



#### BINOD BHATTARAI

xacrly ten years ago this week, flight TG 311 from Bangkok was making its final approach into Kathmandu airport. The Airbus A310 dipped into the monsoon clouds but, because the jet was too high,

approach. It was 12.30 PM, 31 July 1992, and it was the last anyone heard from the plane.

Despite an intensive aerial and land search along the approach path, the wreckage was only found four days later, 40 km north of Kathmandu. The plane had slammed into a ridge below Langtang at 500 kmph at an altitude of 3,500 m. An inquiry showed that the pilots, distracted by a flap problem, had made a 360 degree turn instead of a U-turn and headed due north in zero visibility. Ninety-nine engers and 14 crew were killed, no piece of the aircraft arger than one metre was found.

Two months later, on 28 September, flight PK 268 from Karachi was making the same approach in identical weather conditions. This was also an Airbus A310, and contact was lost soon after the Pakistani pilots reported ten miles from touchdown. The wreckage was found a few hours later just below the ridge line at Bhatte Danda. Of the 155 passengers and 2 crew, none survived.

The two crashes beamed worldwide on television made Kathmandu infamous as "the most dangerous airport in the world"—a reputation that the airport has found difficult to erase even after a decade. It was stupendous bad luck that, after 25 years of safely

Ten years after two of the worst air disasters in Nepali aviation history. new navaids have improved safety. But there is a long way to go.

handling jet aircraft, two major disasters happened in an airworthy aircraft under control of crew flies into a

such quick succession. An approach radar at the airport would have evented both crashes: controllers could have warned the Thai pilots that they were dangerously off course. and the Pakistani jet that it was in a no-no zone below the descent profile. The Japanese government helped install a radar tracking system, and in the past five years air traffic controllers say that at least two potential crashes have been

averted because pilots were warned in time. "We have much better equipment than we did ten years ago," says Binod Gautam, chief of the Aviation Safety Department at the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN). "But there is a need for more navaids in Kathmandu and other airports."

While Kathmandu airport now has state of the art radar and guidance systems, most other airports in Nepal have minimal or no navigational aids. And this in one of the most difficult flying terrains in the world. Nearly all crashes in Nepal in the past ten years have been what aviation experts describe as "controlled flight into terrain" (CFIT)—

mountain in poor visibility.

"You better know exactly where you are while flying in Nepal in the monsoon," says one veteran Royal Nepa Airlines cantain "This terrain doesn't forvive mistakes There were painful reminders of this in two crashes in the past two months: a Skyline Twin Otter in Surkhet on 17 July and the Asian Airlines Mi-17 helicopter which was lost on a flight from Makalu Base Camp to Lukla on 31 May and has still not been found.

That chopper, ferrying 12 mountaineering staff and Russian pilot, did not have the standard Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), and this is one reason it can't be found. CAAN allows Russian helicopters to fly without the transmitters because

installation would require major design changes. A Royal Nepal Twin Otter that crashed into mountains in cloud while approaching Dhangadi in July 2000 did not have a Global Positioning System (GPS) which may have helped avoid the crash.

## Bank-rupture

We are back to square one on banking reforms. A month after Deloitte Touche Tomahatsu abandoned its management contract to run Rastriva Baniiva Bank, its executive chairman, Ganesh P Adhikary, suddenly resigned. The bank has not made a major investment in one year. and holds Rs 40 billion worth of deposits. The captain has jumped ship, and top guns at the central bank and the Planning Commission seem to be too busy angling for party tickets to rescue the bank. Consultants arrived this week to see what can be done with the other sick bank, Nepal Bank Limited. The World Bank and DfID have made the selection of a management consultant conditional to funding the reforms.

nepalnews.com Yes 60.1%

leakly Internet Prof. # 46. To your on to: www.neoalitimes.com Q.Has the government done enough to rehabilitate survivors of last week's flood disaster?

# Past Maoist attacks have hurt ordinary farmers,

but the government isn't much help either.

KUNDA DIXIT in DOLAKHA

th another Maoist bandh looming, the people of Dolakha are bracing them-selves for another wave of destruction. The security forces are nowhere in sight, so there is a wait-and-watch attitude for a repeat of the mayhem in April. Scars of the vandalism and rampage in the run-up to the last five-day bandh in April can still be seen along the Lamosangu-Jiri Highway: the NEA administrative office in Charikot and the Roads Department complex in Thulo Pakhar burnt to cinders, the charred hulks of the tipper trucks and dozers at the Kharidhunga magnesite mine, an electricity substation near 24 km destroyed and burnt, horticultural farms in Maina Pokhari and Bhoj torched, a potato seedling farm in Mude destroyed, the Danda Pakhar telecom tower blasted, and even a Pepsi delivery van set on fire.

"Till May, there were a lot of people around here who gave the Maoists the benefit of doubt," says one Dolakha villager who did not want to be named. "But after they attacked the seedling farms it was a turning point, we thought they are not for the people."

During those two weeks in May, the Maoist leadership appears to have given local cadre open-ended instructions to select targets at will to destroy infrastructure and government property. In a coordinated nationwide rampage, telecom towers, hydropower plants including Jhimruk and Andhikhola, bridges, government buildings and vehicles, and village council buildings were destroyed. Stung subsequently by rising public anger, the Maoist leadership reportedly reversed the instructions. But for people in many areas of the country, as in Dolakha, that came too late.

Tens of thousands of villagers along the Jiri highway depend on fruits, vegetables and potatoes for income, and the government farms were an important source of seedlings and other extension support for their cash crops. "Many of us are not rich," said one farmer. "Selling potatoes was our only source of income." The government farms are now producing seedlings and hybrids again, but business is slow to pick up and much of the vegetable is notting in the fields. Dairy farmers have also been hit because Maoists set fire to two milk collection tankers in Panchkhal in April just because the vehicles had white number plates.

There is an eerie absence of government everywhere. The VDC buildings that



have not yet been destroyed are padlocked. VDC chairmen no longer hold office, but the villagers still come to them with problems. It is rare to see government vehicles plying the highway and, except for the army platoon guarding the Khimti hydro-electric plant and the company in Charikot, there are no soldiers to be seen.

The police left in April when the Danda Pakhar Armed Police Force training centre was abandoned because it was deemed to be too vulnerable to attack. The Maoists came in one night after they'd left, and blasted the houses anyway.

But the Maoists, who used to walk around openly carrying muskets and 303s, have gone back into hiding, fearing the army's undercover agents who reportedly patrol the trails. The army has raided Maoist training camps on the highlands of Sailung in pincer attacks from Ramechhap, Jiri and Barabise, Dozens of mid-level Maoist section and platoon commanders have either been captured or killed in the past three months, according to sources in Kathmandu.

Also, in early July, commander for Dolakha and Sindhupalchok and Maoist central committee member Rit Bahadur Khadka, was killed in an encounter in Parsa near the Indian border. Khadka was a charismatic leader with a loyal following. Legends about him spread after his famous escape while under police custody from Bir Hospital in 1997. His killing is expected to affect Maoist actions in Dolakha. .

Creating gride and satisfaction in ownership of My First Honda





# Tough nut to crack

amned if we do damned if we don't. Whether or not the Supreme Court reamned if we do damned if we don't. Whether or not the Supreme Court re-instates parliament on 6 August, it looks like we are headed into more severe turbulence. More confusion, more chaos, more uncertainty. Was this the

Reinstating parliament would set another dangerous precedent of political parties settling scores in the courts and not through the people's mandate. Nothing wrong with that in a country with rule of law, of course, but you are forced to ask who is running the country: politicians or lawyers? Restoring parliament would set off a new round of the horse-trading that we have come to expect from the people's representatives. Political permutations will be needed to reach the magic number 58, and whoever is at the helm will control government machinery at election time.

Not reinstating parliament will mean a high-risk election scenario. The government's conviction that it can hold parliamentary elections, but that it is too dangerous to conduct local polls is so hypocritical and disingenuous that it does not merit any more comment. Every eyewitness report we have carried from the districts in the past month point to the perils of holding general elections in the present political limbo. Democracy abhors a vacuum, and this vast vacuum is also deleterious to development. Together with the insurgency, these decisions have pushed us back 30 years.

We have no one else to blame for this but the same old astigmatic leaders, rival power-brokers, and their hangers-on in the ruling party who have made the nation and the people pay for their selfishness. What a ghastly betrayal of the people's trust.

Everyone is hunkering down for expected showdowns in the weeks ahead.

The Election Commissioner says he is sick of the Congress factions breathing down his neck, and is probably going to rule on who gets the party symbol before the Supreme Court verdict expected on Tuesday. Then there is the extension of the state of emergency due on 28 August. Technically the prime minister and the king together can get the extension, but the prime minister also wants elections. And he can't have both. Like it or not, the Maoists hold the trump cards. Their campaign of violence may be backfiring, they may be trying to slink back to the negotiating table, but it is the threat of violence that has given them the clout to dictate terms. The bait they are dangling this time is the prospect of talks. The Rs 5 million dead-or-alive ransoms on the heads of underground Maoist leaders is not preventing various organs of state from having furtive meetings through back channels.



#### POETIC LICENSE

# Who, what, where, when?

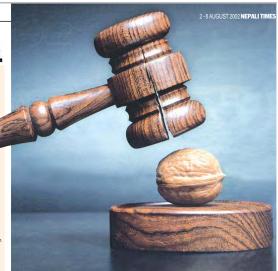
Our democracy it is multi-party but our prime minister he is partyless We have a parliamentary system, but not one parliamentarian

The people are sovereign, but they have no right. They yield to those who have the might.

For twelve years they plundered now they tell us to build. Drafting more rules to keep up the deceit.

Armed to the teeth, they extend the emergency, even the Buddha now senses the urgency. Where does that leave you, where does that leave us If this is a democracy, then why all the fuss:

on the Nepali original in Himal Khah



on an elevated highway from Bangkok, on

to the US airbase at Uta Pao. Pattaya was

more up-market (and less seedy) tourist

soon on its way to being transformed from a

Pattaya has lost much of its lustre to the

watering holes such as Phuket and Koh Samui.

development set. Yes, there is even something

called the "Consultants Cafe" where the waiter

seem to know that the experts of the consul-

ancy business are experts at spending other

here among the residents and the visitors, a

to flourish despite places like Pattaya digging

country's resilience and diversity. Prosperous

they concede in private that sex tourism gave a

hig push to their economy in the earlier phase

It had its by-products, they admit, the

AIDS enidemic resorts that rotted away and

Thais are a little shy to admit it openly, but

themselves into a rut is a tribute to this

true Gommorah of the East.

of their development.

people's money. There is a care-a-hang attitude

That the Thai tourism industry continues

and bare of Parraya

Why do countries realise what they have destroyed only once it's all gone, Bangkok" came to mean more than just a Royal dedicated to pleasure, then this is it. Two hours

There has also been an impact on culture, weekends the motorway is clogged with air-conditioned coaches and fancy cars conveying and Thai social scientists often bemoan the erosion of traditional propriety and courtesy those who yearn to relax down to the beaches and the way in which these traditions have been reduced to a caricature. The cultural The delights of Pattava were first sampled shows are a parody, and the handicrafts have y outsiders 40 years ago when Unocal workers become airport art. arrived here to prospect for natural gas in the Gulf of Thailand. Then came the Vietnam War and Pattaya became the fleshpot nearest

Countries strive for economic growth, but when this growth is too rapid, it exacts a price. Thailand is an example Every society has to decide for itself how much it is ready to sacrifice in order to chase prosperity.

coconut-fringed fishing village to the world's King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan has propounded his theory of Gross National Lappiness. Interestingly his philosophy is shared by Thailand's much-revered monarch. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has proposed But the nearness to Bangkok still brings hordes his concept of "Sufficiency Economics". Popular of tourists, other south-east Asians and even the as he may be, it doesn't look like too many Thais are listening to the wise words of their king on how to live frugally self-sufficiently and to have a small ecological footprint.

As the world gets ready to review the progress since the last Earth Summit ten years ago at another mega-gathering of leaders in Johannesburg this month, it is a good to time to look at the linkages between economics and ecology. Investors tend to think that money can do everything, and that the earnings from ncreased productivity will be enough to pay for even the most expensive remedial measures

in future. But it seldom happens that way. Groundwater depletion due to pumping has lowered the water table and caused the city of Bangkok to sink by almost five cm per year, in some places even 12 cm. The Thai government has an ambitious plan to recharge the

groundwater, but the engineers admit that the subsidence may be irreversible. The drought on Koh Samui island is big news these days. Virach Phongchababnapa, a tourism entrepreneur, told The Nation newspaper: "We in the tourism business sell our natural resources like prostitutes sell their bodies. So many of us only think about making quick profits, forgetting that we have to protect the resources that nature has bestowed us. We must save it in order that they may be enjoyed in the future "

If the Thais are not listening to their king, it is not likely they will listen to Khun Virach, Thailand's economy is now on a full rebound after the Asian crisis, and now more than ever there are even fewer takers for King Bhumibol's "Sufficiency Economics". Boomtime Thailand's prime minister is business tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra. And like most tycoons he is a born-again, supply-side

believer in the theory of perpetual growth. Thailand shows how things can go wrong when on the surface it looks like everything is going right. Ignoring delicate eco-systems and fragile cultures is not just immoral, it is also bad economics. And if you leave it only to businessmen, a country only realises what it has destroyed once it's all gone.

For Nepal, there are so many lessons in Thailand. Bad examples of ignoring carrying capacity, of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Also good examples of towns and islands that have realised their mistake and are now feverishly trying to turn the clock back before it is too late. The moral of the story is: treating tourism as an important industry i fine but we must remember that most



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**Adulterated economy** 

ext time you drive a car, remember: you are poisoning passersby and yourself. The failure of the state to apprehend and punish those involved in the nationwide adulteration of fuel is staggering. Fuel adulteration is one of the most blatant open and obvious instances of corruption in Nepal today. And the government's failure to control it is a strongest indication that it is only paying lip service to combating

corruption.

The driving force behind adulteration is the price differential between subsidised kerosene, diesel and petrol. A weak penalty system of the state-owned monopoly, Nepal Oil Corporation, and lax monitoring have made fuel adulteration a lucrative exercise There are huge profit margins, and no threat of punishment. And the whole system is so well lubricated with graft that everyone up and down the line gets his share.

A recent survey showed that there is a lot of room for manoeuvre for adulterators of fuel, since the "risk free" rate is 40 percent for petrol and 80 percent for diesel. This means that the amount that can be mixed within technical purity measurement parameters is huge. This margin appears to nave been deliberately left wide to allow hanky panky. All this happens in collusion in a "public-private partnership" between the Nepal Oil Corporation, and retailers under the Nepal Petroleum Dealers'

Fuel adulterers ar not just cheating consumers. The impure fuel is turning our cities into easchambers, reducing engine efficiency, weakening national productivity, and dragging the economy down. One conservative estimate is that the country loses Rs 1 billion a year just from the adulteration loss, not counting the health costs and other indirect loss of efficiency

Risks from adulterated fuel are real, it is not some alarmist scientific theory. It affects you and me, everyone who walks or rides on our streets. It will affect us today, it will affect us tomorrow. The dangers add up,

There has been an exponential growth in the number of people with asthma in Kathmandu. This is a direct result of the soot particulates in the air from vehicle exhaust which in turn is are a result of inefficient burning caused by adulteration. Another health problem is hypoxia, which is caused by lack of oxygen in the

fatigue and dizziness and is the cause of numerous traffic accidents

The introduction of lead free petrol in Nepal has eliminated the danger of lead. but replaced it with benzene and toluene. both deadly carcinogens. These chemicals are added to lead-free petrol to raise the octane level, and should be trapped by catalytic converters in Euro II cars. However, the filters lose their efficacy

because of the adulterated fuel. To start doing something about his scourge, those who are involved in adulteration have to realise first that they are poisoning themselves. Those senior officials who are on the take have to see that their own lifespans are decreasing. And

The fuel adulteration mafia is so powerful, its

the state of emergency it cannot be stopped.

tentacles go so high up in government that despite

we consumers have to be aware of the dangers, and raise our voices in outrage. After investigative reports came out in the media last year, the government set up a commission to look into the matter. But adulteration just got worse. The Ministry of

Population and Environment decided to do something about it, and set up large billboards urging motorists to "tune their en regularly". As if that would help. No government office has so far addressed the issue of fuel quality. There are strong indications that officials are in cahoots with the fuel adulteration mafia, even that the two are one and the same.

And yet, it is so easy to do something about it. All we need is political will. We can learn from neighbouring India where the level of corruption are no less than ours. But India has managed to curb adulteration through a marker system". This method allows anyone to check the purity of the fuel at the sales

point with a digital counter at nominal cost. After its initial success in Delhi and Bombay, the marker system is now going to be implemented all

The marker system allows any onsumer at a gas station to check the purity of the fuel in an ATM type machine where a 20 ml sample of oil in a test tube is inserted to check for purity. This simple method ensures that there is no chance of government authorities getting in the way. It is between the buyer and the seller, and the marker system ensures that the transaction is proper.

The architect of the anti-adulteration scheme is the Director of Research and Development of the Indian Oil Composition, A K Bhatnagar. His team designed the system under which fuel is marked by a bio-coding method and the concentration of this marke is tested at the pump with a portable digital analyser. For the time being this is the best tamper-proof method we have of stopping fuel adulteration. But is there the political will to stop it? ♦

(Chakra Khadka is associated with the Department of Economics at the Patan Campus.)

TALKING ABOUT TALKING Thanks to Shyam Shrestha "What do the Maoists want this time?", #104) for saying what most of us have been thinking. Do we want a long-drawn conflict that will destroy our country or even cost us our independence? Because that is what will happen to us if this war drags on. The government and the Maoists must take the opportunity for talks seriously. If not, we may have lost a valuable opportunity to strike a peace deal

### G Lamsal, Kathmandu

 We must always give peace a chance, and I appreciated Shyam Shrestha's efforts to bring the warring parties together. But what Mr Shrestha also has to understand is that it is the Maoists on the run now, not the government or the democratic forces (and no, the Maoists are not democratic, I refuse to believe it) and that it is they who have to compromise more, for peace talks. The way the Manists broke off the last peace talks, and used the time during the truce for their propaganda, makes any other

#### used the time during the peace talks to strengthen his party. He has further said that he would do likewise in the future. Now, who will trust this person? Mr Shrestha has also used the election card to arque that the government now has to talk to Maoist leaders for elections to be held. As Prime

the Manists In fact Prachanda

himself has gone on record and

example of other anarchists and

said that he had followed the

and are lethal

blood and is related to excessive carbon

incomplete combustion. Hypoxia leads to

monoxide in the air, again caused by

Minister Deuba has said, he would rather talk with the Maoist military commanders than these dastardly leaders. I firmly believe that there is no one voice in the Manist party-it is horizontally and vertically split, and there is no need to talk to Prachanda. In fact Prachanda wants to use neace talks to re-establish his lost connection with local cadres. It would definitely wield more

SELE-MADE I really identified with "Nothing is what it seems" (#103) by Raiendr

positive results if peace talks are

initiated with the military command

ers. At least it might lead to them

laving down arms, and an end to

## LETTERS

have faced from childhood as a MANJUSHREE THAPA daughter of a father who was a Thank you for Maniushree Thapa's "Misogyny amid the domestic cook and had to struggle to establish himself. It surrounde Intellectuals" (#103), I have many me as a dark circle of inferiority times thought of returning to complex Recause my father Nenal whether out of nostalnia worked hard, I was lucky to go or as a participant in its growth. school. But this was the school But articles like these leave me where the children of the family that shuddering as a woman, at the employed my father went. No matter narrow-mindedness of the how well I did, for those kids and caveman generation and its their parents I was always their derisive subjugation. I feel sick "hahun ko chhori". Instead of and violated, as did Sapana Malla appreciating my dad for his hard I guess I am too weak to return work. Kathmandu's elite class and face that kind of ugliness. sneered at us. Reading Mr Khadka. was reminded of how I felt in school. This feeling grips me to

 To the person ("Misogyny Letters, #104) who wrote in



#### to have been threatened; you should be ashamed of yourself (Oh. I quess you already are,

I visit Nepal every year with medical equipment for a vision programme of the Lion's Interna tional and also help children in ja identity.) What was cheap was and their mothers. I have booked not my writing about the threat my tickets to Nenal in October but the original threat, and your where I expect to stay three-and silly attempt to discourage me half months with a 10-day side from writing further about it trip to India. As of now, here are From now on, spare 'intelligent my visa fees: \$55 for a 60-day double-entry + \$50 for an additional Nepali women your double speak about what is and isn't 30 days, and \$75 for my 30 day appropriate to discuss in public

GO AWAY

through loud and clear. Maniushree Thapa Kathmandu

Your condescension comes

anonymously, doubting my claim

NEPALIS IN THAILAND I enjoyed CK Lal's piece on Rannkok "Thai Lessons" (#103). The next time he visits Bangkok, I would recommend that he take a trip to the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) to see a glimpse of a little Nepal inside an academic institute far from home. There are currently 150 Nepalis at AIT, three of them are professors. Perhaps no other foreign institute has been as beneficial to Nepal: more than 650 Nepali graduates

are AIT alumni Mangal Shrestha, Bangkok

return visit in March, 2003. Total: \$180. Not only that, because of the fees for entering Hanuman Dhoka, I will probably not visit m many friends with shops around Darbar Square. My multiple-entry visa for India is \$60 for 10 years It doesn't take a PhD to understand that Nepal is doing every

thing possible to tell tourist and

aid workers, to go away. Aloha. Michael VanDeVer Kauai, Hawai

# CORRECTION

Several readers pointed out a spelling mistake in the editorial "Déià vu" (#102) Rana hagiographer "Percival Langdon" should have been Perceval Landon

### HEMLATA RAI

orty years after a successful eradication campaign, malaria is fighting back. Both the nosquitoes and the parasites they carry are getting resistant to antidotes, and have returned to Nepal in an even more virulent form.

Malaria is combining forces with other mosquito-borne diseases like the deadly Japanese encephalitis, dengue fever, and kala agar in a compound epidemic across the Nepal tarai. In addition, the effects of global warming could be making it possible for malaria mosquitoes to m higher altitudes. Although there is a consensus

among Nepal's public health specialists that malaria is staging a omeback, there is disagreement about how serious this regression is. Malaria types are named after the strains of the parasites involved. malaria annually in Nepal and there and besides Plasmodium are 10,000 reported cases. But falciparum, in Nepal there is the Govinda Ojha, who is director at the Plasmodium malariae and Plasmo-Epidemiology and Disease Control dium vivax. Almost 90 percent of Division of the Ministry of Health, he reported malaria cases are caused admits: "The actual malaria incidents by the vivay strain, which causes a might be five to ten times more than relatively benign form of malaria in officially recorded data."

an otherwise healthy person The parasite is transmitted to "The possibility of death by vivax is low, and although malaria humans through the bites of infected female anopheles mosquicases may be under-reported in Nepal, the fatality figures may not toes. After spreading rapidly through the bloodstream to the be under-reported in the same proportion." explains Prakash liver, the parasite finally settles in the red blood cells, where it Ghimire, a Tribhuvan University multiplies and bursts out in an cialist in tropical microbiology. explosion of baby parasites. Because But there are others who are of their large numbers, the microconvinced that the threat of malaria in

Nepal has been underplayed, and that

system, liver, and kidney. he disease is about to explode. If that In young children and adults is so, then the country may very well be headed back to 1950s conditions. who have recently been infected, and have not therefore developed natural leevan Bahadur Sherchand, an immunity, this cycle can result in nmunologist at the TU Institute of death within hours from cerebral Medicine, and executive director of the malaria. Others die later of anaemia Infectious and Tropical Disease or liver and kidney failure. Un-Research Centre, says that most malaria deaths are unrecorded since treated, up to one in five patients infected with the falciparum variety patients are mis-diagnosed as

organisms can damage the nervous

HERE AND THERE



encephalitis or other diseases. Sherchand says: "The government may not want its malaria control programme to be seen as a failure, first to void the probable withdrawal of donor funding, and second to protect its international image as a safe urism destination?

Since the clinical symptoms of

malaria are similar to those of other

tropical infectious diseases-fevers, districts it is seasonal and confined to June-August. For malaria transmission to take chills and headaches-and occur during the same season, many malaria deaths are unreported. At the Shahid place the habitat of the "transmission Shukra Tropical and Infectious Disease area" must support the lifecycle of Hospital in Kathmandu, doctors rely female anopheles mosquitoes. The less on lab test reports than on "clinical temperature must be high enquich (16 degrees) to allow the parasite to judgement"—when a lab test might not confirm but doctors rely on their develop in the body of the infective experience and judgement to treat mosquito, and there must be a pool of infected people in the transmispatients with newer and stronger malaria drugs. "Approximately 60 to sion area that allows the mosquito to 70 percent of the malaria cases coming pass the disease from an infected

to our hospital are treated on the basis son to a non-infected person. Most of the 12 malaria districts of clinical judgement," says the hospital's Shushil Shakva. He explains are in the tarai and below 1.000 m that obsolete testing equipment and lack of advanced skills among in elevation. But warm and wet conditions have helped the disease to spread higher up the valleys. Recent technicians in government hospitals combined with resistance to popular studies by the UN's World Health malaria drugs like chloroquine make Organisation show that worldwide, the disease untraceable in lab tests, and malaria has become an annual

epidemic and is spreading to colder The government has tarreted 12 climates and higher elevations. Kavro tarai and inner tarai districts in its district is in the priority district list anti-malaria campaign. These are because of its proximity to priority districts where the rate of Kathmandu and its higher transm

ransmission is higher, and where

there has been a worrying increase in

cases of the fatal falciparum malaria.

In these districts, infection can be

round the year, while in other

recent years.

Public health experts are divided about why highland malaria has gained a foothold in Nepal. The explanation ranges from global climate change, to increased movement of people along highways

sion rate of vivax malaria. The

transmission rate in Kavre has

increased by almost 40 percent in

Mosquitoes have also developed a resistance to Nepal's favourite insecticide, DDT, which was originally sprayed all across the plains in the 1960s Sub-standard DDT and lower concentration in sprays in subsequent campaigns allowed mosquitoes to slowly

overcome the poison. It took three decades for the world and Nepal to realise that malaria can be controlled but not eradicated. Between 1955 and 1969 the WHO led a global campaign to try and eradicate malaria from the planet using insecticides and the tion was abandoned in the early anti-malarial drug chloroquine. 1980s when the big donors pulled



Although some parts of the world were freed from the disease, the WHO has finally admitted defeat Today, more people die of malaria

worldwide than ever before. Oiha at

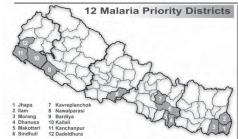
the government's epidemiology

eradicating malaria is impossible.

division admits: "Completely

It wasn't just the mosquito that developed a resistance to the cticide, the plasmodium parasites also became immune to chloroquine. In 1998 the WHO teamed up with the World Bank UNICEF, and UNDP to launch a Roll Back Malaria (RBM) campaier The idea was to strengthen health services available to affected populations, and stimulate research and development of new methods to control the disease. The RBM

campaign aims to cut the number of deaths from malaria by half by 2010 and by 75 percent by 2015. Nepal, too, has changed its strategy to malaria control from malaria eradication. The malaria eradication programme which was funded with USAID support and achieved almost 95 percent eradica-



# Low risk for tourists

Doctors say that although malaria risk is increasing, tourists can protect themselves with proper and timely use of prophy-

The CIWEC Travel Medicine Centre in Kathmandu says that the possibility of tourists contracting malaria in Nepal is extremely low. In the 20 years of its presence in Nepal, the clinic has found only two cases of malaria that may have been contracted in Nepal. But a potential visitor to Nepal might face a bewildering array of drugs and varying medical

opinion. Tourists coming to Nenal are recommended up to nine different anti-malarial regimes depending on their point of origin or departure. According to official data more

than 60,000 foreigners visit Nepal's southern lowland tarai each year. approximately 83 percent of them going to the Royal Chitwan National Park. The Infectious and Tropical Disease Research Centre in Nepal recommends that those visitors take chloroquine. which is effective anainst vivay

The other precautions are usina mosauito repellents, sleeping under nets and avoiding getting bitten out. Presently, Nepal spends Rs 90 million annually to control malaria and other tropical diseases. In Nepal it is lack of awarenes

poverty, and misdiagnosis that kills nore people than malaria Kanchhi Maya Gurung from Jhapa was wrongly diagnosed with typhoid and treated with antibiotics that nearly killed her. When her family realises that, after a month of visiting doctors in Jhapa and taking their drugs, her condition was only becoming worryingly worse, they took her to Kathmandu. She is now being treated for malaria and ning her strength in a private nic. Kanchhi Mava is one of the uckier ones: thousands of Nepali malaria patients die every year due to misdiagnosis by untrained doctors. Most rural clinics lack microscopes to be able to diagnose malaria from a blood sample. Then there is the resistance

to anti-malaria drugs. "The easy availability of anti-malarial drugs are killing more people because drug resistance is alarmingly high, says TU Institute of Medicine immunologist Dr Sherchand. A study conducted in Dhanush

in 1996 found that individuals self liagnose malaria and take the free roquine available at the local health post. Village health workers are also allowed to prescribe the tablets without a blood test. After two incomplete courses of chloro uine, the patient is usually not esponding to the drug.





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# one of the software we use to communicate the idea is

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DOMESTIC BRIEFS

nity FM radio in Nepal.

Bharat Koirala's Magsaysay By awarding Bharat Koirala its 2002 prize in the category Journalism, Literature and Communications, the Philippines-based Magsaysay Awards Foundation honours a man who singlehandedly professionalised Nepali media and pioneered commu-

Koirala and his team lobbied hard with Singha Darbar for four

the first station in Kathmandu Valley, Radio Sagarmatha, in 1995, Koirala is thrilled about the

prize, but is worried about recent delays at the Ministry of Information and Communication in

granting permission to some 25 community FM license applicants from all over Nepal. "The

single biggest obstacle to achieving the goal of communications for grassroots development through community radio is His Majesty's Government itself," Koirala told us. Asked what he

Even as three dozen or so Nepali prisoners rot in Thailand's jails, two more were caught

awaiting their sentence after their recent trial. Thai police closed in on the two on a pedestrian

to have been physically and mentally abused and forced to sign a confession stating that they

were involved in drug trafficking, according to human rights activists monitoring the case, who

Activists also report that two of the 24 Nepali prisoners at Bangkwang Prison outside

Bangkok are very sick. One has gangrene in his right leg, and another has large growths all

over his body. A female Nepali prisoner is also reported to be pregnant, (See also: Serving life

are also critical of the disinterest shown by the Nepali embassy in Bangkok.

walkway in Bangkok and arrested them as "Afghan terrorists". Later Gurung and Ghale are said

recently. Hari Bahadur Gurung and Pore Ghale are now in the infamous Klong Prem prison.

will do with the \$50,000 cash prize that comes with the award. Koirala replies affably: "Do I

years to open up local non-government broadcasting, and set up

Update: Nepalis in Thai prisons

Garbage piling up again

Kathmandu and Patan again. This

time it is because the landfill along

the banks of the Bishnumati and

Bagmati have been disrupted

because of the recent floods. In

disarray at the municipalities after

were disbanded by the government

bage going to remain on the streets

the elected mayors and councils

addition, there appears to be

two weeks ago. What we are

until we elect a new mayor?

worried about is this: is the gar-



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THE PERSON NAME AND ADDRESS OF

# **Not just an American boy**

of cornarate marale with mysterious diseases like the frightenin West Nile virus creeping ever closer to centres of power, with the Israeli-Palestinian equation getting more dangerous by the day, with the war in Afghanistan going nowhere and the perpetrators of 11 September no closer to justice than ever, you'd think the establishment in America has plenty to worry about.

It does, but there's always time for a sideshow centred on popular culture. The latest comes courtesy a rebellious country and folk singer called Steve Earle and a song about John Walker Lindh, the American boy found fighting with the Taleban. Now Earle has courted controversy all his life, not least with his virulent opposition to capital punishment and his untiring-and so far futile-campaign to sign his country up to the international treaty banning land mines. Not a popular figure with the fat cats in Washington. But with the song "John Walker's Blues", Earle has apparently gone too far. The in-house newspaper of the American right wins. The Wall Street Journal, declares itself "dumbstruck at the audacity" of Earle. Another rightist paper, The Washington Times, devotes an editorial to condemning the song. A talk radio rabble-rouser, Steve Gill, says Earle obviously "hates America". Others echo similar sentiments in a confusing babble of vitriol.

Of course, Earle has his defenders. His long time fans, of whom I am one, admire his ability to provoke and take up unpopular causes. Free speech advocates defend the right of artists to produce art for any reason at all, short of dire obscenity or damage to a community. By no one's definition does "John Walker's Blues" fall into these categories. In the end, it all comes to down to America's obsession with the mirror of its culture and the constant struggle for the soul of the individual in today's globalised world.

Indeed, John Walker's Blues begins with the line "I'm just an American boy raised on MTV". Substitute "South Asian" for the national ity and you get a locally relevant concept. Earle's sin, I believe, is that he gazes deep into the maw of the beast of modern consumerism, globalisation and materialism, and sees only emptiness. This is what annoys his

It annovs the fat cats in Washington when someone looks at the beast of modern consumerism, globalisation, and materialism, and sees only emptiness



etractors more than a mildly provocative tale of an American Taleban. And in the case of John Walker Lindh of California, a young man reacted to that vision by choosing the antithesis of the popular mainstream. He grew his beard, praised the Lord and became a iihadi. Never mind all the objections to the Taleban so capably espoused over the past year, no one could call them

In his song, Earle doesn't approve of this. He tries to understand it, and probably doesn't approve once the exercise in understanding is over. In publicity material connected to the release of "John Walker's Blues", Earle describes religious fundamentalism as "the enemy of thought, of religion even" This is a view that takes in more than the Taleban, and challenges mainstream certainties with a realistic relativism that infuriates and troubles

those who think that their politics or faith holds all the answers. But the endless search of the artist for meaning and context goes on, whatever the fury of the beast provoked.

It's a lesson that might do us some good here in Nepal. Perhaps Steve Earle could write us a song about the Maoists and what they think they're fighting for, not from the point of view of Comrade Prachanda or Baburam Bhattarai, but from that of the simple men and women, boys and girls, on the battlefield. I wonder if anyone here is daring enough to attempt it....

Here are the words to John Walker's Blues, by Steve Earle. Em just an American how raised on MTV And I've seen all those kids in the soda pop ad But none of 'em looked like me So I started lookin' around for a light out of the dim And the first thing I heard that made sense was the word Of Mohammed, peace be upon him A shadu la ilaha illa Allah There is no God but God If my daddy could see me now—chains around my feet He don't understand that sometimes a man Has to fight for what he believes And I believe God is great all praise due to him And if I should die I'll rise up to the sky Just like Jesus, peace be upon him We came to fight the Jihad and our hearts were pure and strong As death filled the air we all offered up prayers And prepared for our martyrdom But Allah had some other plan some secret not revealed Now they're draggin' me back with my head in a sack To the land of the infidel

**APARTMENTS** 

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NATION

# **Democratic deficit**

ECONOMY

Everest Insurance

Coke's Kinley

Parle bites

Kawasaki wash

Well, hear about one more plan. The government has put together a hydropower development strategy that aims to take electricity to over 60 percent of the people in another 25 years, by when it hopes to generate over 15, 000 megawatts-a major leap from the roughly 600 megawatt (MW) of power currently generated in the country. The idea is to rone in private investors, who under the hydronower development policy 2001 can be licensed for producing electricity for domestic production as well as captive use and export. The

policy also makes space for private investors to come in to run transmission and distribution systems.

Here's a recap of the policy: the power generation licenses for up to 35 years (domestic consumption) and 30 years (for export) can be obtained by private investors or joint ventures with government. The

transmission and distribution licenses are to be good for 25 years, renewable for another 10 years. The

royalty for different types of projects is based on the annual capacity per kilowatt and energy generated

per KW hour (KWH). The capacity royalty for a 10-100 megawatt (MW) project would be Rs 150 per KW

and the energy royalty 1.85% per KWH for the first 15 years and Rs 1.200 per KW and 10 percent per KWH

ancients to expect the first 15 years and Rs 3,000 energy royalty per KVH. Captive use projects within changed energy royalties applicable to projects above 100MV category in the event they set excess power. The policy has different royalty structures for export projects. Accordingly, run-of-river projects are to

be required to pay an annual capacity royalty of Rs 400 per KW and an energy royalty of 7.5 percent per

KWH in the first 15 years and Rs 1,800 and 12 percent thereafter. Likewise the charges for export-oriented

storage projects is to be Rs 500 per KW as applied capacity royalty for the first 15 years and 10 percent per

KWH as energy royalty; the charges thereafter are to be Rs 2,000 per KW and 15 percent.

one of the most successful domestic ventures in the non-life insurance segment. The

50 percent to about Rs 300 million. Among its major clients have been the Kali Gandaki

says it has over 60 percent of the aviation insurance business in Nepal.

high purity of the water. Bottler's produces Kinley at its Balaju plant.

Puspa Man Shrestha borrowed Rs 2,000

Puspa Man Shrestha borrowed Rs 2,000 from a friend 20 years ago to begin his pashmina business. Today, the gentlemannered managing director of Nepal Pashmina Industry is one of Nepal's largest exporters of a fabric that has become synonymous with the country. And despite the slump, he says Nepal pashmina exports are doing well and could soon see a rebound

Nepali Times: The industry has gone through a boom and bust cycle.

Puspa Man Shrestha: My main market has always been Europe. The

boom started in 1997, when we were still small. The orders began coming

in 1998, and hit the roof the following year. In fact, the boom caught us

completely unprepared. In 1997 it used to be difficult even to operate on or two looms. Then I came in touch with my first major client through the

How have you fared?

company claims to have a 20 percent market share and its premiums in 2001/02 soared by

Hydroelectric Project, whose civil construction was insured by Everest. The company also

Bottler's Nepal Ltd., the makers of a range of aerated drinks, has joined the already over-

product ones through exhaustive filtration, purification and clarification processes to ensure

Parle, which controls 40 percent of the biscuit market in India, is introducing some of its best

selling brands in the Nepali market. Among those biscuit brands set to be introduced are Monaco, Hide &

Seek, Parle G and Marie Choice. Other Parle confectioneries to be introduced are popins, Melody 2 in 1 and

Bajaj-Kawasaki has opened a new servicing centre at Teku Kathmandu, an attempt to pamper customers

with branded after-sales services. Planet Bajaj, as the centre is known, is run by its sole distributor Hansraj

crowding bottled-water market in Nepal with Kinley. A company press release says its

Everest insurance, which completed eight years of operation last week, says it has grown into

BIZ

the midst of our wet and slippery ummer of discontent, the United Nations Development Programme brought cherished moments of warmth last week. The good news in the Human Development Report (HDR) 2002 isn't that Nepal's slide tous as we had thought. What's heartening is that we're in good

international company. Of the 81 countries that embraced democracy in the 1980s and 1990s in a Fragmented World, also found the report says, only 47 are considered hat economic slowdowns in many fully free roday. With authoritarian countries add to the popular percep leaders manipulating elections and tion that democracies cannot deliver millions of people losing faith in the better lives. Banks, courts and democratic process, the authors

Another report tells us that democracy, development and security are intertwined. If only the right people listened.

War gains risk being reversed. In political pressures. Electoral processes scores of nations, political opposition are subverted by fraud and iron-hand free press and citizens groups are either The study. Deepening Democracy

Post Level :

Organization Unit: Programme

Vacancy Ref. No: VN 2002-18

politics. The authors maintain that parriers to trade, along with production and export subsidies in rich countries, cost the developing world more in lost exports than the \$56 billion they receive in aid each year. Nevertheless, the principal stimulus for democracy and development must come from within countries. The international community can encour

You might wonder whether Novalis needed an exhaustive emational report to learn what we've been living through. It's the messenger, not the message, that counts here. Those of you who were so worked up by the dressing down we got at the Nepal Development Forum and London conference can cheer up. It doesn't look like the governments of Burundi and Burkina Faso have avoided similar admonitions

The HDR-2002 authors affirm

he traditional tenet that democracies

are less prone to civil war than nondemocratic regimes and are more likely to cope with political turmoil. Before you retort how Nepal is an exception on both counts, you must acknowledg that the authors are speaking in general terms about 140 countries that hold multiparty elections. The redeeming value of the report lies in our ailing body politic. Or, more precisely, their custodians When the lead international donor seeks the consent of uppe the process of setting up a hydropower development fund, our politicians are castigated for having sold off our sovereignty not even for a pittance. When development agencies funding grass-roots projects warn of suspending programmes if the local bodies remain vacant for too long, the people easily transform despair into leeper antipathy to the political class. Leaders struggling to allocate dwinrces to unlimited national noods find themselves nock-doon in criticism for having allowed Nepal's



anita income to slide from \$240 to \$224 within a single fiscal year (Actually, things aren't as bad as they sound; 63 countries have lower per capita incomes than what they did 12 years ago.)

Although they were buried in the sixth or seventh paragraph in most newspapers, our politicians can take heart from remarks UNDP chief Mark Malloch Brown's made at a media briefing in New York, Exacerbating the people's disenchantment in developing nations is a prowing sense that their elected governments have little power over the world bodies that set the rules for their economies. Working translation: The next time we feel like spewing out our fire and fury, we ould seriously consider letting the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation take some of the heat.

For an organisation that just two

years ago brought out an HDR hailing

returned to the centre of international egic calculations, could the corollary—the sacrifice of human rights for national security-be far away? Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, HDR-2002's chief author, seeks to demolish the emerging wisdom that fostering democracy might endanger world security. "History and academic research provide no evidence that authoritarian regimes are better at promoting economic and social progress." Ordinarily, such a bold assertion would have been sufficient to discourage any kind of adventurism from the extremes. In today's freak political climate, it could

embolden our agents of authoritarian

ism to have another try.

the spread of democracy across Latin

America. Central and Eastern Europe

and parts of Africa and Asia, the

UNDP couldn't have missed the

post-9/11 trepidation. With Cold

War-style military alliances having

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- Assist in maintaining the UNICEF Nepal Home page, drafting and editing articles, press releases, human interest stories and other advocacy/information materials for both webbased and traditional media as appropriate.
- Prepare background communication and promotional materials for briefing and visits of media, goodwill ambassadors, donors, national committee representatives and other special interest groups. Assist in the planning, logistic and administrative arrangements for them
- Help organize and generate public support for special events and activities to promote country programme goals. Monitor the public perception of UNICEF in the country, including international gueries on UNICEF Nepal's Homepage. Recommend as well as
- implement appropriate actions/responses to maintain a positive image of the organization. Follow up on the production of advocacy and communication materials (e.g. films, video, audio-visual, etc.), and oversee the qualitative aspects of production, e.g. quality control, translation, review of layout and graphic design

#### Minimum Qualifications and Experience Required

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Composition written in English within 500 words entitled "What are the major steps for

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# Domestic concerns

"You can have the best uipment in the world, but carelessness and over-confidence can still cause crashes," says one instructor pilot, who, like many of the people interviewed for this ation, wanted anonymity The Skyline aircraft in Surkhet had a GPS. but still flew into high ground on approach. It also had a cocknit voice recorder but crash investigators have not been able to go to the site after the initial rescue

Aviation safety experts say that the best safeguard against CFITs are the sophisticated "enhanced ground proximity warning system" (EGPWS) which is an onboard computer that stores global terrain data and, in conjunction with a GPS, warns pilots with a coloured 3-D map of approaching mountains in time to take evasive action.

CAAN made standard GPS mandatory early this year, but officials told us they cannot force airlines to install the \$35,000 enhanced version because of cost considerations. "Finding the right balance between safety and cost is tricky, and every airline has to weigh it carefully," says one senior pilot with a private Nepali airline. But given Nepal's terrain, weather and lack of other ground navigational aids, and the fact that almost all crashes involve planes flying into mountains, it is clear that onboard

Although mechanical defects or aircraft have not been the cause of any major disaster in recent years. the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has audited CAAN's airworthiness certification procedures and has said that its checks are not rigorous enough. "I have been flying for over six years and I have

**SAFETY ISSUES**  Crowded airways, especially of Kathmandu-Pokhara corridor • Corrupt ground handlers in an investigation showed that the win Otter that crashed in angadi was seriously

niliarisation and STOI field Deterioration in visibility at Kathmandu airport due to creasing pollution from brick Bird strikes and runway intrusi uality (one of the factors leading come across only one surprise check. one pilot told us As Nepal's domestic airlines suffer from the tourism slump and decreased revenue, there is belttightening all around. Pilots tell us that this leads to maintenance lanses. "It is so embarassing to have all these MEL (minimum equipment list) stickers on your cockpit instruments," one pilot told us at Kathmandu airport. Budget shortfalls are forcing most airlines to cannibalise cocknit instruments

and spares just to allow the plane to get through an MEL category validity check Some are cutting down pilot training time on simulators abroad because it is so expensive. One pilot told us that things in his carrier are so bad, it has no spare tyres or wheel brake units in stock

CAAN became an independent authority five years ago, but the government still calls the shots, and often breaks its own rules. CAAN officials have their own list of woes: low budget, lack of manpower and insufficient training.

# Is public health intellectual property?

and cons of its entry into and cons of its entry into the WTO, its implication nent noverty alleviation and sublic health needs more thought thereafter. Projects built for captive use don't have to pay energy royalties but a flat Rs 1,500 per KW annual The obligations that the far reaching Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) imposes n WTO members to recognise nd strengthen patent protection on pharmaceuticals denies patients in leveloping countries like ours ccess to essential life-saving medicines and the freedom to formulate and implement our own public health policies. Today, the nternational trading system puts orporate interest before poverty

eduction and public health. In the initial WTO negotiat e pharmaceutical industry lobbied ard to have patent protection extended to cover pharmaceuticals This was accepted with certain mportant safeguards that governments could use to balance nublic nterest with the claims of patent holders. For example, "compulsor licensing" allows governments to exploit a patent without the wner's consent if it is justified by The Brazilian AIDS policy,

which includes providing free drugs o people with HIV/AIDS has been highly successful because of Brazil's ability to manufacture affordable medicines through compulsory censing. But a country needs a asonably sophisticated pharmaceu rical industry to do this, and must be

Nepal, like most developing countries and smaller economies, fails on both counts. Countries that lack the infrastructure to make available locally-produced pharmaceuticals could import generic drugs from the cheapest source by what is called 'parallel importing.' The option of parallel importing from a generic manufacturer in a large country is restricted unless compulsory license has also been issued in the exporting country to manufacture the product. It is important that member countries have the flexibility to grant compulsory licenses to foreign markets and be free to determine the grounds upon which to issue them. But in the past, even when countries have acted within the scope of health for their nationals, they have met with strong opposition from

developed countries, especially the US and its pharmaceutical lobby. Developed countries argue that TRIPS will lead to positive results in terms of an increase in the flow of technology transfer and foreign direct investment (FDI), leading to an increase in the resources devoted to R&D of needed new drugs. This, they claim, ensures a dynamic pharmaceutical industry to the benefit of the developing countrie and possibly an end of "brain drain"

caused by the absence of patent protection in developing countries But a market for lifesaving drug simply doesn't exist in developing countries although 90 percent of all deaths and suffering from infectious diseases occur here Of the 1 223

between 1975 and 1997, only 13 were for tropical diseases. For many tropical illnesses and other disease that affect the poor, low income levels deter private investors. And since developed countries and their multinational corporations are the main users of patent protection (onl 3 percent of world patents are owned y inventors in the developing untries) they will also be the major beneficiaries of the strict patent laws in developing countries. This will likely lead to a transfer of income from less developed countries to developed ones, further widening the

nercent of its national health budge on drugs, most Nepalis can't afford essential medicines. With public health being threatened by new diseases and drug resistant varietie of old killers, WTO patent rules of the poor to modern medicines. By restricting the right of governments to allow the production, marketing and import of generic drugs, competition is restricted, leading to price increases and further reduction in the already limited access of poor population to vital medicines

income disparities between the two

Though Nepal spends 42

Nepal needs adequate domestic infrastructure to strengthen the country's legal frameworks to meet the public health challenges posed by elobalisation •

(Ravi Rauniyar is with the Joslin Diabetes Center Harvard

# "The trust in Nepali pashmina is intact."

ordered 300 shawls. I was euphoric, it was my first real order. A month later he asked for another 1,000 pieces to be delivered in a month. did. Within two months, he wanted me to supply 3-4,000 pieces each month. After three months, he wanted me to supply 10,000 pieces. There were buyers from other countries Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Germany, Switzerland and everywhere. We had so much demand that we even had to turn some down.

During the boom, there were about 150 people producing pashmina for me, and another 50-60 working on a piece-rate basis.

> How did the silk mixing start? In the early 1990s there was a company in Balaiu that began to use silk threads for

weaving. Prior to that we used cotton threads. The product was better and caught on quickly with customers. The manufacturers imported varn directly from China, and used to sell shawls for \$100-120. It took some years for the market to be aware of the Chinese varn. I visited China in 1994 to survey what was available and began importing yarn. Until then we used to extract pashmina from the hides, and then card and spin it manually.

What is the state of the industry now?

Despite the slump, there are still 200 companies exporting pashmina. In 1997, Nepal exported Rs 30 million worth of pashmina. In 1998 exports reached Rs 280 million, in 1999, Rs 5.66 billion and it was about the same in 2000. These are only official figures and do not include goods handcarried by people. At its boom period, Nepal was said to be exporting about 20,000 pieces of pashmina products to India every day, most of which was

Was it falling quality or over-supply that killed the industry?

Demand declined after fashion trends changed. Early in the boom we used to sell more to Indian parties than third-country exports in a ratio of 70-30. Later, we heran exporting 60 percent overseas and 40 percent to India. We used to sell only raw fabrics to India, and even now we sell only unprocessed fabric to Indian buyers. They did the finishing and re-exported. Some businesses also compromised, pure wool was passed off as pashmina. Indian traders also came to Nepal in large numbers and went house-to-house looking for pashmina, many compromised quality in the race to sell more.

But I don't think the industry is dead. I was in Europe earlier this year and saw that pashmina is still popular. In Paris a shawl that would cost about \$50 in Nepal was selling at about \$350. Only the latecomers who tried to cash in on the boom have been hit. Trust in the Negali product

#### Is there any diversification?

We have begun making sweaters but have not begun exporting them yet. Making sweaters is difficult because the lack of skilled weavers and also expensive because if a piece is damaged, it is a write-off. Our weavers annot weave the necks and ribs properly, but we're selling sweaters locally We make chaule blankets stoles and granues of which the stole is most

So the quality of Nepali pashmina has not gone down?

hose that were in the pashmina business before the boom are still producing and selling quality goods. Some who had moved into pashmina from carnets and garments are still doing well, but the overnight speculators and traders have quit. The prices have also crashed by half, but mainly herause raw materials have become cheaner. In a way we have come back to the pre-boom days, both in terms of quality and also in terms of sales. From Rs 30 million in 1997 we are still selling about Rs 1.3 billion worth pashmina annually

## How can locals and tourists be assured that they are buying genuine

The best way would be to go to established businesses because they have both history and credibility that they have to protect. The prices may be expensive in such outlets, but the quality is guaranteed.

Are there any industry-specific problems besides the slump? Our problem is of design and styling, and getting the right colour combina-

tions. This is a critical issue because we don't have institutions surveying foreign markets and advising us on designs and styles. Our customers taught us what quality means. Diversification has not been possible herause of designing and styling problems. There are also the routing ureaucratic hurdles: especially at the customs. The government has fixed the floor price of the raw material at \$95. Now you can get that for \$70, but custom officials insist that it should be \$95, and charge duty based on that. We pay about 13.5 percent as customs and VAT, which is refundable. However, getting refunds on time is very cumbersome.

8 LIFESTYLE 2-8 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES 9 2 - 8 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES

It existed once, and still exists, more or less, in the world's poorest places. No raucous advertising, no ugly billboards, no McDonald's. Yet, given a chance and a bit of money, people flee this Eden. They seek out Budweiser instead of their local tipple, ditch nameless shirts for Gap, prefer Marlboros to homegrown smokes. What should one conclude? That people are pawns in the hands of giant companies with huge advertising budgets and global reach? Or that brands bring something that people think is better than what they had before?





corporate interests." The ubiquity

sweatshops, branded goods displace

local alternatives and force a grey

cultural homogeneity on the world.

and power of brand advertising

curtails choice, she claims; pro-

duced cheaply in third-world

Brands have thus become

stalking horses for international canitalism Outside the United States, they are now symbols of America's corporate power, since nost of the world's best-known brands are American. Around them accrete all the worries about environmental damage, humanrights abuses and sweated labour that anti-globalists like to put up on their placards. No wonder

Product power or people power Yet this is a wholly misleading account of the nature of brands. They are not as powerful as their opponents allege, nor is the public as easily manipulated. The reality is more complicated. Brands began as

NT has often presented critiques of the "buyological urge" and accounts of Adbusters and Buy Nothing Day. This week, we give you the case for brands: some argue that far from being instruments of oppression, they make firms accountable to consumers.

exploit people's emotional needs as

well as their desires to consume.

to tell runners that it is selling

personal achievement, or Coca-

its fizzy drink with carefree fun.

story around their service or

Companies deliberately concoct a

product, trying to turn a run-of-

This peddling of superior

lifestyle is something that irritates

many consumers. They disapprove

of the vapid notion that spending

orders: now the poorest African

where second-hand designer

country has its clothing markets

labels command a premium over

The flip side of the power and

the-mill purchase (think of Häagen-

Hence Nike's "Just do it" attempt

Cola's relentless effort to associate

a form not of exploitation, but of onsumer protection. In preindustrial days, people knew exactly what went into their meat-pies and which butchers were trustworthy; swissair once they moved to cities, they no onger did. A brand provided a guarantee of reliability and quality. the role of brands. Increasingly, Its owner had a powerful incentive customers pay more for a brand to ensure that each one was as good as the precious one, because that of life or a set of ideas. Companies would persuade people to come



Just as distance created a need for brands in the 19th century, so in the age of globalisation and the Internet it reinforces their value A book-buyer might not entrust a company in Seattle with his credit card number had experience not aught him to trust the Amazon brand; an American might not accept a bottle of French water were it not for the name of Evian Because consumer trust is the basis of all brand values, companies that own the brands have an immense incentive to work to retain that trust



Indeed, that dependence of successful brands on trust and consistent quality suggests that consumers need more of them. In poor countries, the arrival of foreign pre-worn No Logo. brands points to an increase in competition from which consumers gain. Public services live in a No Logo world: attempts at government branding arouse derision. That is because brands have value only when consumers have choice, which rarely exists in public services. The absence of brands in the public sector reflects a world like that of the old Soviet Union in which consumer choice has



Brands are the tools with which ompanies seek to build and retain onsumer loyalty. Because that often requires expensive advertising and good marketing, a strong brand can raise both prices and barriers to entry. But not to insuperable levels: brands fade as tastes change (Nestlé has fallen, while Starbucks has risen); the vagaries of fashion can rebuild a brand that once seemed moribund (think of the Beetle); and quality of service still counts (hence the rise of Amazon). Many brands have been around for more than a entury, but the past two decades have seen many more displaced by new global names, such as Microsoft and Nokia.

**Super cool Nepali logos** 







Nepali logo-makers take little inspiration from this country's great artistic traditions. The motifs are all the same: the head of the national pheasant, the classic shot of Mt Everest, a minimlaist version of the Swyamabhu stupa that makes it look like a herring bone, temples that look like triangles. Oh yes. Triangles, lots of them: because our flag is made up of two

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forcefully, if not always coherently

by Naomi Klein, author of No

bible of the anti-globalisation

Logo, a book that has become a

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portance of a brand is its growing vulnerability. Because it is so valuable to a company, a brand must be cosseted sustained and protected. A failed advertising campaign, a drop-off in quality or a hint of scandal can all quickly send consumers fleeing. Indeed, protesters, including Ms Klein's anti-globalisation supporters, can use the power of the brand against companies by drumming up evidence of workers ill-treated or rivers polluted. Thanks, ironically enough, to globalisation, they can do this all around the world. The more companies promote the value of their brands, the more they will need to seem ethically robust and environmentally pure. Whether protestors will actually succeed in advancing the interests of those they claim to champion is another question. The fact remains that brands give them far more powe over companies than they would otherwise have. Companies may grumble about that, but it is hard to see why the enemies of brand

"fascism" are complaining. •

(The Economist)





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STATUTORY DIRECTIVE: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

ardly a week goes by without some addition to the already ong list of European-American gripes and irritants. One week it is the UN Security Council vote about a continued US presence in the Bosnia peacekeeping mission. Before that, the setting up of the International Criminal Court without American participation set both sides on edge. and the question of whether the Palestinians should be told who no to elect as their leader. Israel and the Palestinians remain a subject of profound Europe-US disagreems as do issues surrounding the environment and the idea of sustainable development. Add to these US trade sanctions, America's latest Farm Bill, and of course the whole question of alleged or real U.S. unilateralism.

Fortunately, such spats are not t is represented by the Trade the whole truth. American unilateral-Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, If the ism is in fact a form of issue is competition. Commissione 'multilateralism à la carte". Where it Mario Monti represents Europe, suits American interests, international stridently so, as Americans have institutions are happily used, and learned to their surprise. But as soon they usually serve European interests. as we move to wider issues of foreign and defense policy, Javier Solana, the Also one must never forget that we are

views about Bosnia, about Árafat, telephone number that Henry even about protecting farmers. After Kissinger famously could never find all, not every American voted for in Brussels when he wanted to "speak to President Bush, nor is every Europe" in his day, but Solana is hardly in a position to speak for "Europe" on European a Eurofederalist Still, when representatives of the important matters today European attitudes demonstrate

US and the EU meet for formal consultations, they arrive at the table with different perceptions. US participants represent a country at war in which energies are concentrated on defeating the enemy, "terrorism", whether of the al-Qaeda or Iraqi variety. EU participants on the other

talking about democracies. In the US,

as in Europe, there are many different



hand represent ... well, what exactly? If the issue is trade, the answer is clear Insofar as the EU is a "single market," firm action should be applied to the world at large. Sometimes the two methods consultation without action in Europe High Representative of the EU Council of Ministers, may be at the actions without consultation in the US-can be turned to mutual advan tage. If Europeans do not want to go to

war, and Americans do not want to get involved in protracted processes of institution building in distant places, an obvious potential for an international division of labour emerges. To some extent it is practised already both in the consequences. Americans are right to point out that Europeans spend an Afghanistan and in the Balkans. among themselves, and then come up with very little. Most of the time, they

At other times, a dangerous notential for division arises between Europeans and the US. Quite a few in Europe define the EU as an instrument for holding their own against the

go too far in supporting Israel and United States. They see even the Eur neelecting the Palestinians," "Don't as a weapon against the dollar and extend the fight against terrorism to the rejoice when the Euro is "strong" and producers of weapons of mass destruc-tion!" What should be done instead? the dollar is "weak". The US has found a new "empire of evil" in "terrorist" "Political solutions" should be found, states and organisations: Europe has which really means that the European found a new adversary who helps it method of consensus building without integrate in the United States.

> both sides of the Atlantic who believe in the values of the enlightenment and in liberty. In terms of basic values. there is such a thing as the west. After 11 September, it has become more important than ever. Defending the values of the west against antienlightenment forces both within and without may well be the most mportant task ahead for all who believe in liberty. (Project Syndicate)

This is dangerous for those on

(Ralf Dahrendorf is a member of the British House of Lords and also a former Warden of St Anthony's College Oxford )

Fuming over pot

OTTAWA - Canada's justice minister is leaning towards striking marijuana possession from the country's criminal code, but he faces tough opposition from the US and the powerful Canadian police lobby, Martin Cauchon, a member of the ruling Liberal Party, says it is unfair that people who are caught with marijuana receive criminal records that can prevent them from getting jobs and travelling to foreign countries, especially the United States. Cauchon is waiting for the recommendations of Senate and House of Commons committees before deciding whether to wipe marijuana possession from the Criminal Code and make it a non-criminal offence punishable by a fine rather than an arrest. A preliminary Senate report said. research shows that between 30 and 50 percent of Canadians between the ages 15 and 24 have used cannabis.

The United States, which has the west's toughest drug laws, opposes Canadian decriminalisation because of its relatively open border with its northern neighbour. Earlier this year, Canadian Health Minister Anne McLellan said that US bureaucrats sabotaged Canada's medicinal marijuana program by denying the government's Health Canada access to the US government's supply of researchquality pot seeds. Last spring, US drug war tsar John Walters threatened Canada with trade sanctions if parliament relaxed pot laws. The US government has threatened to cut Jamaica's foreign aid if it goes ahead with plans to decriminalise the drug. (IPS)

#### Democracy for development

JOHANNESBURG - There is something sadly familiar in this year's Africa Human Development Index (HID), published annually by the UNDP. Africa is poorer than she was at the beginning of the decade and sub-Saharan Africa is the region least likely to achieve the Millennium Development goals set by the UN two years ago meant to halve world poverty by 2015, as well as improve school enrolment and nutrition levels. Fewer than half the countries of the region are on track to achieve the global goals, with 11-including Angola and Somalia-way off the mark, Libva at number 64 leads Africa in the HDI, followed by Cape Verde and South Africa. The continent features strongly in the least-developed nations section of the index and did not make it into the high human development section.

This year's index points fingers at the usual gamut of reasons: unfair terms of world trade: declining aid budgets and poor governance. But it also points to a new reason: the decline in democracy after the wave that hit Africa from the late 1980s. Where people have a greater say in how their money is spent and how policies. are made and implemented, the greater the changes of success of development programmes, say experts. (IPS)

#### Unfair trade

GENEVA - The protectionist stance of the EU has hampered the expansion of agriculture in developing countries, say WTO member states in a study of the bloc's policies. Without the barriers created by protectionist measures, farming "could otherwise be an important source of economic growth and poverty reduction" in poor nations. concludes the WTO trade policy review. The principal objections of the delegates at last week's WTO meet also involved the high tariffs the EU applies to textile and clothing imports. Several countries had reported the adverse effects that the EU's farm trade regime has had on their agricultural products. For the year 2000, the total the 15-country bloc spent on its common agricultural policy (CAP) was \$40 billion, or 43.9 percent of the EU budget. Less than five percent of the EU's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. (IPS)

## Anti-immigration Maori

CANBERRA - Perhaps more significant than the re-election of a minority I abour government in the New Zealand election over the weekend is the startling emergence of an anti-immigration party, New Zealand First Party. On the rise is anti-immigration sentimentand its use as a political issue-of the type in neighbouring Australia where it has been seen in recent months in the government's tough policies against asylum seekers. The party polled 13 seats, over 10 percent of the vote-on par with the initial success of Pauline Hanson's anti-immigration One Nation Party in Australia a few years ago. In his last election rally ahead of the 27 July poll. leader of New Zealand First, Maori-born Winston Peters, declared that one of the "fundamental rights of ordinary Kiwis (New Zealanders)" is "the right to stop being swamped by a flood of immigrants". Peters proposes that the number of new people approved by the government to reside in the country of four million people be cut from the current 50,000 per year to only 10,000, a figure so low, New Zealand's population would decline once more.

Prime Minister Helen Clark—whose Labour Party gained 41 percent of the vote in the election and won 52 of 120 seats in the single house of parliament-has ruled out discussions with the party in forming a minority government. Professor Richard Bedford at Waikato University's Population Studies Centre argues that actually much of the increase in the number Asian people Peters complains about are students lured by New Zealand's marketing of its international education industry. With opinion polls showing that a majority of voters are concerned about immigration from Asia, Peters rejects the accusation that he plays the race card for electoral advantage. But in a televised debate in the election campaign. Peters reicected the suggestion that the country was short of workers and might welcome immigrants: "So you want a bunch of people from Bangladesh and India to come down here?" Another academic said that "there is a real paradox: though much of Winston's rhetoric is racist, he dresses it up in ways that he claims aren't racist, and it has some appeal to Maori voters as well." (IPS)

Fighting over rain

NEW DELHI - As India faces its worst drought in a decade, the government's Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIF) has predicted a drop in the increase in foodgrain production to 1 percent compared to last year's 8 percent. Food security isn't a worry: India has a 62 million tonne foodgrain surplus. But every one percent increase in agriculture production means \$2 billion extra cash for the farming community, which supports the demand for manufactured goods. After 15 successive good monsoons, India's luck has run out.



Such is the fear of an adverse impact on the economy of a bad monsoon, that officials at the meteorological department are asked not to speak to the press. Shivraj Singh Chauhan, an MP from central India has accused the denartment of making "erroneous predictions that the monsoons would arrive in late June or early July, causing enormous losses to millions who believed them and began sowing. When ruined farmers and their families began pouring into Delhi by the thousands looking for food and employment, there was no way to keep the droughts a secret. (IPS)

#### Fighting AIDS, Thai-style

BANGKOK - Thailand's medical community has earned new stripes as a leader in the fight to stall the spread of HIV by working on a new drug regimen that cuts the virus' transmission rate from mother to child. This effort adds to other Thai achievements in fighting the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, including plans to conduct an HIV vaccine trial and the production of the world's cheapest anti-AIDS drug.

Doctors at a government university hospital revealed efforts to reduce to 3 percent the transmission rate of HIV from infected mothers to children, from around 11.7 percent, Reports in the local press on Tuesday drew attention to this achievement as a "breakthrough" in efforts to cut mother-to-child infections and one that made HIV treatment "affordable to low-income people". In the new procedure. from the 34th week (of pregnancy) onward, mothers are treated with a combination of AZT (500 mg) and 3TC (150mg) every 12 hours until the onset of labour. After that they are given drugs every three hours until delivery. The newhorn haby only needs one course of the medication within eight hours of birth. "The regimen has minimal side effects," says Dr Pongsakdi Chaisilwattana, head of the gynaecologic endoscopy division at the Bangkok-based Siriraj hospital. An equally significant part of this anti-retroviral regimen is its cost-about \$42 a month for each person. The team is using the generic anti-AIDS drugs produced by the government's pharmaceutical section. (IPS)

#### Satellites over Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's concern about permanently losing its slot in geo stationary space has led it to put in place a leased communications satellite by year-end. The country has already lost four of the five slots originally allocated to it in 1984 by the International Telecommunications Union, which regulates satellite-related matters worldwide. At present, there are around 250 satellites in the Geo Stationary Orbit (GSO) belonging to different countries and companies. Not much space is available for new entrants. Science and Technology Minister Atta-ur-Rehman told IPS that if Pakistan fails to have a satellite in GSO by 19 April, 2003, it will lose its fifth-and last-slot located at 38 degree East. That will mean its presence in space, which officials also

link to defence and security, would be doomed forever.

Though Rehman insisted that the decision was motivated solely by commercial concerns, chair of the National Telecommunications Corporation (NTC), Air Vice Marshall Azhar Maud, says that a geo stationary satellite can be used to secure defence communication, act as a lookout for a missile attack and detect any nuclear detonation or explosion. Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) says that the technology is vital for making nuclear command and control mechanisms "credible". (IPS)

#### Complicating Kashmir

NEW DELHI – India's government, led by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, came under fire in parliament Tuesday for an overtly pro-US tilt that has failed to stop the steady internationalisation of the Kashmir issue. Ever since US Secretary of State Colin Powell declared Saturday in New Delhi that Kashmir was "on the international agenda", New Delhi has been abuzz with speculation on whether he meant external mediation on an issue India insists is a nurely domestic affair. Powell, on an eight-nation Asian tour that took him to Íslamabad on Sunday, also called for international observers to monitor state assembly elections, scheduled to be held in the Indian part of Kashmir in October, and for the release of all Kashmiri political prisoners in Indian jails. What agitated MPs more was further clarification of Powell's statements by State Department spokesman Philip Reeker in Washington Monday: "As the secretary said, Kashmir is on the international agenda and the United States and other countries are going to take an active interest in encouraging a resolution." Although the government is yet to respond to Powell's statement, BJP president Venkiah Naidu said that "the BJP emphatically regrets the suggestion made by the Secretary of State that international observers should be allowed or invited to oversee elections in Jammu and Kashmir." (IPS)

#### Floundering oil economies

UNITED NATIONS - Continued violence in the West Bank and Gaza, the decline in the value of petro dollars, and the sharp slow-down in world economic growth which has reduced the demand for oil, have badly hurt Middle Eastern nations, says a new UN study. The growth of 13 Middle Eastern nations will average about 2 percent this year. compared with 4.5 percent in 2000 and 2.1 percent in 2000, according to a survey by the Beirut-based UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). This is a "substantial decline given the region's annual population growth rate of 2.4 percent," adds the



While countries in the region have improved education, literacy health and economic opportunities. ESCWA officials said significant regional challenges remain—the lack of peace and security, poverty, unemployment, inadequate natural resource management, unsustain able consumption and production patterns, lack of research and appropriate technologies, and the limited capacity of civil society to become actively engaged in the sustainable development process. The study covers Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The relative fall in the US dollar has also had a direct impact, and balance of trade positions are expected to further

#### The world's newest country

WASHINGTON - Two distinct welcomes have greeted the newest member of the IMF: free-market advice from the Fund and World Bank, and warnings from civil society groups about who controls its money. The Democratic Republic of East Timor officially signed on with the two financial institutions last week, making it eligible for funds from the donor community and the Bank. East Timor will receive money in the form of grants for three years. After that, any money requested will most likely be given as concessional or 'soft' loans. By 2004 the country is expected to be generating about \$70 million a year in oil and gas revenues form sizeable offshore reserves.



Even before the signing, a controversy had emerged over who should control the hundreds of millions of dollars donors have pledged to the island nation of less than one million people. The money went to the World Bank, which collects and disburses aid to nembers, but leaders in the capital Dili say they want the UN to keep the funds. The leaders and anti-debt activists believe the UN is more likely than the Rank and the Fund to allow East Timor to take the money in the form of unconditional grants rather than loans. In addition to its role in the south-east Asian financial crisis, the IMF is also viewed with suspicion due to its efforts to make the US dollar East Timor's official currency during the reconstruction period. (IPS)

# Israel and India cosy up

NEW DELHI - The highly secretive Israeli military complex has successfully managed to become India's second largest weapons provider after Russia, a decade after the two nations established ormal diplomatic ties. Israel's Soltam is one of three howitzer manufacturers alongside South Africa's Denel and Sweden's Bofors, which are competing in trials in the western Pokhran desert to sell India their weapon systems in a contract worth \$1.5-\$2 billion. This week, the United States said it is considering an Israeli request to sell India the hi-tech Arrow missile defence system, developed in cooperation with Washington, against the backdrop of heightened tensions in South Asia.

Russia delivers the hardware—tanks, aircraft and ships—and Israel provides the weapons systems, the radar, the electronic control systems and other high-tech add-ons, a military official said. Israeli security officials have also been known to clandestinely visit Kashmir's border regions to set up border fencing and sensors. Dr AJP Abdul Kalam, India's new president, as head of the Defence Research Development Organisation and scientific advisor to the defence minister, visited Israel twice in the 18 months leading up to India emerging as the world's sixth nuclear weapon state after its nuclear tests in 1998. (IPS)

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undue amount of time consulting

are reluctant. "Don't go too fast in

welcoming Russia to NATO!" "Don't

bates about immigration nowadays tend to concentrate on the impact newcomers have on social cohesion. Advocates of a more open policy argue that populations are aging and workforces are diminishing, so greater immigration is needed to sustain high living standards. Their opponents focus on the disruptive effects of immigration, particularly among the most vulnerable citizens in countries that already suffer from high unemployment. But a deeper, more global perspective is needed.

Between 1800 and 1950 Europe's population increased by 269 percent, from 203 million to 547 million, as the continent experienced extraordinary economic change, social upheaval, and political turmoil. Emigration from Europe was the continent's critical safety valve, without which the pressure placed on populations and states would have been unsustainable

During these 150 years, Europeans emigrated en masse to Latin America, driving its population up by 50 million, to North America, which saw an increase of 75 million, and to Oceania, where the population rose by 11 million. Sumlus rural folk could find land to till in the New World, or industrial employment. The most adventurous and ambitious could seek fame and fortune in the colonies of Africa and Asia. Emigration also contributed to Europe's material and cultural wealth. Remittances kept much of Europe alive, and international markets opened to European goods and capital.

Major shifts then began occurring in the Third World, and accelerated in the

post-war decades: independence in India, liberation in China, decolonisation in Asia and Africa, nation building and industrialisation in Latin America. These changes fuel massive population increases. Between 1950 and 2050. Africa's population is projected to soar by 800 percent, from 221 million to nearly 1.8 billion, Asia's by 375 percent, from 1.4 billion to 5.3 billion, and Latin America's by 484 percent, from 167 million to 809 million.

Sociopolitical conditions in developing countries where demographic growth outpaces economic growth—the situation throughout the Middle East and North Africa—are bound to deteriorate rapidly in the years ahead. So today's entry barriers, particularly in Europe, will produce ever-increasing waves of illegal

migration

# We need positive, realistic globalisation strategies.

immigration, with all the crime, corruption, and suffering that this implies (Money to be made from the illegal traffic in people, by some estimates, already outstrips the profits of the illegal drug trade.) Current trends point toward greater instability, including war.

To manage this situation, no panaceas are on offer, and no miracles expected. The following prescriptions may, however, help avert a disaster:

- Rich countries, particularly in Europe, must dismantle trade barriers to exports from developing countries and cease dumping subsidised agricultural
- OECD countries should honour the target of allocating the equivalent of 0.7 percent of GDP annually to foreign aid;
- The volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing countries needs to be greatly increased and more evenly spread. About 80 percent of FDI in developing countries worldwide goes to five economies: China, Hong Kong, Korea, Brazil, and Mexico. The lesson of the last decade is that money flowing to constructive investments in developing countries would have yielded higher returns than all the Enrons, WorldComs, and Vivendis, while laying the basis for dynamic indigenous development:
- . More emphasis must be placed on dramatically improving the quality of governance in developing countries. Wherever demographic growth outstrips economic growth, the fault lies primarily with corrupt and inefficient regimes and the obstacles they put in the way of entrepreneurship and wealth creation. As a result, wealthy Middle Easterners, for example, invest their capital in developed countries, not at home:
- Europe must open its doors far more widely. This is not merely a question of increasing the rate of legal immigration, but also of strengthening the quality of integration. If properly managed, the economic benefits will be significant both for the developing world (higher remittances, but also greater opportunities for learning and experience) and rich countries (a younger, dynamic, and often

It is imperative that world leaders pursue such positive, if difficult plobalisation strategies, rather than the negative, defensive, and protectionist policies that are so universally on offer today. Otherwise, they risk plunging their citizens into a period of violence, destruction, and disintegration that could recall the horrors of the first half of the 20th century . (Penier Syndione

(Jean-Pierre Lehmann is professor of International Political Economy at IMD, Lausanne, and founding director of the Evian Group, a coalition for global liberal governance,)

Shri Bhadra Sharma, former Nepali Congress general secretary. To the Spen

The flag of the Negal Democratic Congress led by Subarna Sumshere Rana had four stars, and BP Koirala's Nepali National Congress flag had three stars and a rising sun. The flag's three colours symbolised the mountains, the hills and the plains. The rising sun symbolised the growing political awareness in Nepal. When the two parties decided to merge, it was decided that the flag of the Nepali National Congress would be adopted. But Subarna Sumshere had already made thousands of the flags with four stars, which he showed BP Koirala. BP asked Subarna Sumshere why he had ordered so many flags. He was told that they were needed to spread the word of revolution in Nepal. He also said that it would be expensive to produce another flag, and that those already ordered would be useless...

All this happened before the parties formally merged in Chaîtra 2006 BS [1951]. BP thought that the flag was just one symbol, and as Subarna Sumshere had already spent so much money on them, it would be wasteful to dump them. But he didn't say anything then. After both parties completed all the merger procedures, however, BP stood up and said that the flag of the new party would be that of the Nepal Democration Congress. Ganesh Man Singh opposed the move strongly... BP said that money would be needed to re-print the Nepali National Congress flag and that the party did not have the resources.

That was how the flag with the four stars became the Congress

emblem. The colour red symbolises revolution. It means that we will bring about change through revolution, and then revolt again if it is needed to safeguard democracy. The white in the flag stands for peace. The four stars represent the four basic freedoms.

After the revolution, it was decided to have elections in 2015 BS [1958]. The Congress picked the tree as its election symbol. There was no particular reason for this, though candidates tried to interpret the symbol differently. The Congress simply selected it from the options put forward by the Election Commission. Today the tree is synonymous with the Congress, and has deep meaning for long-time party cadres.

Today most Congress members say that they will side with the faction that gets to keep the election symbol and the party flag... This is what the two factions are now fighting for. The Koirala faction would never give up the two, and if the Deuba faction does not get them, its



very existence would be threatened. It is difficult to establish a party based only on the fact of being in power, which makes the symbols valuable. The Election Commission should not have delayed its decision on the symbols because the longer it does, the more its commissioners credibility is strained. People sense it may be delaying making public its decision under pressure from the government...What about the side that does not get the Election Commission's approval to keep the symbols? Can it contest the elections? Would it? The main Congress would be that with the tree and flag, and this complicates the tussle. But the Commission has little room to make any decision other than the expected one.

#### Same old story

cerpts from an interview with Mohan Gopal Khetan in Deshantar, 28 July



They are both the same (panchayat and multi-party democracy). Have we changed the organisation at the grassroots? What is there is something that was always there. India has Panchayati Raj, Europe a the very local levels has councils of five people resolving local-level problems. The courts are for those who can afford them. Locals have ways resolved their own problem in the past

National politics ..On behalf of industrialists and usinessmen we had told Girija Prasad Koirala and Madhav Kumar Nepal that a 'broad alliance' would be another form of the Panchayat. If you have a coalition government then there is no opposition. I told GP: you are a lifelong prime minister whether you are in office or not, because you have a strong organisation and can make anyone a Not just Sher Bahadur Deuba or Ram Sharan Mahat, all are people brought in by him. But [I said]. come together with Deuba for the sake of the country' To Madhav Nepal we said: stop

oing politics in the name of the labourers and introduce the "hire and fire" system, otherwise workers will not work, but engage in strikes that cause industrial chaos and discourage investment. That would not enable economic progress. Marwaris have been practicing

eal communism. Have you seen nyone in the group begging? We help everyone and make them capable of being able to earn two meals a day. Dhirubhai Ambani [the recently deceased Indian tycoon]

# QUOTE OF THE WEEK

There must be talks, I have always been saying that. But I am not saying that the government's military operations must also stop. The operations may be stopped after a decision has been reached to have talks

-Dhurba Bahadur Pradhan, former Inspector General of Police in Tarun, 29 July



Radio says: And for the flood victims... relief is being readied... on a war footing.

PROPRIE CHARLES Himalaya Times, 28 July

[when he died] millions came out to pay their final respects, and shareholders [in his company] ever feared the value of their shares would topple. He got the respect that no politician had, even though he had many cases against him in the courts. He kept on nvesting and invested Rs 100

did not have anything in 1965, but

sector. It we are able to achieve economic prosperity, even Georg Bush will visit us. Tony Blair and the Japanese prime minister will also visit almost every month, but no one has paid attention to conomics Finally it was during the visit of His Majesty the King to India and China that there were agreements on water resources. tourism and trade promotion. All these show that the problems the country faces are more economic than political

Modernity is in the economic

Commission agencies .. Earlier trading textiles was good susiness, then contracts for salt

and oils. After that came grocery stores and petrol pumps. Over time, business expanded and agencies came into being. Political nterference began to increase once agencies started to flourish. Then businessmen began to think that this was what politicians should be doing, not them. The minister wanted to meet the company (representative), his personal assistant wanted to meet the same person, the minister's relatives also wanted to do the same. The ministers themselves ar doing the agency business. I don't mean that all HMG ministers are doing that, but in ministries like water resources, housing, telecommunications, where there is foreign aid, ministers are themselves engaged in the business. Earlier (during Panchayat days), when foreign projects came, there used to be briefings at different levels from conception until the

project ended. The system

vanished after democracy was

introduced. Uneducated people

became ministers, and bureaucrats

or their relatives took advantage of

political leaders build their houses

in Kathmandu? Any aware person

knows what their situation was

materials imported at one

percent duty, I don't have much

to say, After India's Steel Author-

ity supported one industry in

Hetauda all other steel makers

sank. Why did the government

imposed anti-dumping duties

selling more copper wires, and they seem to get away [doing

and quotas, saving we were

the same] by using political

their positions. How could the

The future for Nepali investors amount, but treated the foreign Those of us in industry are facing ers politely. The militants had hard times. Those who invested in appointed local schoolteachers as mining (Magnesite), spinning English-language interpreters to (Butwal Threads) and textiles have communicate with foreigners. seen them all collapse. In this About 1,000 foreigners visit country to be successful through Mansarovar via the Simikot industry you have to steal. route annually. The New whether it is electricity or dodging Zealander trekkers reported that revenue, that is the only way there is total absence of governindustry can run. Nepalis can ment functionaries. The police earn only by opening assembly posts in the area are deserted plants, not real industries. After Hindustan Lever came to Hetauda, all Nepali soap industries sank If someone is



## Orphaned

Kantipur, 29 July Pratap Bista in Manhari

(Makwanpur) CONTRACTOR Nine-year old Akash Bahadur Praja lost his entire 13-member family to

a landslide on 22 July. Both his parents, grandfather, three brothe and seven sisters were swept away in Bhaisirang Danda after three days of incessant rainfall. Akash himself was 200 m below where his home used to be, when Ratna Man Praja from a neighbouring village carried him in a doko for two days to Manhari, the nearest place where medical help was available The child, who can speak only his native Chepang, has been

demanding that he be sent back to his home and family. His only solace at the health post is a distant uncle Sigh Bahadur Praja, who is also there, being treated for injuries he sustained in a landslide The child does not know the fate of the rest of his family. Sigh Bahadur has managed to convince Akash so far that they will be able to return home when their wounds heal. On the fateful night of 22 July.

42 people were killed at Devitar of Kakada VDC in addition to Akash's family. Kakada VDC is inhabited mostly by Chepangs, and Corruption in the air of the 63 killed in the village, 34 Haank, 31 July are Chepang.

#### Maoist "tax" Raidhani, 30 Iuly

Mao. Those who refuse to pay

discontinue their trek

the "tax" are said to be forced to

A group of New Zealanders

on their way back from a trip to

Mansarovar said that they were

and the safety for their belong-

ings would be secure after they

militants refused outright their

paid the designated tax. The

request to reduce the tax

KC and his deputy Minister of Madhu Sudan Paudel State Sarwadhan Rai have राजाधानीर abused their authority to The Maoist militants have appoint their brothers, who are started collecting "tax" from not qualified for the position, foreign trekkers. Trekkers going on the board of directors of Royal Nepal Airlines Corporaup towards Mansarovar in Tibet through Simikot in Jumla are tion (RNAC). The Commission charged a fee of \$100 per person. for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has already After that they are presented with a guidebook with pictures of Communist thinkers such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and



assured that their personal safety asked him to take action against the ministers.

Presently the CIAA is investigating pending cases of previous controversial appointments to the RNAC board. Both the ministers in question had tried to mislead the CIAA with irresponsible and irrational excuses during inquires made by the CIAA before it recommended action against them. A seat on the RNAC's

board of directors has been long known as a place where anyone can amass wealth and enjoy unlimited privileges. Everyone with influence from high-level bureaucrats to ministers have always yied with their colleagues to appoint their relatives to the board. The privileged brothers, Keshav Babu KC and Attalsher Rai, seem to be in no mood to resign from their posts. Besides, the ministers from the Deuba faction of the Nepali Congress seem to have realised that their political careers are coming to an end, and so have raced to appoint their close relatives in influential positions and misan propriate of government funds

CULTURE AND SOCIETY and destroyed by the militants.

Trekking agents in

Kathmandu are aware of the

situation in the Simikot area

but most refused to comment

for fear of Maoist retaliation.

of Nepal (TAN) had issued an

taxing" foreigners a month ago

insurgents charging foreigners in

This extortion of money

from foreigners contradicts the

leader Baburam Bhattarai in a

months ago. In the release Dr

Bhattarai had assured the safety

assurance given by Maoist

release issued about three

of foreign visitors—if they

informed his party in advano

about their routes and sched-

ules However he did recom-

mend that visitors avoid

Officialdom claimed

ignorance about the matter.

Home Secretary Tika Dutta

Niraula said that the bureauc-

racy is unaware of such activi-

ties and assured that action

would be taken against anyone

forcing foreigners to part with

Minister for Culture, Tour

and Civil Aviation Bal Bahadur

dangerous" areas

appeal to the Maoists to stop

when reports came in of the

the Makalu area \$50 each.

The Trekking Agents Association

# **OF POVERTY AND POEMS: Jhamak Kumari Ghimire**



wo years back, at the age of nineteen, Jhamak Kumari Ghimire burst onto Nepal's literary scene with several collections of poems, songs, journal entries, stories and essays that showed off her remarkable mastery of language and literature, and insight into the social realities that she writes of. Born with a severe disability that has robbed her of motor control of her arms. slurred her sneech, and limited her movement. .lhamak Kumari writes

with her foot. Her sensibility is anything but restricted, though. With a skill that rivals that of the best progressive writers of today, she explores hard political, intellectual, feminist and social issues, without shying away from emotional expressions of love, regret, joy and sadness. The intensity of her voice is riveting; while there are. obviously, more stylish, clever poets and writers in Nepal, there may not be anyone for whom the written word carries so much urgency. Here is someone who palpably lives by her words.

Both the poems translated below are excerpted from Jhamak Kumari's collected writings, Awasanpachhiko Aagaman. The first poem below speaks in controlled rage of the senselessness of the

#### WHAT IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM?

A soft light glimmers on the eye of neonle's deaths The fern unfurls out of season without its stem having matured

No mourning will be observed now on the eves of people's deaths What is the interpretation of this age? A separate live identity

#### After a hollow ending

the raped abducted orphaned skeletons won't exorcise their agitation at the crossroads of expression as one exorcises witches and phosts by sacrificing chicks

The sari and blouse torn in

the poverty of a ran to wear

in the freezing winters

dam the snow rivers of the season and yet there is no hint of bitterness The yearned-for attacks not just of one winter but of thunder and lightning spread no mutinous luminescence A peaceful flame burns forever at evening time in the homes of the dead It is likely that the cultured people who affect devotion do not wish to offer to the fire a single tear for this millennium Now what is the interpretation of this age? Each hurting moment Each hurting tremor kisses the arrival of the new millennium

Not a stir of the new millennium came to the frostbitten heels of the old grandmother to the ragged tunic of the old grandfather The water jugs filled by a young girl near this courtvard of poverty taunt the new millennium the flowers she has plucked and arranged unearth countless realities and search in the grandmother's torn sari and blouse in the grandfather's patched tunic for the interpretation of the new millennium

giving way to flat, cliché-ridden didacticism. Jhamak Kumari overcomes this challenge through the sincerity of her voice, and the sophistication of her language. In the poem below, she takes to task the irresponsible father (the metaphoric father of the state) who has abandoned his progeny to the indifferent streets:

if you won't shout it down for though you can boast a hundred thousand offspring I have only one father

Have you forgotten your How could you embrace me a new ray rising from wrong time? I am the avenging apparition of wrong time

an unneeded offspring added to the hordes of your offspring a mere child who broke through his mother's stained womb a renegade child

Bahal I'll ask another question

Half formed by you

Raha my last question why are you siring renegade children like me who have lit your funeral pyre before you have died who have mourned you before your death shattering pebbles

Baba! Why are you siring

Overcoming great odds to find her clear, moral voice, Jhamak Kumari is one of the brightest points of Nepali literature today. Her stylish, clever elders in the field of poetry might learn, from her work, how to speak out for democracy and progress in these troubled times

Poverty is an issue that is difficult to take on in noetry without Behind Closed Doors: Behind Closed Doors:

#### A STREET CHILD'S QUESTION TO HIS FATHER

Baba! I'll ask you a question

Baba! Have you forgotten me amid the hordes of your offspring I am your fugitive child sleepless communion with my mother?

though you can boast a hundred thousand children the union of your blood is in the union of my blood Questions of silent union arise from the cacophony

fully formed by my mother am I, the child of the street Why did you damage me on a corner of the street? Why did you fill my mind with gunpowder? Its transformation will leave your society and you poisoned

renegade children like me?

# Pappu the bangle seller

ENCOUNTERS by MEGH RANJANI RAI

In Nepal, it is now the survival of the smallest micro-entrepreneur.

watch the political scenario unfolding before our eyes as the newspaper comes lying in on its parabolic journey, a precise trajectory from the delivery boy's ingers. How many more killed vesterday in encounters? How many more washed away by landslides? How many roads blocked? How many more micro-

Here in Birganj, sipping "Nepali Special Chai" and munching on a suspi ciously orange-timed bhajiya I went through spectres of speculation.

What speculation! What Expectation, What Titillation! Behind Closed Doors: A banging of the mace, an angry face, pacification, justification,

Decisions taken, Strategies Forsaken, False Political Smile, Every once in a

The Maoist Plight, all planned hindsight, Behind Closed Doors:

Do you know what to do? I sure wish I knew

The sparrow is hopping and pecking at the gravel under my feet. All the

hile, great heads are rising, great minds awakening to begin the day at loggerheads. Somebody bumps somebody off, while the opposition stands at the stump I look at my watch and hurry off, clasping by bag and my subservient steps to the minister's beck and call. Yet I have had my moment of bliss, the simplicity of a nadeide encounte



There is hone as long as there are enthusiastic people like the young micro ntrepreneur Pappu K Singh , Class Eight, the bangle seller of Mina Bazaar. His ather is the manger of the Gemini Circus, and is always travelling. Pappu sits in for his mother and is the man of the house, wheeling and dealing with the ladies, who are all set to buy the requisite bangles for the pious

He gauges the customer and, poker faced, quotes different prices for the same product, ranging from Rs 10-16 depending on the customer. I sit silently and watch him negotiate. He looks at me and says "You should reduce in one item and increase in the other, auntyji." He plans to expand and diversify his bangle shop, a bigger place with a wider range of products.

Or maybe it is the women, who come daily selling exotic greens and chillies,

colourful cotton saris draped over their heads, protecting them from the afternoon heat. Contributing to the family's well being.

How do foreign exchange reserves and budget lines matter here? It is the urvival of the smallest micro-entrepreneur. Maybe we should go their way. A paper presented at a National Seminar on Micro Enterprise Development in Nepal, jointly organized by MOICS and UNDP Policy Needs in Micro-

terprises in Nepal in May had this to say: \*Micro enterprises are an effective means for poverty alleviation by engaging the rural poor in economic activities and employment promotion, they help convert local savings into productive investments, and focus on women. Entrepre eurship development has contributed to women empowerment."

Tell that to Pappu K Singh. ♦

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- · Weekly dialogues on life and living and books and audiotapes at the Krishnamurti Study Center, Dhyankuti, Swoyambhu. Saturdays 1PM-6PM. 227704.

- The Legend Sings The Gavak Phatternan Show, 10 August, 5PM, Rs 1,000, Rs 500. Rs 200. Birendra International Convention Centre. Tickets at Youth Vision, 429192.
- Shangri-La Re-Unites Prism Friday nights live at the Jazz Bar, starting 8 PM. www.hotelshangrila.com. 412999
- Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526 Live music by Catch 22. Friday nights at the 40.000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant.

- Ladies night Wednesday nights women get a drink on the house. Teesta plays after 8PM at The Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
- Business lunches, poolside parties, romantic dinners All at the Fusion Bar, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488
- Happy Hour at Splash Bar & Grill Buy one, get one free. Live music Wednesdays and Fridays with barbecue. Radisson Hotel 5.30 PM-7.30 PM. 411818
- July Kegarne Madness One free draft beer with every meal, including Mexican specialties at the K-too! Beer & Steakhouse, Thamel. 433043

- Weekend lunches with swimming Rs 700 per adult, Rs 500 per child at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488 · Saturday Brunch at the Café Buffet, free flow of beer, desserts, outdoor activities for
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- The Radisson Pastry Shop Teas and coffees from around the world at the Tea Lounge, food from the patisserie. 9AM-9PM, Radisson Hotel. 411818
- Beer & Barbecue Special Until 4 August for lunch or dinner, with unlimited beer at The Clubhouse, Le Meridien Kathmandu Gokarna Forest Golf Resort. 451212
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- fire station and St Mary's School. Foodcourt@wlink.com.np. 520004 Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar

#### CFTAWAYS

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seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café. Thamel.

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- Experience a 12<sup>th</sup> century-style pool Students get 50 percent off, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488 Monsoon in Shiyanuri 20 minute drive and 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, two acres 6.000 feet right by Shiyapuri National Park. Rs 1.850 per person with dinner and breakfast.
- Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, Shivapuri Heights Cottage. info@escape2nepal.com 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





This is a woird monsoon. The 41 districts in east and central Nepal had more than average rainfall, while western Nepal is suffering a drought. The east has flood disasters, the west will suffer a food disaster. The satellite nictures taken on Wednesday afternoon show another phase of monsoon trough hitting Nepal next week. However, the intensity of this system will be moderate. The skewed rainfall pattern is a result of persistent westerlies which are blocking the progress of the south-westerly monsoon. Some moisture is sneaking into far-western Nenal from the Arabian Sea, but not bringing much by way of precipitation. For Kathmandu Valley expect light night rains through the week. KATHMANDIIVALIEY















State of Nepal Kanak Mani Dixit, Shastri Ramachandran, eds Himal Books, Lalitpur, 2002 Fifteen Nepali authors and one Indian writer, all experts in their fields, describe how this

uniquely diverse country is grappling with change and continuity. The essays focus on: ethnicity, religion and the state, democracy, kingship, gender, development, education, the Maobadi. culture. media, technology, literature, water, the place of the tarai and Indian Nepalis, economy, and Indian perceptions of Nepal.

The Shahas of West Nepal: Political Autonomy and Economic Dependence in Former Nepalese Community Dr Inga-Britt Krause Adarsh Books, New Delhi 2002

The outcome of a long spell of fieldwork in Rara village, this volume traces the trajectories of the three castes that inhabit the village—high-status Shah Thakuris, twice-born Chhetris and outcast Doms and analyses the economic relationship and the kinship systems of the Thakuris and the Chhetris. She explains how this affects marriage strategies, the organisation of production and the monetarisation of





Man from Nepal Aditya Man Shrestha Robin Books, New Delhi, 2002

Re 240

The author writes about his struggle to get an education in his remote village in Nepal's western hills, and his eventual pursuit of higher studies on scholarship in India. He catalogues the rest of his life and the range of personal triumphs and tragedies he has had to deal with. Shrestha writes in a direct, imple style, and does not spare the reader any of his experiences, no matter how unconventional they

edge of western and eastern clothes design

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email: buddhasfeet@yahoo.com or ring 425931 Nagarkot Special at Naked Chef Bed and break-

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# Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones

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# Nepali olive oil First it was Andean llamas. Now it's time to see

virgin olive oil produced here," he says proudly, looking forward to the autumn harvest.

There's good reason for Bauder to be excited—olive oil is slowly catching on in Nepal, and not just ecause it is an un-smelly massage oil Sure, we know that olive oil is good for you". But just how good? It is a proven fact that people from the Mediterranean, who use the oil in quantities that would seem unhealthy, live longer, and healthier than virtually any other group in the world. "The idea was to sell the concept to farmers and

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

of the world wouldn't know

about for many centuries. The

Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans,

Carthaginians, and Arabs spread it

all along the Mediterranean coast

and later the Spaniards brought

this wonderful secret to the New

World. Today, olives are grown all

Hartmut Bauder was manager

over the world. Including Nepal.

of the Indian branch of a large

enough, and came to live in

strange projects—such as

in the Himalaya", #15)

Next on their minds was

olives. There have been reports

the climate is semi-arid, which is

what the trees need, and the soil

of people coming across wild

olives in part of Nepal like

Manang, which makes sense-

is just rich enough. After

searching for months, Bauder

fertile, valley of Chitlang in

route to Kathmandu

came upon the forgotten, but

Makwanpur, on the old trade

To begin with, Bander

bought 10 hectares of land in

two areas in Chitlang and named

them Tuscany and Vinci, after

the Italian region and town

famous for their olive oildrenched cuisine. That was eight

years ago. Today the olive saplings Bauder brought from all over the world are handsome

trees. In the two plantations, he has 2,400 trees with at least 15 different varieties of olives. The trees vielded some 65 kilos of

fruit last year, and there may be significantly more this year.

There are olive trees more than

2,000 years old that produce

over 800 kilos of fruit a year.

The trees in Chitlang may seem

inconsequential in comparison, bu

don't plant olive trees for yourself

So, more than an increase in

that's all right with Bauder, "You

but for the sons of your sons."

harvest, Bauder is looking forward to pressing the first oil from the fruits of his farm. He's

already ordered a pressing

machine, and can't wait for it to get here "This will be the first

pharmaceutical company for over

ice upon a time, middle-

tern civilisations had a

nagical fruit that the rest



the general public at large so that

people are aware of the advantages

two decades, until eight years ago, when he decided that he'd had The single most important fact in this era of lifestyle diseases such as heart disease and diabetes Kathmandu with his Nepali wife, Pramila. Since they've moved here, is that olive oil lowers total they set up Himalayan Plantation cholesterol but raises high-density in order to carry out some pretty lipoproteins, which reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. In ging alpacas from Chile to addition, food prepared in olive oil the Himalava (See "Andean Ilams has a mild laxative effect and corrects chronic constipation. It stimulates the gall bladder and protects against gallstones. And it

tastes great. It isn't, unfortunately, that easy to grow olives or press oil from them. Olive trees are seriously harmed by too much water, and are very susceptible to insects and pests. Even after the shrub has grown into a tree, it needs to be pruned constantly to ensure a higher yield. When it



comes to harvest, a similar amount of attention to detail is needed. Quality olive oil is obtained from sound, whole olives that are best just when just their green colour is darkening to black or purple. Olives are generally picked by hand but can also be harvested using



poles and nets placed above the grounds to collect the fruit. Some people even use shaking machines to get the fruit off the tree. The important thing, regardless of how the olives are harvested, is to not let oil and is called 'virgin'. The the fruit fall to the ground, because this affects the quality of the oil. To produce the best oil,

olives needs be crushed right after being picked, because they start to ferment rather fast. They are crushed and spread on pressing mats stacked one on top of the other; entire stacks are then compressed using a hydraulic press



The more modern method is by centrifuging the paste in a horizontal shaft decanter. The oil that is obtained from either of these two methods is the purest form of olive International Olive Oil Council states that virgin olive oil should have undergone no treatment other than washing, decantation, centrifuging and filtration. After that, depending on the acidity, odour and colour, virgin olive oil is further classified as extra virgin.

As increasingly stressed Nepalis

virgin or ordinary.

start discovering the health benefits of olive oil, there's no doubt it won't just be used as massage oil anymore. Get ready to eat vegeta bles and meats, salads and pasta sautéed in and drizzled with the oil of the gods-all-Nepali,



of course. •



16 2-8 AUGUST 2002 **NEPALI TIMES** 



## **Under My Hat**

by Kunda Dixit

# **Unrealistic items**

wo bits of news this week in the papers give us hope in these troubled times that there is indeed a strong possibility that there may after all be a silver lining at the end of the tunnel for Nepal's

Being the 122<sup>nd</sup> poorest nation on earth, it is clear that we have to learn to live within our limited means. It does not behoove us to indulge in conspicuous consumption and snobbishly insist on only buying expensive senuine articles.

The first news item concerns an investor who decided to use his photocopier shop in Teku to

churn out replicas of Indian 500 rupes notes, and distribute them to the needy and destitute. At the rate his business is expanding, Indian currency is going to be declared legal tender in this country, just like in the old days. Only this time, it is going to be counterfeit currency. Our next Pirate of



the Year is the fellow in Pyulcha who is showing exemplary entrepreneurship by manufacturing imitation 555 cigarettes from the comfort of his own home. This guy is a genius. Ordinary Nephsis can't afford expensive 555s, so be slabes the price drastically and sells fake fags that look and feel just like the genuine article.

All right, all right, the eigarettes taste like you are inhaling combustible hose manure, but we're working on it, OR? You can't expect us to blend horse do-do perfectly at first shot, especially if you are paying for it with fake Indian notes. (Statutov) Government Health Warning: It's going to kill you anyway, so it doesn't matter what you smoke.)

The important thing is that Nepal's private sector is concerned about creating new jobs and making Virginia blends trendy and affordable to the masses. And, instead of just siring on their butts like the rest of us, our bold buccaneers are doing something about reviving economic activity.

What these two venture capitalist Nepali businesses have proven is that all it takes is a small amount of seed capital, imagination, and a can-dodo attitude to launch an unrealistic product, and thus combine business with public service. Inspired by them, we are now processing applications for the

manufacture of the following forged items:

Pseudo-Pajeros. These are knockoffs of the actual Mitsubishi 4WDs,

offs of the actual
Mitsubishi 4WDs,
but for a fraction of
the cost. So, if you
are a politician, all
you have to do is be
only half-corrupt to
be able to afford one
of these.

Quasi-Diesel.

Instead of pure diesel, which is expensive, put a tiger in your tank by filling her up with affordable

and high-octane kerosene.

• Phony-telephony. These designer brand mobiles with names such as Nakia, Sonny, and Mutterola are coming off the assembly lines in vast numbers at

 Sham shampoo. Squeeze out a liberal amount of Head Over Shoulders shampoo with conditioner and rub gently over scalp, and rinse. Careful, now, we don't want the wig to fall off, do we?

 Pretend democracy. Feigning freedom in a make-believe land.





hat do a group of young Kathmandu printing press workers do on long weekends: a) stay home and watch Hindi movies on cable, b) stay home and play cards, c) hang around the Bagmati Bridge and watch the world go by.

s. d) nick of the above.

8. d) nick of the above.

Ram Tudahov Hari

Ram Tudahov, Korin Man

Barladur Gurung, Raju Shrestha,

Suni Babu Dhungana, Suren

Shrestha, Puran Nagarkodi,

Shyamu Joshi, Panhad Thapa

Magar, Kaji Budahndol, Nar

Barladur Gurung, Samu Babu

Tamang are names that represent

a cross-aection of Nepal. And they

press in Patan who are bite

ancionados. Every chance they

get, they're off to see the world.

Well, not exactly. They're off to

Inspired by the Nepali roundthe-world cyclist, Pushkar Shah, who is currently somewhere in South America, the group has bicycle-

trekked roundtrip from Kathmandu to Trisuli, Kodari, Gorkha, Pokhara and Narayanghat. They have even done the gruelling Kathmandu-Hetauda Tribhuvan

Kathmandu-Hetauda Tribhuvan m Highway via Daman. to "People along the highways are not used to seeing Nepalis on long bicycle tours," says 30-something all

Ram Tuladhar, "village children along the way call us "Nepali kuire". So far, the fours have lasted four to five days with up to ten hours of bicycling every day. Some days are easy, like coasting downhill all the way from Dhulikhel to Dolalghat. But others are strenuous and need tremendous muscle power, like the Mugling to Thankot stretch.

At tea shops along the way, locals are surprised that it is possible to go such long distances on bicycle, and even more astonished that the "tourists" are

working class Nepalis like them.
"Many people ask us why we
take all the trouble if no one is
paying us to do it," says Sanu Babu

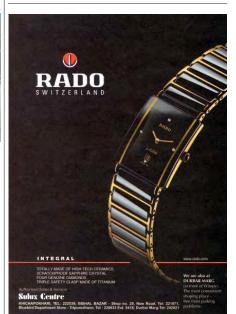
Tamang, "they are puzzled when we say we're just doing it for fun."
Many of their friends and relatives have warned the bicyclists that it may be dangerous to do these tours at times like these.

"Some told us the police would harass us, but the policemen have all been friendly. They warned us that the army would stop us, but soldiers have never bothered us. Others warned us about Maoists, but we haven't yet met a single Maoist on the trails," says Ram, seen rounding a hair-pin bend on the Kodari Highway in the photo above.

The group's next ambition is to do a 1,200 km tour from Mechi to Mahakali right across the length of Nepal.

Says Sanu Babu: "When you are pedalling, one thing that strikes you is that in Nepal, it is up and down all the way. Everytime you have an easy donwhill, you know that sometime, somewhere, there will be a hard uphill."

Sounds like life itself.



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