you not to extend the emergency immediately, that we now have th Terrorism and Disruptive Activities prevention and control) Act and we should try and implement it. we can impose the emergency if that does not work ... how could

He said, "Khoi ke bhayo, ke bhavo" [Well, I don't know what hannened Hater I met Chiraniibi (Wagle) and told him "You are well educated and have done much politics, but you converted the eeting into a General ntion...at least you could hav

ou declare election

collected the signatures of those present and petitioned the centre Congress Party), which would ha prevented this problem." I asked nim why, he said, "Well, I don't know what happened." That is wh everything that has happened is still And now the Nepali Congress

what happened' mode. The Congress must pull its forces together to protect democracy; I personally do not want anything out of it. There is nothing left for me to achieve, no place to step down to, and so my onl objective is to protect democracy. Protecting democracy is about preserving the future of the youth of this country. If there is no democracy, our youth will age, wasted, and others will come and ask then o step aside (as has happened to me). I believe a moment is comins in the history of the party where i will take a major step, I am

working to make that happen. ...Even the power of the sword or guns or the pen cannot stand in

"Please carry on with your good work. I am in a great hurry. I am leaving right away."

-Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba during his regular monthly meeting with government secretaries, quoted in Jana Astha, 17 July. The prime minister is required to attend these meetings, although he did not do so on 15 Jul



...The tree will be ours! If not, the branch will be ours! If that doesn't happen, the leaf will definitely

清志東市 Gorkhapatra, 15 July

front of the strength of morals. A bullet may be able to kill me but not the objectives and goals I am fighting for. When we're proceeding with this moral strength, neither the sword car

kill us, nor can the pen." 39 speakers

Samacharpatra, 14 July

There were 39 speakers at the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in Biratnagar o Saturday. It may be a record for a meeting to have that many speakers rom the welcome address to the final vote of thanks. The entire program lasted for eight hours. In order to make sure that the speeches at the Birendra Sabhaoriha were heard at Koirala Niwas (Girija Prasad Koirala' nome), a 200 m-long wire was needed to hang up a loudspeake Sixty-four vehicles were reserved for bringing in cadres to the meeting, and another 42 government vehicle were used to ferry ministers and other government officials

Nepal on Sen Chalphal, 14 July

(Excerpts of an interview with Madhav Kumar Nepal) On Krishna Sen's alleged murder "It shows now narrow-minded and insensitive to the national interest thi government is A gentleman like Sen. even though a Maoist, is not the type who would have taken up arms. Ever people like him have been murdered He was arrested and mercilessly beaten to death, and then cover-up efforts are made. This reflects the commitment of this government owards respecting human rights And it is not ready to change, or find out where the mistakes have been made. Corruption is increasin

in the same manner. .. The government has failed in both war and peace (talks). And the government speaks so irresponsibly, wing that it will not talk with Prachanda or Baburam but with Ran Bahadur Thapa (lower down in the Maoist hierarchy). It has not realised what will happen if the Maoists provided a similar response.

The Chief's stance Deshantar, 14 July

On three previous decisions the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has stood on the side of the people's representatives. In 1994, when Girija Prasad Koirala dissolved parliament, he [the Chief Justice] upheld with the opinion that the dissolution of parliament by a prime minister who had resigned in order to obstruct the possibility of another government being formed was unconstitutionalven though that was a minority decision. In 1995, when then UML Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikar dissolved parliament the present Chief Justice sided with the decision of former Chief Justice Biswonath Upadhyay. That majority opinion ruled against the decision to dissolve parliament, saying that it was taken after a quarter of the parliamentarians had initiated a move to act against the government. Similarly, in 1997, when Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa petitioned the king to dissolve parliament_after one-fourth of the MPs in parliament had petitioned to convene a special session of the House—he [the Chief] went along with the decision of then chief justice Om Bhakta Rana which favoured the political representatives. [This time

around, the court's opinion was ought by the then king.) The ruling upholds the powers of the 2.5 million be released im prime minister under Article 53 (3) of the constitution as not fully The local produce in the hill

special session of parliament Troubled rebels Sanghu, 8 July

discretionary—at least not against

the right of the MPs to seek a

It is learnt that Rit Bahadur Khadka central committee member of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist and chief of the Dolakha District Jana Sarkar ("people's government" has been killed in an encounter with plainclothes Nepal Army soldiers in Parsa News of the death has not however, been confirmed by the security forces or the Maoists. Abou two weeks ago, a Defence Ministry release was released which claimer that a few "high level" Maoist leaders had been arrested in Parsa. Political analysts think that the arrests and th alleged death of Khadka in Parsa could be more than mere coincidence Our sources cannot give details as to exactly when, where and how Khadka was killed, but we have confirmed that the incident took place after the second week of Jun

Similarly, Rabi Bogati, alias Anant the son of Maoist polithuro member Posta Babadur Bogati alias Diwakar, was killed at Kumari in Nuwakot district on 20 June. Anant held a high rank in the Nuwakot Jana Sena ("people's army"). In an interview given to the Internet edition of Iana Awai [a Maoist party mouthpiece], a high-ranking guerrilla leader Rajesh confirmed that 32 high-ranking guerrillas, including a very influential ompany commander Rosban were killed during the encounter at Gam on 2 May. The Maoists have already confirmed the deaths of central committee advisor Aiab Lal Yaday and alternative member in the Wester region Yam Prasad Baniade.

has kept silent about the governmen claim that alternative polithur member Khoi Babadur Kandel and alternative central committee member Lekh Raj Bhatta have both een killed. The Maoists have also not reacted to the death of Eastern rgion militia commander Ras Kamal at Nepalthok in Kavre a month ago, news of which was publicised by the security forces vith photographs. On the other hand, president of the All-Nepal Free Student's Union (Revolution ary) Devendra Parajuli bas alreadu confirmed the deaths of five student leaders, including vice president of the Union

However, the Maoist leadership

Renoi Adhikari Instead of acknowledging the deaths of their commanders, Maoist leadership has been issuing releases claiming that their opponents hav faced "heavy casualties and defeat" Political analysts believe that the Maoists have been denying their casualties for fear that acknowledge ing them might frustrate their ighters on the ground and make hem become defensive, or even

arrender to the government. We have also learnt that the Maoists are facing severe shortages o medicine and food in remote areas of Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot, mostly due to the government-imposed limit on the amount of food-grain that can be supplied to these districts. The security forces learnt about this, and the fact that the Maoist guerrillas were running low on funds during the

Lisne Lek attack when they inter cepted a letter addressed to the entral committee requesting that Rs

districts of mid-western region cannot

sustain even the local needs and so

obviously limiting the supply from the outside would directly affect the Maoists' supplies. Moreover, in these districts the security forces have already confiscated large stores stockpiled by the Maoists. This is why political analysts believe that Maoist guerrillas are suffering hardships due to shortage of food, and also suspect that there might be a rebellion brewing in the guerilla ranks, a situation of rebellion migh have occurred due to the frustration caused by a paucity of medical supplies. Our sources claim that there has been an increase in the number of guerrillas defecting.

Giving it all up Budhabar, 17 July

The government decision to not renew the tenure of the local rendered 3,913 village development committees, 58 municipalities and 57 district development committee non-functioning. This mindless decision, motivated by the Deuba povernment's political selfishness. has helped the Maoists come close to their long-cherished goal of eliminating local governance. The people, for their part, have been deprived of their representatives.

"Deuba's undemocratic decision is politically motivated and driven by self-interest. The prime minister had assured that the loca anvernments many times that thei tenure would be renewed," CPN UMI secretary general Madhay Kumar Nepal said.

In the absence of representa tives, the people will be deprived of fundamental facilities such as hirth registration, and recommendation or citizenship certificates and passports. Data from the Ministr of Local Development shows that 1.200 VDCs do not even have the ecretaries who carry out simple day-to-day procedures at the local

"The Maoists used barrels to make the people's representative leave their offices: some have already been manhandled, others have been killed. A single unwise decision by Deuba has made the Maoist dream a reality. The achievements of the 1990 mov ment have been erased in a moment." says UML central committee member Rajendra Prasad Pandey.

Difficulties in the villages wil ompel people to move to the district headquarters, where they will crowd around the Chief District Officers, which would certainly make their job more difficult. "When the people overcrowd the headquarters, with them we will start a campaign." Pandev said

The government decision to discontinue the tenure of the local presentatives is an attempt to fill he gap within its own political cadres. This will cost the government the little sympathy the people had for the prime minister and his functionaries. The prime minister's recent move has also made his connection with the Manists clear to the public. More, the people wil become victims of bureaucratic red tape, inefficiency and

by MANJUSHREE THAPA

Misogyny amid the 'Intellectuals'

Like most Nepali

women writers.

activists, doctors

lawyers, professionals, I

know that no

matter what my

achievement, I too

can be cut down to

size by name-

calling and insinuation.

was the Fourth of July reception at the US embassy, and women's rights advocate Sapana Pradhan Malla was flush with victory at the recent Supreme Court interpretation recognising rape within marriage as a punishable offence. (See also "One small step for womankind", #99.) This interpretation came as a milestone in a country where demands for women's rights get easily derailed by (at best) Hindu paternalism and (at worst) unapologetic misogyny. News of the ruling had met with sensationalistic press coverage, mocking cartoons, snide jokes and derision. Malla had even heard, in passing, that some men felt so enraged by the ruling that they wanted to shoot her. She is a clear-thinking, experienced lawyer, though, and she was confident of the value of this interpretation, prompted by a public interest litination case launched by her and Meera Dhungana. Then she met someone who knocked

the wind out of her sails. At the reception, a very august man said to her, without blinking, that some men were so outraged by the court's ruling that they said that they should rape Malla. That was about the extent of the conversation between Malla and the august man. But in this brief exchange, the man had managed to convey a veiled threat to her, while appearing to chat amicably over canapes and drinks.

Speaking recently at Martin Chautari, Malla spoke of this incident, her voice ringing with emotion. "I was so shaken by what I had heard, I couldn't even tell my husband at first." For a week she suffered anxiety attacks, depression and doubt. "I thought of giving up my work. I thoughtwhy not go and work abroad, instead of putting up with such attitudes?"

Malla's talk at Martin Chautari prompted several women in the crowd to come forward with their stories of humilia tion, sexual threats, harassment and rape-all in front of perfect strangers. I marvelled at the opening she had created. And, as though given permission by her, I thought of several incidents in my own life incidents that have had the effect of controlling my behaviour, making me fearful, and instilling in me deep ambivalence about my identity as a woman.

The first incident came during an election campaign in which I was helping my father run for office. I was not happy doing this, as it meant giving up my independence to my family; but I had

chosen out of filial love to do so, and I was willing to face the consequences. I thought I did not realise that in politics, the consequences get brutal. On voting day, as the Congress party's workers became more and more confident of winning, some Congress sympathisers told me, apparently with good intent, that I should not be walking about, because their 'Congress boys' were looking for me so that they could strip me in public.

I was out in an open courtyard when I heard this, surrounded by perfectly ordinary people, many of them of good heart, and I suddenly felt extremely unsafe. A few women around me reacted with indignation; but others turned away in fear, as though they had not heard this. I went to seek shelter at a nearby house, and from that moment on I came to see my body as a liability; any man

I thought, as a feminist, that it would be easy for me to get over that incident, but the madness of other damaged men kept preventing me. A few months later, a family friend who had heard of the threat began to drop by my apartment and, in between pretending to sympathise, ask me pointed questions about sex. A well-known septua denarian made a very unwanted pass at me (I was 26), and even after I told his friends about this, they abetted him in phoning me. One of my supervisors spread salacious gossip about me. A few years later, a man began to stalk me, upset that had refused to meet him after a single telephone conversation. There is, it seems no dearth of men who get off on making women regret that they are women.

Now, as a writer, I keep encountering insidious reminders not to get too unnity. A year or so back. I was privy to a conversation that a few male writers were having about an established woman writer. The men had had a few drinks, and they were speaking with the alcohol-induced braggadocio of fallen Bahuns. One of them said. "I was at a party at which P went up to the woman and said, you think I don't know everyone who's bedded you, whore? He literally called her a whore, and said that he would expose her past."

"And what did she do?" another male writer asked.

"She went red in the face. She couldn't reply." The first male writer went on to count with relish, the men that the female writer had slept with, by his count.

It was bad enough that these men were speaking so contemptuously of a woman whose literary accomplishments clearly outshine theirs. But by conducting this conversation in my presence, these men were also giving me a not-so-subtle message: no matter what my achievement I too can be cut down to size by means of name-calling. I know, from conversations with other women writers over the years, that this kind of threat prevents many women writers from writing openly about women's experience and especially about women's sexuality: the personal risks are just too great. We might be branded as having 'bad character', or be called whores. Our husbands, parents, children might feel humiliated, or might stop loving or respecting us...people might overlook our accomplishments and see us as figures

Such experiences are, I believe, typica of the experience of women in Kathmandu's 'intellectual' circle: sexual threats lie just below the surface, and erunt when any crazed man feels the impulse to harm. I would wager that even the most established women journalists, NGO workers, political activists, doctors, lawyers, and professionals in Nepal have received such threats, veiled or open, at many points in their lives. Many of us talk about these incidents in private, but hesitate to bring these stories out in public, thus helping to hide just how prevalent misogyny is among Nepal's 'intellectuals'.

Sapana Pradhan Malla broke an important barrier by talking openly about the recent threat to her. Perhaps if the rest of us followed her lead, we could make it more difficult for damaged men to prev on the vulnerabilities of less advantaged women

Letter from Black Mesa Mesa, Arizona. In Nepal, he may have been a *jhankri*. But he is more than a shaman, he is the soul of a people pushed to the edge He was my soul father, we bonded as soon as we met at a UN conference

ENCOUNTERS

prayer in New York, in the cavernous General Assembly Hall where it is usually heads of governments in suits and ties who get up to speak. I felt that kinship of spirit. He looked like us, and he prayed like us. I feel his sorrow now, when I get this email appeal from his people His sadness and despair represents the sorrow of Native American peoples. Huck Greyeyes' people are a proud nation, but a dying one. It is the plight of indigenous peoples everywhere, struggle to save a way of life against a creeping global monoculture, a process accelerated by a corpo-

on indigenous peoples a few years ago. He was conducting the opening

ate thirst for water and minerals. They are asked to parade in **Huck Greyeyes** remonial costumes as token looked like us, and gestures to a cause. Across the world, indigenous peoples are he prayed like us. displayed in colourful clothes, as if what they wear were all-important.

As if these outer trappings could save the culture. Actually, it does not matter if Huck Greyeyes wears Levis. Identity means recognition of us as a people, human beings and citizens with equal rights. Here is an appeal from Huck Greveyes in Black Mesa that I pass on

We wish to submit this open letter to the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe and the US government to demand corporate accountability in light of the

Bush administration's decision last week to relax air-quality rules governing older coal-fired power plants, the Enron scandal in Black Mesa and the urrent drought disaster. Can't you see we are suffering from the effects of corporate greed

n collusion with the US and tribal governments? "Grandfathered" coal-fired power plants in our region constitute the largest source of greenhouse gases in North America. Fossil fuel emissions impact global climate change.



We are directly affected because our ancestral homeland contains major deposits of coal which are being extracted by Peabody Coal Company owned by Lehman Brothers. The coal from Peabody's Black Mesa mine is transported to the Mojave Power plant through a slurry pipeline owned by Enron Corporation that pumps 3.3 million gallons of ristine water from our sole source aquifer each day. Stop the corporate waste! In a region where water is extremely scare, our only source of drinking water is being depleted and contaminated to transport coal without any permit from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). And all this is happening during a drought emergency.

We pray you will act now to fulfil your trust responsibility to us and demand corporate accountability by Peabody, Enron and Lehman Brothers who are operating in collusion with the US government. We pray you will stop looking at the \$45 million in revenue you receive each year rom them, long enough to see that water is more precious than gold and not a drop should be wasted.

Our distinct identity as a people is crucially linked to the lands we have occupied since time immemorial. Displacement from our territorie means death and the destruction of our identity, culture and way of life Without water we cannot survive.

We believe our human rights should not be denied and should take precedence over national sovereignty—whether it be the sovereignty of independent nations or the dependent sovereign status accorded to tribal governments.





Authentic Thai Food Baan Thai Restaurant & Bar

> Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal For Reservation: 243271

- Michael Hutt speaks on Bhutanese Refugees: Some Reflections on the Past and Present. 19 July, 5.30PM, Baggikhana, Patan Dhoka. Social Science Baha and the Institute for Social and Environmental Transformation. 542544
- Presentation skills and public speaking Training provided by UK charity ELD. 20-22 July. Details at eld@wlink.com.np. www.eld.org.uk, 524202

. Momos and music The Heartbreakers at Nanglo Bakery Café starting 19 July, 6.30 PM on. Fridays in Teku, Saturdays at the Nanglo Café and Pub, Darbar Marg, Sundays in

- . Happy Hour at the Splash Bar & Grill 5.30 PM-7.30 PM, buy one get one free. Live band Wednesdays and Fridays with barbeque, Radisson Hotel. 411818
- * Business lunches, poolside parties, romantic dinners All at the Fusion Bar, Dwarika's

- Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510 . La Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque Lunch, tea and dinner with European and American food, fine wines, Pulchowk,
- Patan Museum Café Mixed menu, garden seating, Lunch only, 11am—2pm. 25 percent off with Summit Card. 526271
- * Improved Singaporean and Malaysian food New dry noodles with wonton soup, better nasi lemak, satay, and more. Sing Ma, the Food Court, Jawalakhel. 520004
- * Tukche Thakali Kitchen Buckwheat, barley, bean, and dried meat specialties. Also brunch with porridge and pancakes, all raw material from Tukche village. Darbar Marg.
- Cuisine du jour Rs 700, two for one, and free use of pool. Hotel Shangri La. 412999 * Regional cuisine at the Fun Café Saturday Brunch with buffet of cuisine from Ireland,
- Mexico and more. 12 noon-2.30 PM, Rs 600, Radisson Hotel. 411818 . Friday Continental BBQ at Dwarika's Hotel 7PM on. Rs500 per person, includes a free
- heer or soft drink 479488 · Pasta Mania Choose from a variety of pastas for Rs 111 plus tax at lunch and dinner, and 20 percent off bottled wines, La Dolce Vita, Thamel,
- Sandwiches Innovative fillings on home-baked breads. 12-27 July, The Café, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234
- . Fine dining and table top cooking Dinner at The Chimney, Hotel Yak & Yeti, starting 6.30 PM everyday, 248999
- Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café, Thamel.
- Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday
- Thursday and Sunday nights. 416096.

 Special Thai cuisine at Ban Thai Restaurant, Darbar Marg. 243271

- . For pilgrims and holidaymakers Dakchhinkali Village Inn overlooking Dakchhinkali Temple and Pharping's Buddhist monasteries. Weekend Rs 1,300 per person on twin-sharing with half board. Children from 6-15. Rs 800, dak vinn@hotmail.com.
- Special Offer Buy one \$99 overnight package, get the second night at 50 percent. Valid for single or double occupancy at Dwarika's Hotel, 479488
- . Monsoon at its best Walk in the rain through the pristing country side. \$35 per person per night on full board basis at the Horse Shoe Mountain Resort, Mude. resort@horshoe.wlink.com.np
- * The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner, 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort. 560675
- . Writing Retreat Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, 375280

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





We are now waiting for this next low pressure zone hovering over the northern Bay of Bengal that we see in this satellite picture taken on Wednesday morning. If it doesn't bring substantial rains to Nepal, then this year's monsoon can be officially declared to have failed. Western Nepal, and northwestern India are under severe drought. The rain that has fallen has come down in hune cloudbursts like the one that triggered the landslides in Khotang this week. The approaching monsoon trough is now supported by two distinct lows over the tarai. Expect heavy rains by Monday. Fingers crossed.

KATHMANDU VALLEY













The New Lahures: Foreign Employment and Remittance Economy of Nepal David Seddon, Jagannatha Adhikari, Ganesh Gurung lepal Institute of Development Studies, Kathmandu, 2001

The authors explore the impact of remittances on rural livelihoods and the national economy. They discuss the structure of access to employment, regional patterns and linkages, and variations between villages. They present analyses and case studies from the western and other hill areas and ask how migration from the tarai is being affected. They end with policy recommendations at the rnational national, regional, district and VDC level.

> Lives and Work of Nepalese Children: A View from Below Aino Askezard, Kathmandu, 2002

Askgaard spent two years in Kathmandu working with a small group of Nepali children, many of whom work as domestic help, ragpickers, and porters, and some who are in school. This volume nies of the children about their lives and dreams, as well as photographs the children took under the guidance of Askgaard and Nepali photgrapher Mani Lama.



Rs 250

B Barua

Pioneer Nepali Students in Japan a Century AgoHarendra

Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu, 2002

Rs 650

Barua traces the adoption in the early 20th century of Japan as a model of development and growth for Nepal's rulers, who decided to send a certain number of Nepali youth there to study. The students who made the arduous journey were welcomed in Japan. This trilingual volume (English, Nepali, Japanese) contains reproductions of document pertaining to these students, as well as period photographs.

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

Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles. cards, silver jewellery and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l'Annapurna.

Wanted Sales manager-cum-designer Knowledge of western and eastern clothes design. French language a plus. Divine Group and Co. Tel: 230369, fax: 229622. Email: divine@mail.com.np

Foot - Reflexology: stressed or tired? UPLIFT YOUR SPIRIT FROM YOUR TOES UP. email: buddhasfeet@yahoo.com or ring 425931

Flowerlovers don't miss our special FUCHSIA exhibition!!! More than 60 new and very beautiful varieties of FUCHSIA, recently imported from Furnne are on sale now for the first time ever in Nepal. Only at THE BISHALNAGAR NURSERY, tel. 431797, five min from Bhatbhateni Supermarket, two min from Bishalnagar Chowk (turn right and down-

Landrover Defender 110 1990, 146,000 kms. Duty not paid. Price negotiable. Contact 521105 between 10AM-12 noon.

Nagarkot Special at Naked Chef Bed and breakfast, three-course gourmet dinner, Rs 800 per person, Room Rs 300 only. For Nepalis and expatri ates 680006 969107153

House for rent Ground floor: living room, kitchen, dining room, one bathroom. First floor: master bedroom with attached bath, one bedroom, bathroom, pantry. Second floor: one bedroom with attached bath store Johby Third floor terrace and laundry room. Location: Galfutar, Tel: 412094

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

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

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

BBG on FM 102.4

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



Radio Sagarmatha

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

Shashi Shah's works, all titled Terrorism", are almost scary in their

intensity. Obviously, they have narticular resonance in these times but even seen out of this context the images of horses foaming at the mouth and trampling on screaming, disembodied heads are enough to disconcert even the most hardened. Shashi Shah has dedicated his whole career to painting horses, and he is a master old, stunning colours, all at manipulating his horses to fit any theme. The result is a startling. thought-provoking messages thought-provoking set of paintings. Navindra Raihhandari's "Naturescapes" are dramatic,

All this and more awaits you at the current show at the Srijana Art Gallery, a group exhibition of the expressionistic depictions of works of nine contemporary Nepali nature. He uses bold, harsh, artists, including veterans such as brushstrokes, and dark colours Kiran Manandhar, Shashi Shah, predominantly blacks, browns. greens and reds. Peer into his range from nature, and culture. to abstracts and you just might see terrorism, individualism, and birds sitting on lush dark green feelings. Seen all at one go, the pines, and jagged rocks with trees work can be rather overwhelming. clinging to their sides.

The mixed media pieces by Kiran Manandhar's set of Sharada Man Shrestha are highly naintings titled "K I" through K textured, detailed depictions of V", are the highlight of the Nepali culture, especially festivals. Some of the more striking pieces exhibition. They are instantly identifiable as part of his oeuvre. are a combination of rich, luxuriwith their sure, bold, black strokes ant, dark colours on jute and and vibrant colours. He talks of plaster of paris that make the work how he used a model when he three-dimensional. The effect is started to paint this particular set

encapsulated only the essence of the model. He then used lavers of paper, and overlapped his work with different materials in order to make the subject his own. "Hijo samma oon thhivo." he savs "aaia ma bhaen." ("Until yesterday, the model was the work; today, I made it mine.")

Uttam Nepali's works display a similar depth of thought and perception. Collectively entitled "Feelings", these are lovely, luminous, airy works of art. Abstract and whimsical, they are full of elusive intannible objects floating around and seeming to wink at you cheekily. Also abstract are Krishna Manandhar's set of paintings called "Rocks".

This is a show worth seeing. It isn't often that the some of the hest-known names in Nenali art exhibit their work together in a joint effort to promote contempo rary Nepali art. Chances are. you'll go back for a second

(The show, Recent Paintings by Contemporary Nepali Artists, runs until 27 July at the Srijana Art Gallery Kamaladi from 9AM-7PM everyday. 247889)

Our under-16 girls are off to play competitive football in Norway. Back home, they need a budget events and an audience.

KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA

manner of textures and

's good news for everyone who gave up on Nepali football disgusted with the power struggles between the two factions of the All Nepal Football Association.
There's a Nepali team off for the first time to play in Europe, at the 30-year-old Norway Cup. The national under-16 girl's team. And even better news, the team has members from all over the country, and not only Kathmandu. There's only one player from the capital; the others come from as far way as Ihana and Kailali.

The girls haven't had much time to prepare for the ournament, which begins 28 July, but they're working hard at the closed camp being run at the ANFA hostel in Satdobato. After three rounds of selection following the agreement signed between the Norwegian Embassy in Nepal and the ANFA in April, 16 players were chosen from 70 candidates. The team has been training in Satdobato since, practicing for an hour-and-a-half two times a day, no matter what the weather.

The terms of participation in the Norway Cup rec that girls' teams be accompanied by a female coach. The only licensed woman football coach in Nepal, Lalita Shrestha, was engaged elsewhere, so for the moment the team is working with coach Milan Hada, who has been a coach for seven years. He says the team is a good one, but acknowledges that they aren't yet battle-tested. "There is lack of competition for the girls. You can't guarantee performance without competition," he says. Without regular competitions and matches, there's no avenue for the team to develop their skills, confidence and strategies. "There are five or six players with great potential, and they should have the opportunity to ntinue with this." says coach Hada

Unfortunately, it is likely that this under-16 eam won't even be a team after the Norway Cup. Hada and Sanjiv Mishra, manager of the team, aren't too hopeful, although Mishra tells us that Geeta Rana's Women's Football Committee is trying it's best to ensure the team's survival. The major hurdle here is the matter of social acceptance. Nepalis are finding it hard to come to terms with the idea of women playing football. "Society, the way people think, is the piggest enemy of women's football. There are still these traditional ideas about girls staying home and performing chores," says Hada. "The team is almost entirely supported by ANFA right now, but they will definitely need more support from other sports organisations, the media and maybe even individuals," Hada said. The team needs proper budget for everything from training to housing to nod to education

focused, dedicated, and excited, even if they do worry about how tall and strong many of their competitors will be When we visited them at a practice session last week, they were clearly enjoying themselves thoroughly, although they played with grim concentration. "It's great to be a national player. Everyone dreams of making it. I'm proud that I enresent my country all over the world," said 15-war-old Pashupati Rana, who has been playing on various national level teams for five years. But the most experienced player on the squad knows only too well how hard it will be to keep her passion alive. "People are still discouraging and disrespectful to players," she shrugs. Her teammates agree, but say that their love of the game is a suitable enough refort to most navsavers

The girls met for the first time when they moved into the ANFA hostel, but they've managed to get into real team spirit. They say they are like a very close-knit family now sharing their sharing their problems and helping each other. And despite the rigorous training, they remain young girls in their early- and mid-

teens who like to loosen up after

practice. They laugh and tell us

bout singing in the shower,



The All-New 200 ml International Pack Reach for the range of Real fruit juices now in the all-new 200ml Trim & Tall Packs. Drink deep to the juiclest fashion statement in town it even comes with a cool flexi-straw hat keeps the juice flowing. Really Happening Picking apart Pakistan's political economy in the July Himal



APJ Abdul Kalam: India's ballistic president-to-be

19-25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES 15

Sexuality and obscenity in South Asia

Sri Lanka's eastern question



Coming in August: Eelam dalits, women's work in Pakistan, the Gangetic dolphin, bridging the IT gap and much more.

19-25 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Irony, Steel and Industriousness

top me if you've heard this one before, but we have just received a piece of breaking news that the All-Nepal association for Satire, Parody and Sarcasm (Election symbol: 1,000-rupee note) has splir into two factions with one accusing the other of not having a sense of humour.

In a more serious vein, the president ousted the incumbent general-secretary and made himself secretary-general of the rump faction, promising equal mirth

and merriment for all Nepalis by the year 2020. Meanwhile, the oustee incumbent general secretary is not taking it lying down and has already started providing immediate entertainment by embarking on a nationwide roadshow to perform skits at all Zonal Headquarters of the Kingdom.

Headquarters of the Kingdom. For those outside the ZHQs, it doesn't really matter that one bunch of clowns has been replaced by another bunch of clowns, because both are equally good. They should both turn professional. As a result of all this fun and amusement, the whole country is in stitches, which is just as

well because, as we all know, a stitch in time saves nine and, lest we forget, he who laughs last laughs best.

Now that the youth wing of the All-Nepal Association for Satire, Parody and Sarcasm has also followed the adult wing and split, it has become a knotty issue deciding which juveniles will represent the country at the XII International Congress of Under-19 Jokers which is being held in Ouagadougou later this

But going by the preamble of the constitution of

the incumbent general-secretary's faction of the former president's bloc of the youth wing which states, and I quote, "The more is always the merier," it is quite possible that both factions will be represented to present a joint working paper titled "The Importance of Irony and Steel in National Industriousness, Property Alleviation, and Steel in National Industriousness, Property Alleviation, and Steel in National Debasement."

This is a hefty document that charts out our strategy in unleashing the forces of mockery, derision

and scom in a nationwide campaign so that we will all in the not very unforesceable future be able to laugh our guts out and, I might add, to our hearts' content. In doing so, we will all be able to better survive our orgoing trials and tribulations and collectively emerge from them better human beings.

human beings.

Mr Chairman, Ladies
and Gentlemen, allow me
now a few more minutes of
your indulgence to delve
into the vital importance of
journalism and journalists in
this great endeavour. As we
set about on this path of
national deconstruction, we

need to keep a watchful eye on the lapdog role of the media. We cannot allow the pen to be mightier than the ploughshares that we turn into swords. Since it is all fun and games, there cannot be even a moment of seriousness.

In conclusion, with permission from the Chair, I would like all of you gathered here today to stand up on your seats, lampoon the person standing next to you, and observe a minute's laughter. You may now start chuckling.



he Horizon Regional Cancer Center at Bummugrad Hospital is a recognized, fleader in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, or uniformationally trained physicians (leader in the diagnosis, and sessess and treat this complex disease using the very latest modical technology and treatment protocols. In addition to our world-class medical services, Bummungrad Hospital offers an array of patient services designed to make your visit as pleasant as possible, including on-the busing and or international patient services center.

Screening

- Internationally Certified Laboratory - Tumor Markers

· Cytology (PAP Smeur)

- Fine Needle Aspiration - Immunohistochemistry

Diagnostics and Imaging

Mammography
 Fiberoptic Endoscopy

· MRI · CT Scanning

Color Doppler Ultrasound
 Nuclear Medicine

Treatment - Radiation Therapy

Interventional Radiology
 Chemotherapy
 Surgical Oncology





Mr. Arnal Probarial, Authorizad Representative in Repri.

Rahmalar 4 (1999). Rassum Extractory Kashrasada Tel: 426-581, Makiir 98(0).

Sensilar 4 (1999). Rassum Extractory Kashrasada Tel: 426-581, Makiir 98(0).

IEPALI SOCIETY

ext time you drive up Kupondole towards Patan, look at some of the classy handicraft shopfronts on either side of the road and you may just see Meera Bhattarai visiting

her retailers.
Meera has broken away
from the mould of womenheaded crafts production for charity, and plunged headlong into the management and marketing style of hardnosed business, embracing competition and rigorous quality standards, and catering to the latest trends.

Watching Meera function, you'd think she was in the corporate world, and not the founder of the Association of Craft Producers. As executive director, she has been able to balance business with social obligations, developing what she calls a "sociallyoriented, commercially viable enternrise."

Meera has come a long way since she first started managing women's skill development at the Nepal Women's Organisation 25 years ago. As a psychology graduate, she has used her academic background and learn over the years that the only way is to combine charity with entrepreneurship.

Meera's world

"It's helped me understand people's attitudes," says an introspective Meera about the people she meets everydary generation (provincome women, sophisticated international buyers, bubsinessmen (and they are almost always men) wanting to cash in on the handicraft trade, bureaucraft from the labour department, and most

recently—and bruisingly dogged trade unionists. Meera says she has inherited her strong sense of altruism from her mother, and

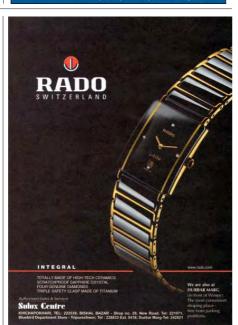
altruism from her mother, and

she wanted to help other women like her stand on their own feet with income generation and skills training. "My mother would always feed and clothe people who came to our door, she never turned anyone away," she recalls.

But as Meera learnt over the years, kindness and generosity are not enough. Continuous charity makes people dependent, her idea is to give people fishing nets, not fish. Today, her organisation helps women strike out on their own, develop craft and management skills, self-confidence and a sense of ownership over their products.

The group helps women develop product ideas and marketing arrangements that allow a sufficient margin to provide not only competitive incomes, but a wide array of fringe benefits not common in Nepal today including an emergency welfare fund, annual bonuses, and a retirement plan. There is even an "educational allowance benefit program" to help female children on to school. The finished products are displayed at Dhukuti, the ACP's trendy

Kupondole outlet. •



CDO Read No. 194/056/57 Lalitour, Central Region Postal Read, No. 04/058/59