Rs 20



ANALYSIS by RAJENDRA DAHAL

he two protagonists in the present crisis—the extreme right and the extreme left—want the same thing: as extension of the emergency, and neither side cares too much for elections. The constitution has provided polls as a way out of this stalemate, but they are not going to let the

That is the paradox of Nepal's politics: the enemies seem to want the same result. And they are pitted against parliamentary parties and Nepalis who haven't given up on democracy. There are signs the extreme right is now more royal than the king, and the resignation Thursday of the king's nominee to the upper house, Dipta Prakash Shah, is an indication that his views were too hardline to digest. Shah told us: "I resigned because I sensed

that certain forces didn't like what I had said about the role of the constitutional monarchy." In an interview with Raidhani Shah had said Tuesday that the king can

No one won, everyone lost

deprivation and insecurity. 

Magists

prime minister is even less powerful than it was, and the

monarchy's public image is quiescent. Who benefited from all this?

They have been the biggest losers. The

use Article 127 to amend the constitution and take necessary powers. The resignation shows that political regression may not be as easy as

Given this undercurrent, it doesn't seem to matter anymore which faction of the Congress gets the tree symbol. Or if the emergency is extended or not. In fact, even without a formal emergency, the country is in a state of emergency.

Since the emergency went into force in November, no one won. Everyone lost. Parliamentary parties have been emasculated, the Certainly not the Nepali people. Manistra are weakened, the strength of the army has been dragged into public debate, the office of economy has been battered, investments are purchasing power, markets, food supply, health services, education, and personal security. Caught between the ruthlessness of the Maoists and counter-attacks from security orces, Nepalis have never before faced such deprivation and insecurity. An alternative to elections would be

postponed elections. The Maoists have squandered popular support, and it would be possible for the govern-Emergency ment to keep them at bay and hold some form of elections. But will it be

able to convince the army, the palace and certain foreign governments that it can? The defence establishment is fairly clear that Nepali Congress begins reunification. ♦

to finish off the Maniere The idea is to nur sufficient pressure on them to bolster the bargaining position in future talks. And this is also the intention of the Maoists who have already begun their senseless mayhem in the run-up to the 16 September strike.

On the political front, Deuba has played out all his cards, and his cabinet is selfdestructing. The media-led campaign against Deuba loyalist Chiranjibi Wagle this week is orchestrated by his own cabinet colleagues over construction contracts. "Deuba's left hand is destroying his right hand," is how a political insider put it. Given this scenario, and a rumoured meeting between Girija Koirala and the king on Friday, don't be surprised if the

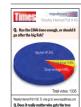


ears of pre-poll violence, the emergency, an international slump in air travel post-September 11 and fears of India-Pakistan tensions air travel post-September 11 and fears of India-Pakistan tensic continue to keep tourists away from Nepal. Bookings for the autumn season are down, and cancellations are coming in.

Although it is picking up again in southeast Asia, tourism shows no signs of recovery here. Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) has tried to put on a brave face by saving that arrivals are up 35 percent this July compared to July 2001. But that is misleading because last July saw a serious post-royal massacre slump.

Saskia is a Dutch tourist who was all set to travel to India and Nepal this autumn. But on advice of the Dutch government, she's decided to postpone her plans to visit the region. Lina is a Swede, but she has decided to defy her government's travel alert for Nepal and is coming for a trek in October. On Thursday, the US embassy upgraded its travel advisory for Nepal in lieu of the 16 September Maoist strike saving Americans and other tourists could be at risk.

"Traffic to Nepal has been affected by travel advisories issued by the US, Britain and many European countries deterring travel to India," NTB says. Still, the promotional body says Indian arrivals are double last year's figures, and there have been dramatic increases from Australia and Japan. But the downturn for the main markets-Britain, the US. Germany and France-continues.



"The unrest in Afghanistan, India-Pakistan tension and Nepal's own internal problems have impacted heavily on tourism. Things don't look too encouraging," says Suman Pandey President of the Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN).

Nenal was voted the second "top travel destination" in May this year, ranking after New Zealand in a survey by the Guardian newspaper in London. The accolade came six months after Nenal was voted second in the Top Country Category out of 180 countries in the Wanderlust Travel Awards 2001. But such distinction does not show in arrival figures.



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> It is with much pride that we would like to announce, that for the first time in the history of banking in the Kingdom of Nepal, Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Limited has been awarded the prestigious 'Bank of the Year 2002 Nepal' Award by The Banker, a publication of the Financial Times group, London. 'The Bank of the Year' award recognizes excellence in banking services in the world-banking arena. We at Standard Chartered Bank Nepal are proud of being the first bank in the Kingdom to receive this international award. We are honoured to have done our country proud.

Fighting by the rules

General Pyar Jung Thapa takes over as Chief of Army Staff

next week. He faces the challenge of fighting the Maoists

without sullying the image of the army.





wo world leaders most conspicuous by their absence at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg this week—as far as we were concerned—were the president of the world's richest country and the prime minister of one of its poorest. The fact that Sher Bahadur Deuba didn't attend just went to show that he knows

which side his toast is butered; getting a Belgian gun deal unstuck. George W, for his part, was too busy trying to carry on where daddy left off to bomb Iraq into smithereens on or before 11 September. Bush and Deuba were symbolic absentees: they sent the message that threats to the earth's ecosphere come from both prosperity and poverty. Ten years and the senior Rush told the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro that America's lifestyle was "not up for negotiation". His son went a step further and killed the

Kyoto Protocol last year destroying even the consensus on reducing carbon emissions that was reached in Rio. This is proof, if proof is still needed in an age of corporate corruption, that oil lubricates American politics.

So, four percent of the world's population keeps burning up 25 percent of its fossil fuel. The Bush administration sees nothing wrong with its citizens emitting six tons of carbon dioxide per head into the atmosphere every year, when an average European with a similar lifestyle emits one third that, and an average Japanese, a quarter. (It takes nearly 300 Nepalis to burn off as much carbon dioxide as an average American.)



The resulting climate change and sea-level rise may soon wipe the Maldives off the map. There is no such thing as "my back vard" anymore, and global warming is already making a measurable impact on our mountains. Last spring, the inhabitants of Pokhara for the first time in living memory caught the apocalyptic sight of Machhapuchare as a stark black pyramid devoid of any snow. The Khumbu Glacier has retreated 5 km since the first ascent of Mt Everest 50 years ago. Glacial lakes in Nepal and Bhutan are brimming with melted snow, several are in danger of bursting through their moraine barriers. Malaria is climbing up the valleys, and epidemics have been reported even in Kavre district. This year's erratic monsoon is probably nature's way of telling us that we are tampering with the equilibrium.

Johannesburg was supposed to be a historic opportunity to address the develop-nt roots of environmental problems: to see that the ecology and the economy are two sides of the same coin, Indeed, as we have seen in Europe, Japan and some

American states, eco-friendly policies actually help the economy.

But we also see governments of the South using the argument of Northern overconsumption to carry on with business as usual. Per capita carbon emission levels in countries like China and India may be small, but China is already the third larges course of atmospheric carbon, with 12 percent of the total. In the payt 15 years. China

and India will account for 40 percent of new carbon in the atmosphere. China and India also provide a vivid example of the dangers of biodiversity loss. Increased affluence in China is pushing the illicit trade in tiger parts, leading to the decimation of India's tiger population. The tiger is a metaphor for the rest of the ecosystem. The battle to save the planet through sustainable development will be won or lost in Asia: if Asia follows the western model of economic growth the planet is

So let's stop this kneelerk west-bashing and start putting our own houses in order

## **Distant neighbours**

Who will we take lessons from in forging a new, updated relationship with India: Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, or Sikkim?

BANGKOK - If distance gives perspective, then there is no better place to reflect over Nepal-India relations than while flying over this yest subcontinent and watching the Himalaya recede over the northern horizon. The necessity of rethinking the bases came out of a chance meeting with an Indian diplomat at Bangkok transit.

South Asia's hub these days is Bangkok. Even Prime Minister Deuba passes through Don Muang on his way to and from Europe. There are no flights between Kathmandu to Colombo, or New Delhi to Islamabad, but one can go between these places by flying all the way to Bangkok. So it isn't unusual to bump into South Asians in the cavemous shopping mall that is the departure concourse of Bangkok International Airport.

The dip in question was in a relaxed mood and began by praising the realistic geo-politics of Nepali Maoists. Never since Rana rule, he said, has a political force in Kathmandu been as friendly towards the Delhi darbar as the Maoists. He may have been over-playing it for effect, but it is a fact that Maoists hiding in India are not unduly worried about the Interpol Red Comer notice. Once in a while, some low level Maoists are apprehended by the Uttar Pradesh Police and handed over to Nepal. but the big fish continue to swim back and

forth across the border. The Indian diplomat—let's call him "ID"—urged me to think like an Indian for a moment and ask why India must remain friendlier to Nepal than is absolutely necessary. According to ID, Nepal has ceased to be the buffer that once cushioned the clash of geo-political plates between India and China. Beijing is wary about Tibetan activity in Nepal, and there is no reason why India should depend anymore on Nepal to protect its strategic interests in the Himalaya. ID was warming up to his line of thinking, and added meaningfully

It is clear that the new breed of South Block strategists see Nepal as a pesky pebble in the rice bowl. There is a message in there for us in Nepal. We can't count anymore on the rhetoric of "age old ties of amity and friendship" anymore. Our relationship has to be based on something

"In fact, Nepal magnifies problems for

more tangible. If we want favours, we must first know what they really want.

Back in the "buffer" days, Nepal's independence saved the Indian army the cost of patrolling the high, hostile frontier with China. With Indo-Chinese detente this buffer is less important. Meanwhile, our southern border now has to be guarded by an Indian border patrol that is an army by another name. So the budgetary advantage

of having Nepal as buffer has vanished. Nepal has friendly relations with Pakistan. It can't cut off ties simply because New Delhi doesn't like it. An independent Nepal cannot be an extension of Indian oreign policy even if China recognises the area south of the Himalava as Delhi's sphere of influence

We therefore have to decide what kind f relationship we want with India. We can follow the belligerency model often adopted by Bangladesh and brace ourselves for the consequences. Or we can go to the other extreme, and do the Thimpu model to win material advantages by sacrificing certain emotional ones. One can't have it both ways: Shital Niwas cannot treat South Block like a distant neighbour and then expect geopolitical advantages that are never unconditional. Then there is the option of maintaining a balance: the Sri

Lankan way. When Sikkimese Chief Minister Pawan Chamling told this paper last year that it was not Sikkim that merged into India but the other way round, we found it a cute remark. But it is a fact that the Sikkimese nave benefited immensely from Indian largesse. If Nepal doesn't adopt realistic

policies towards India, then there are chances of an action replay of the Kazi-Chogyal showdown here. The Maoists will be only too happy to dance to that tune.

The days of dictatorial vanity couched in the terminology of nationalism and patriotism are long over. The disadvantaged of Nepal are no longer ready to endure nationalism on an empty stomach. Nepalis toiling in the Gulf and Malaysia now know that there is no particular advantage attached to a passport of one of the poores countries of the world that is now also strife-torn. When they return, as they one day will, they will want a say in how Nepal is run. And the governing elite will then no posed advantages of never having been a

Like every other emotional Nepali, I told ID that an independent Nepal is a moral issue, not a balance sheet. As we go up to board our respective flights, I had to add that an independent and prosperous Nepal is still in India's best interest.

It is clear, however, that we continue to ignore the hard realities of geopolitics in this region at our own peril. The economic reasons are compelling enough, but now it's clear that we need more than show-case support from India to control the Maoist

Prime Minister Deuba can re-impose the state of emergency in the country by ndermining the spirit of the constitution but he cannot stop them from roaming free over Indian territory

It's a difficult decision, but one we will have to take sooner or later. A later decision may be too late if the Maoists



ahead for them to exploit the multi-layered political confusion that is about. The Royal Nepalese Army has established itself firmly in the centre-stage of Nepali polity even though till recently the soldiers had a strictly secondary role demanded by the primacy of the royal palace. Since November, the RNA has ecome an active player in its own right In addition to the duty towards maintain ing the country's integrity at this time of extreme stress, the generals now also have a responsibility to take maximum care while tackling the insurgency. The short-term tactical goals of

he monsoon is about to end, and

renewed bout of bloodletting that

together with it may come a

the people can ill afford. The Maoists have

recruit. There are ample opportunities up

clearly used the period to regroup and

NATION

defeating the Maoists must be seen by the army against the larger strategic goal of maintaining national unity within an evolving democracy. The Maoists are exploiting failures of democracy to rip society apart by destroying horizontal linkages among the people. The military surely has higher ideals than those who are completely lawless.

Since November, the army has had to overcome its logistical and equipment shortfalls to fight a battle-hardened and ruthless Maobadi force. The army entered the fray after the guerrillas had already gained significant momentum.

The army's strategy is clearly to try and break the back of the Maobadi, and force it into submission. But the experience so far suggests that it is too thinly spread and as has not yet mustered the required striking power The army also seems to be addressing the expectations of the Kathmandu classes to

have the war over with quickly All this has resulted in an unacceptably high level of civilian deaths, a fact well documented by the National Human Rights Commission, international watchdog groups, as well as the very diplomatic community that is keen to provide the army with support in the fight against 'terror'. As one diplomat says, "The army is breaking too many rules when it should be taking the high ground and harder road against the cruelty and mayhem

being wrought by the Manists Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's government has neither the stature nor ability

General Thapa greets Prime Minister Deuba on his return from Brussels on Tuesday to exercise civilian control over the military And with civil society largely cowed down the army is left to set its own standards in the

um that exists In a country where there are a large number of oney and accidental Maoists, it has been difficult for the soldiers to draw the distinction. The bulk of the hardcore eems to have evaded the dragnet thus far. There have been many instances of multiple killings in "encounters", and mistakes have not been acknowledged The Defence Ministry reports list the dead, but no wounded and too few prisoners. This will ultimately create

The volume of the army's operation: are necessarily at a quantum level higher than those carried out by the police during the 1997 Kilo Sierra Two in the midwest. The fallout of mistakes made today, unfortunately, will also be on a different

economic levels, and political

persuasions to work together

to solve real problems through

harmonious dialogue and

collective action. There is

much that our leaders and

development agencies can

healing wounds, building

peace, making a difference,

learn from them about

scale, and last far into the future. The resulting militancy at that time may not than its counterparts in civil society? even be Maoist, for fundamentalists of any

hue can capitalise on the grievances There is no doubt of course that the army was called in to pick up the pieces after the politicians and Kathmandu's powerbrokers had already managed to wreck democracy. But the army does not function in a vacuum either. It must look at what kind of victory is achievable, and should not countenance a total victory in isolation from political parties that will still be there tomorrow as representatives of the people. Also, thus far, the soldiers have tried

to go it alone, forgetting that there are many civilian sectors that have equal if not more enmity with the Maobadi. Some abuse will happen in the conduct of war, but a professional army needs to investigate and prosecute the guilty. A human rights cell has been created recently within the

RNA Can one hope it will be more active

Many foreign governments have willingly supported the government and army to fight 'terrorism'. They have no hones from the Maobadi, but are now increasingly concerned over serious violations of civilian rights by the army. International human rights groups are on high alert, and are beginning to stir.

The RNA must respond to these early signs before the rapacious 'parachute media' discovers and descends on the 'story' Articles like the recent one in The Times of London on the June Thulo Sirubari incident will become more common. If the army's image is tarnished, supportive vernments will begin to distance them-

Because Nepal has been a popula ourist destination (at least until Comrade Prachanda ruined it), there is more

international interest focussed here than another similarly-placed country. There are therefore activists about and they will raise a stink which otherwise

supportive governments cannot ignore To begin with, this will result in ancellation of weapons deliveries and a shift towards providing non-lethal support for the army. The high-profile drama in Brussels last week with the near-collapse of the Belgian government will surely make other governments think twice over selling arms to Nepal. The army does need to upgrade its weapons, but how is it going to do it if its conduc

The RNA and its individual officers and sipahis also have their own post-Maoist future to consider. By remaining strictly apolitical and fighting a relatively clean war, the Nepali military can continue to be a valued member of international peacekeeping fraternity and ving seen action) a sought-after force for the Blue Helmets. Indeed, it was even once suggested that the RNA organise a permanent peacekeeping force for the United Nations. But if (rightly or wrongly) the image is created of a force that does not follow the rules, then both the army and the national economy stand to lose a great deal. As in days of old, the army brass

ontinues to react with petulance to criticism. But such criticism is even more natural (and necessary) now that the RNA is no longer a ceremonial presence but a fighting force. Rather than simplistically label all commentators as "anti army", the generals should try to get to the content of the analysis vis-a-vis the future of the country and the RNA.

General Pyar Jung Thapa faces the challenge of fighting the Maobadi, maintai ing the image of the army, as well as preparing for the demanding task of policing the slated elections. He will be a political player in a position that is required to be

There is an opportunity during this change of guard to adjust course and jettison the predecessor's political and tactical baggage. The challenge before CoAS Thaps is to try and bring peace to the land with minimum innocent civilian victims. The public expects the army to deliver peace, but ot the peace of the cemetery.

needed, by subsidising

electricity while removing

subsidy on imported fossil fuel

#### LETTERS

THE MESSENGER Although your editorial Bloody Well Right" (#109)



serious issue, often ignored by the Fourth Estate as well as by our intellectuals. The print media is one of the most powerful agents to influence a society. Nepali media. knowingly or unknowingly, is systematically brainwashing the vast majority of poorly educated population, including the tender brains of the younger generation, and has succeeded to convince them that Nepal is a country full of political thugs, corrupt governnent servants, smuggler businessmen, teachers with fake certificates and what not The majority of teenagers already have the feeling that their motherland is not worth

media. The man-on-the-street who obviously has to depend national news and views, is not bothered about develop-

concern is the possible kickbacks involved in those activities. He is always staring at the half empty part of the glass. He is convinced that foreign aid is no good for the country, as it may involve commissions to business houses and business houses can only make money by illegal means. He thinks that Royal Nenal Airlines should not buy or hire any aircraft, as it will involve big money and dealings. A negative mind-set has become rampant in society and the main driving force for this state of the affairs is undoubtedly the news

ment activities, his only

Even CIAA Chief Surva Nath Upadhyaya once comunnecessarily euphoric ove corruption issues, thereby

is absolutely no hope for our country. The people are never told that we have many officials like Upadhvava, that there are many incorruptible politicians with sincerity and dedication, that there are many journalists who cannot be bought, that there are many industrialists and businessmen who do fair husiness and sincerely pay taxes, and that we have many students who can excel at Harvard and Oxford.

But, alas, it will take years to de-brainwash our society to make them proud of their motherland, our society, our alorious history, our rich culture, our bravery, our hardworking farmers, and above all our tradition of "tolerance and

Sugat Ratna Kansakar, by

editorial, "Bloody well right" as well as for Ani Rudra Silwal's excellent report, "Giving micro credit where it's due" (#110) on Pact's remarkable Women's Empowerment Program in the tarai, Thanks, too, not only for avoiding "body-bag" iournalism but also focusing Nepali Times articles on how Nenal can heal the wounds and find solutions rather than glorify the violence, as other edia tend to do as a matter

Silwal's article does just that by highlighting the power 130 000 rural Nepali women email in creating a new model for

of course.

Kudos on your superb

micro finance that is attracting global attention, having won five international awards/ amazing things about WEP is that everything that Silwal reports on is taking place over one year after the donor and Pact wound up their core funding and technical support The women really are in charge-and they are busy, on their own, forming more Village Banks.

literacy- and savings-led

A recent external evaluation estimated that nerhans as many as 1,000 new economic groups-with some 20,000 members-have been formed by the women them

selves among their sisters in their own and neighboring villages, often stitching up the bindings of their literacy and banking handbooks to pass them on to others. These groups carry on, even in the heart of Maoist territory, in a remarkable non-partisan manner bringing together



solution" instead of a "part of Malcolm Odell, Tangal

I usually like CK Lal's columns, they are original and insightful analyses of the present social phenomena in Nepal. But I had fundamental differences with the part of his column "Disadvantaged ahroad" (#108) where he puts forward the theory that "HANSA" (Hindu, Aryan, Nepali-speaking Administra tors) are the sole cause of the misery faced by our forexearning brothers and sisters Although the article made me feel sorry for their plight, it also made me uneasy that my favourite columnist was taking

such a reductionist stand. I

expected CK Lal to be more

careful in paying attention to

other facets of the issue

Kapil Dahal, Gorkha "Disadvantaged abroad" by CK Lal was one of the hest

reads in recent times. Espe-

cially his depiction of HANSAs

lian origin miserable when you

have seen it with my own eyes

when my uncle tried to obtain

a passport, and it took nearly

taken longer but my father was

fed up with the officer on duty

and paid him some money to

expedite the process. Some of

Malaysia and Kuwait, but none

of the Nepali labour officials

anywhere are the least bit

interested in helping them

There are hundreds of similar

stories if you want to publish

uneducated don't get justice

them. If the noor and the

my relatives have had prob-

lems with employers in

three months. It would have

who make people of Mongo-

have to obtain a passport. I

and assistance from the government when they try to go abroad to work, then you will have the unwanted consequences of Maoism

After reading "Trading power

(#108) by Binod Bhattarai, it

get over the mindset that we

always need to dance to the

tune of the Indians (even if

their cronies in this country

would like us to believe that

learned enough lessons by

making deals such as Kos

and others with the Indians? We have always been an

independent country and let us

independence. We must use

the surplus electric power and

we must). Have we not

continue to exercise our

much more that we can generate for our own use, if

SELE-EMPOWERMENT

R Subba, Kuwait

Let us use electricity for transport, industry and household needs. Let us go ahead and light our villages and towns while the villages and towns on the other side of the border remain in the dark. When this happens, the pressure from our neighbours hevond our horders will be enough to force their politicians to purchase power from us-which we know will be beneficial for everybody (them

R Khadga, Kathmandu

### CORRECTION

and us).

Michung Gurung in "Another Manang" (#109) should have been identified as the former DDC chairman of Manang



#### MADHUSUDHAN GURAGAIN IN KAVRE

apta Man, like hundreds of housands of Nepali farmers, has been using hydropower for centuries. Th know-how to design, build maintain and run traditional ghattas for grinding grain is probably as old as human ettlements in the Himalaya. But Sapta Man is rare among Nepali farmers because he has adapted the traditional waterwheel of his ancestors, installed more efficient paddles and ball-bearings so that with the same amount of falling water he can grind corn, wheat and millet three times more

nearly 35 years ago by Swiss "The improvement in engineer Andreas Bachmann efficiency and power generation i amazing," Satya Man told us working with Nepali small-hydro pioneer, Akal Man Nakarmi. In a while showing us his "generation 1983 monograph, Bachmann and room" in Ladku village. His mill Nakarmi list the options for equipped with spoon-shaped upgrading ghattas, depending on metal blades in the turbine can the head and flow. They put forward the design of a multigenerate up to 3 kW of power and grind as much as 15 pathis of purpose power unit (MPPU) kit grain in an hour—three times that came in three easy-tomore efficient than his original assemble modules and can be wooden ghatta. The traditional design is a installed on the site of ghattas with minimum expense and expertise. MPPUs not just grind

wooden cross-flow turbine that turns a stone disc on top of a stationery disc and grinds corn or wheat that feeds into a hole on

Improved water mills improve lives







Sapta Man Shrestha (above, right) with his improved ghatta. The wooden paddles were replaced with this metal turbine to triple his mill's efficiency.

the upper stone through a made MPPUs have been ex ported to Bhutan, Ladakh and vibrating metal contraption called a "bird" that can regulate the Sri Lanka. Organisations like the Centre flow of grain. There are an estimated 30,000 traditional for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N) and others are promot water mills still in operation all over Nepal, but these numbers ing similar upgrading, CRT/N are decreasing as ghatta owners which trained farmers like Sapta near highways and in the tarai turn to diesel mills. Efforts to improve on the traditional ghattas were started

rn, but generate electricity, run

threshing machines, looms and

even belt-driven lathes. Nepali-

Man in upgrading ghattas, has declared Ladku an "Energy Village" All 26 traditional ghattas along a two km stretch of Ladku stream now run on improved turbines, and these days their high-pitch whine merge with one another as one walks down through the village. "This is probably one of most intensive uses of improved ghattas anywhere in Nepal," says

CRT/N's Puspakar Lamichhane who has conducted a "ghatta census" in Kavre and found that there are 415 in 63 rivers and streams in the district. So far, 0 have been upgraded with new

One of them is Sabitri Nepali in Kunekharka who is happy with the way her family's ghatta has

## Traditional Horizontal Water Mill

This ingenious design uses the energy of falling water channeled through a hollowed out tree-trunk falling on water wheel made of a wooden hub fitted with obliquely-set paddles and a stone pin at the bottom. A wooden shaft turns the top grinding stone as the bottom stone stays stationery. Grain in the hopper trickles into the feeding canal on the top stone through a vibrator called "bird".

## Improved Ghatta

The turbine runner is made of spoon-shaped blades encased in a wooden case. The chute is replaced with a metal pipe, and the shaft turns the grinding stones. The upper part with the hopper and vibrator are the same as the traditional ghatta. The power can be taken with a belt to a dynamo or a rice huller when the ghatta is not

## **Multi-Purpose Power Unit**

The unit is made of metal and comprises of three detachable segments to make it easy to carry to remote locations. The MMPU can simultaenously grind grain, generate electricity and hull rice. The increase in speed and power is due to the greater efficiency of the blade design, and the improved design of the penstock and bearings The MPPLI is versatile and can run either as a turbine only to generate electricity, or mill only or do all the work simultaneously.

(Courtesy: Mini Technology by BR Saubolle and Andreas Bachmann, 1978 Sahayogi Press and New Himalayan Water Wheels by Andreas Bachmann and Akal Man Nakarmi, 1983)

HERE AND THERE

# **One year later**



began innocuously enough for me. I was in Delhi to edit television stories about the Maoists and an interview with Prime Minister Deuba. We had spent an entire day at television's equivalent of the coalface and it was teatime was sitting in the tiny closet that passes for a kitchen at the Delhi bureau of Britain's proudest institution, as some of us are moved to call the BBC from time to time—especially when a short-sighted government cuts funding to the World Service. As the BBC tea brewed, a Scottish video editor on loan to the bureau burst through the door. He was laughing—I remember this distinctly, unaware at this early stage of what was unfolding. "All yur woork's gawn fer naught," he said in thickest Glaswegian, "Soom booger's just flown his wee plane intae the World Trade Center.

I wandered—none too urgently, I admit—out to the newsroom to watch the horror unfold; the impact of the second plane, live on television, the news of other hijacks, other crashes, the riveting and heart stopping implo-sion of the gleaming towers, the unforgettable look on the face of George Bush Jr as he was told the news. From Delhi to Dubai, Washington to Beijing, the world switched on its televisions and surfed the dreadful images of "Nine Eleven". We heard the endless speculation of clueless commentators (myself soon to join their ranks) and were shown disgusting canards like the nfamous video of one or two Palestinians celebrating America's pain, presented by inference—at the time—as the Muslim world's reaction to events.

In fact, people from every one of Samuel Huntington's 'civilisations'-



dus, Christians, Chinese—felt very mixed emotions at seeing the Superpowe humbled so. Everyone was horrified, saddened, filled with fear. Yet any number of times, even in the immediate aftermath of the tragedies of New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the phrases "serves them right" or "now they know what go through" crept into discussions, along with expressions of shock and grief. The justifiably angry rhetoric from Washington went on, unaware of the world's conflicting yet equally sincerely held views. Musharaff, Chirac, Vajpayee and Blair, all-properly-extended the hand of friendship to America. Dissenting voices aside, we were all Americans for a while.

No longer I'm afraid. Iraq is not al-Qaeda, Saddam Hussein is no Bin Laden. The world may have changed forever on 11 September, 2001 but the ability of imperial powers to be seen to be very, very wrong has not. So, a year on, as we all take stock and ask whether the war on terror is being won. Other, more qualified commentators can trade insights on that question, but I have one observation. Never mind 15,000 lb bunker-buster bombs, high ech laser guidance systems and vast invasion flotilla. America was humbled thousands of innocents died; a symbol of might and prosperity was destroyed on live television by a hoard of quiet, intense fanatics armed only with box cutters and the willingness to sacrifice their own lives for a cause, however insane or evil. We will never erase that from the history books. Their twisted "achievement" stands as a singular example of both evil and triumph, admittedly only by their

We can aconise for decades—and we will—over why they felt alienated, what fuels hatred against a nation that responds with generosity far more often than it makes war. This is for those well-qualified commentators to reflect upon, as well as the rest of us. But one starkly frightening face remains, however you respond emotionally to al-Oaeda or the hirakers of last 11 September. They will strike again.

# "After my time, I don't know if my son will run the mill or sell it off."

am known as Saila Baaiev in the village. My registered name is I al Bahadur Majhi. I must be between 60-65 years old. I have a family of nine. My son, daughter-in-law, my brother and his wife stay at home. I look after this ghatta [watermill].

This watermill was registered in 1952. As a child Lenioued following my pathis a day. Otherwise we cannot even make 1-2 nathis father here. I am now old and long for the comforts of home. This place is cold and I have no hed

Earlier, on some days, up to 20-25 people came here. This number has gone down a lot after many motor-driven mills were installed in the area. These mills are ten times faster. Obviously they would be, a machine is a machine, after all; ours is a stone mill. And last night the water canal got damaged. One cannot do repairs at night, so water was diverted to the mil

My father and uncle both worked in this mill: there were three shares in it then. With a son and grandson, there were more divisions, and now the mill is shared among five. We charge one path for every mun we grind.

This is shared among five. That is enough for here, but it is not enough for the home. People at home work on the farm. There is little land. That's how it is; it's not like in the tarai here. You farm two to four terraces. You start off from one end harvesting maize but there isn't even a basketful when you get to the other end. Working on the farm is tough. It is very hard work, but there is very little crop to harvest. Running the watermill is not easy either It is only done because it is said that a son must follow in the footsteps of the father. That's all. I lived here at the mill, now my son and grandson will

stay here. What to do, there's nowhere else to go.

Everyone, not just Majhis, operates watermills. Now, if they know how, just about anyhody runs them. Even Rhotes, Danwars, Chhetris and Rahuns operate them. In the old days, since Majhis lived near rivers, it seemed as

improved both the quality and quantity of flour that comes out of the machine. We ask her if it is true what some villagers say that the flour from the improved ghattas are not as tasty. "I don't think so," she replies. "There is no difference in taste, and I have found that the flour even has

Sapta Man, for his part, says he is carrying out his family's traditional business. He learnt his skills from his father who did from his father. Now, Sapta Man is running his three improved ghattas as a village development enterprise with his business partners. He will couple one of

the harvest season comes around. This has saved a lot of time for women who usually had to queue up and spend the whole day waiting for their flour at the traditional ghatta. Others, who used to do backbreaking work at the dhikki to de-husk grain can nov do it quickly and be home early.

up in these streams and rivulets.

cannot husk rice, though.

stumbling along.

Earnings depend on the amount of work. If we get customers, if the mill is full functional and if things are done quickly, we can earn as much as 5-6

This mill grinds other grain besides maize and wheat. It grinds millet,

As far as I can remember, there were many watermills here: up there, up

Now people earn Rs 100-150 if they do some other work, whereas when

you stay at the mill, you get two manas of flour [valued at about Rs 10] and

the rest of the day is dry. Some have, therefore, sought permission from the department to close the mill down, and others are doing something else.

Taxes have to be paid on this water mill. During father's time it was either Rs 1 or Rs 5. now we have to pay Rs 40 annually. They do not come

to collect it. Once they did not come for four or eight years and when they

came after four years, we had to pay 16 twenties [Rs 320]. It is difficult to

pay large sums at one time. For poor people like us, instead of such huge

don't know if my son will run the mill or sell it off. There are many shares in

this mill. He could decide to sell it, or he might even keep it after realising

During my time, with great hardship, I managed this two manas' chore.

there, on the other side, this side near the stream, behind the village. But

most have ben abandoned. In our case, we just can't afford to leave.

Yet others are still paying taxes. We are somehow bumbling and

amounts we would be paying only Rs 40 if they came every year.

that he would lose his livelihood. After I am none, he can do as he

pleases. (From Water Wisdom, Panos Institute, South Asia, 2000.)

beans and soya beans. If there are insects around, it grinds them too! It

raised his family's income level, plans to invest on bigger hydronower-driven schemes, and is looking for opportunities. And he has also volunteered his services as a consultant to other VDCs in Kayre to advise those who want to make the move to improved ghattas on the econom-

### Speaking in tongues

Despite the agreement to grant convertibility to the Yuan two months ago, a language barrier prevents Nepali traders from dealing in the Chinese currency. Traders who travel between the two countries continue to depend on US dollars or the age-old barter system, Nepal's Bank of Kathmandu, the Nepal Bangladesh Bank and the Himalayan Bank all initiated the procedure to open Yuan accounts, but had to backtrack when their Chinese counter parts could not communicate in English. The 17 June agreement allows Nepali banks to buy Yuan from Chinese tourists coming to Nepal and deposit their earnings in accounts with the Central Bank of China. This facility is expected to increase the Chinese tourist inflow to Nepal and narrow the trade gap between the two countries. In the last fiscal year Nepal imported Chinese goods worth of Rs 5.29 billion, though exports only totalled Rs 525 million

#### Health to the people

A new Health Sector Strategy identifies safe motherhood and family planning, child heath, the control of communicable diseases and strengthening outpatient services as the four areas that need to be prioritised in the delivery of health services. The way to do this, says the strategy paper, is to decentralise resources and service institutions. In the first phase of the plan, 15 districts would have full essential health care within three years. The strategy would also work towards increasing the per capital health sector expenditure. Presently, Nepal's per capital health evnenditure is \$10 of which \$7 is spent on pharmaceuticals

### High-flying defaulters

It is old news that the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation is in the red. But it looks like the corporation won't take more than its fair share of the blame. RNAC last week submitted a four-page list of defaulters to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority. Adding to its endless problems of mismanagement, commissions, kickbacks, and every other kind of graft, the corporation is also owed close to Rs 240.5 million by the Prime Minister's Office, numerous ministries, embassies and international organisations. This is more than just whistleblowing. Do the math. what RNAC is owed would be enough to pay off its pressing foreign debts (totalling about Rs 220 million), including the \$5 million it owes China Southwest for a jet lease deal. The payment has been overdue for over a year and the airline is threatening legal

#### III-gotten gains

Yet another list has been made public. The Judicial Investigation Commission on Property has put out the names of people who have yet to complete their declaration forms. The list includes a number of former ministers and high-ranking government officials Wonder how much they have? If reports are to be believed, Chiraniibi Wagle has a lot more wealth than he's declared. Apart from what he had before his political star went on the ascendant-Rs 600,00 in his bank account and 65 ropanis of land-Wagle, who was Minister of Physical Planning and Works before the dissolution of parliament, and his immediate family also own property in Thamel and Chitwan, facts missing from his



In the September Himal The Great Game of

 INTERVIEW WITH SAMDHONG PINDOCHE • ROADS TO THE HEART OF TIRET

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Simon Mollison Assessing Shastri

Ramachandaran Travelling in and above Jomosom

An Asian news network?



6 NATION

6-12 SEPTEMBER 2002 NEPALLTIMES

# **Poll vault**





Trekking agencies members in Kathmandu say there have been a lot of cancellations, and this seems to be related to fears of violence preceding the November polls. "We have tried to tell our clients that the Magists are not targeting trekkers, but there is a perception of insecurity for the coming season," said another trekking agent who had cancellations by three groups one morning this week.

Hotel Association of Nepal president, Narendra Bajracharya, is just back from a promotion trip to Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Southeast Asia is seeing a revival, but we are looking at an average of only 20 percent occupancy " he told us

For S P Koirala, at the Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation, it is clear what needs to be done: "We first need to put our house in order." Koirala is optimistic that the government's recent decisions to open up new trekking areas and climbing peaks, streamlined mountaineering rules, lowering of visa fees and the addition of the Chinese

market will ensure a swift recovery once a tourism turnaround takes place. The problem is, there is no sign of a turnaround.

One sector of tourism that remains relatively unaffected is mountaineering. "Going by the trends this spring, the numbers have remained more or less constant. While there were a few teams on the newly opened peaks, we've had many enquires." Ganesh Rai Karki at the Tourism Department's Climbing Section told

More than 20 expeditions are expected to scale Mt
Everest from the Nepali side next spring

to mark the 50th anniversary of the first ascent. Tourism entrepreneurs say they don't have their hands folded. Says Pandey: "We've got to keep Negal alive in the market, we've got to remind people that we're still in the running, that we've started a recovery process."

DIRECT HIT

NTB has launched a "Destination Nepal Campaign 2002-2003" but for that to show results, everyone agrees there has to be a change in the ground situation at home. Tourism entrepreneurs in Manang have got together with the Annapurna Conservation Area Project to promote Destination Manage 2004 in the hope of boosting the local economy. If things work out, and Nepal's security situation improves, the prediction by the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) of a revival in travel trends in the region may well come true. Fingers crossed. •



ill the elections be held on schedule? It sounds like politicians, inumalier . . . ! civil libertarians are the ones asking that question the most, doesn't it? We have good reason. Our jobs will be on the line first if democracy were to disappear on a technicality. But we aren't being entirely selfish. There is a lag time before the people start suffocating. Once they do. they'll start blaming the parties, papers and pressure groups for not properly warning the rest of the

The security situation across swathes of the countryside is not stable. In most insurgency-tom areas, the government barely has a presence beyond the district headquarters. (You're forced to wonder, though, what officials would actually be doing in the midst of ridges, crevasses, rivers and forests, anyway ) But the omens aren't that bad. Under the latest delimitation of constituencies, the district-wise breakdown of House of Representatives seats goes against the Maoists. The places sending most of the MPs have terrain nhospitable to hit-and-run raids. curity officials believe polls can go ahead in about 155 of the country's 205 constituencies That's almost hree-quarters of the House nembership. It would be akin to

having a third of the 155 MPs

elected from two constituencies, By-

Banvan Convention Center at

Nestle in the foothills of Shivapuri, world's only National Park close to the capital & intl. airport.

NG HALLS 

6 ACRES OF JUNGLE 

48 SUITE ROOMS

Buddhanilkantha

It's hard defending democracy when those who want polls aren't nearly as fired up as those who don't. .....

elections can be held in any number our all-party commitment to save of phases If some consider coming out to vote too high a price to save the

system, they're entitled to their opinion. For those who swear by the sanctity of the ballot, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's bluster about his brigade winning a majority on an 80 percent turnout raises a red flag. The confidence with which the UML is predicting its own majority unfairly influence voters who haven't made up their minds. From the conflicting statements of top bureaucrats of the ome and defence ministries, it looks like our choice may be between having a flawed election or none at all. A Deuba-led all-party election government could help us out of the dilemma. The UML could get the deputy premiership complete with the home ministry. with finance going to the RPP. The other parties in the dissolved house could work out the rest of the power-sharing deal. The parties outside parliament could be represented based on the number of statements they put out on vital national issues since the last elections. As a gesture of goodwill to the Maoists, the two facilitators during last year's peace talks could be asked to join. Getting representatives from the shadow reactionary right on board might prove a little more difficult. They

seem to hate elections more than the Maoists do, anyway. As for fairness, let's not pretend that irregularities never existed. We probably can work out an acceptable margin by averaging the malpractices of the last three polls and doubling it in deference to the exigencies of the national crisis. A pledge to accept an outcome falling within that range would burnish

the gains of 1990. Specifically, we must resolve not to blame the Maoists for holding back people who weren't planning to vote in the first place. Subject to all-party consensus, the new parliament could serve for a two-year trans tional period, extendable by a year Once we agree that the situation has become propitious for a freer poll, we can go back to the people. Even in the best of times, tren analysis suggests, this would be the time the lower house would be rine for dissolution.

The overriding consideration of beginning the elections on Kartik 27 is to avoid activating Article 127 of the constitution and opening another can of worms. Putting up at least one unopposed candidate could facilitate things in case meeting the deadline were to prove impossible. With the first test having been met, it would become easier to accept minor violations of democratic practice as part of an effort to save it.

Contrary to belief, Deuba's trip to Belgium wasn't entirely a fiasco. He persuaded the Belgian prime minister and most legislators that guns were an important instrument to save Nepali democracy.

Where he really excelled was in

trying to get European Union monitors for the polls. Deuba should have spent an extra afternoon in Brussels to make sure those EU representatives came from countries that are also members of NATO. That way, we could brandish both carrots and sticks, draw in all those against or indifferent to elections. Right now, those who want the polls aren't nearly as fired up as those who don't But we still have time

#### FULBRIGHT POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR NEPALI SCHOLARS

The Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal (USEF/ Nepal) announces the competition for the Nepali Scholar Post-Doctoral research grants for academic year 2003-2004 under the auspices of the Fulbright academic exchange program. Depending on the availability of funding, USEF/Nepal will provide grants to as many as four Nepali scholars to conduct post-doctoral research at a U.S. university during the 2003-2004 academic year for a period of six months.

The subject of the proposed research should relate directly to Nepal. Typewritten research proposals using the prescribed form will be accepted in any field. Applicants should have previously established contact with and solicited expression of interest from the U.S. university where their research is to be conducted. Women are encouraged to apply

#### General Requirements for Entering the Competition Only those scholars who received their doctorate during the years 1989-1999 are

- · Applicants must present a fully-developed research proposal, three letters of
  - eference, and the documentary evidence of the following:
  - a recognized doctoral degree;
  - · a MINIMUM of three years post-doctoral professional experience in Nepal;
  - · Nepalese citizenship:
  - · a certificate of good health; and
  - · letter of invitation or appointment from a U.S. university.

#### Application Forms

Detailed instructions and application forms must be obtained from the Fulbright Commission (USEF/Nepal) office at the American Center in Gyaneshwor, Kathmandu by 4.00 p.m. Friday, October 18, 2002. No applications will be given out after this date. Completed applications must reach the Fulbright Commission (USEF/Nepal) no later than 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 20, 2002.



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FCONOMY 6-12 SEPTEMBER 2002 NEPALITIMES

Gaurab Upadhaya: In layman's terms, what is an Internet Exchange's Internet Exchanges are the "factories" that create Internet bandwidth. ISPs (Internet Service Providers) deliver that bandwidth to consumers. IXes are where ISPs communicate with each other handling customers' traffic with one another. Customers are interested in reaching other ISPs customers so the value of the Internet is created at Internet Exchanges. The job of the ISP is to transmit this bandwidth to the customers. Hauling traffic to and from an IX outside the country is very slow and expensive. Building a local IX like the Nepal Internet Exchange (NPIX) within the country solves this problem by reducing the cost and distance between consumers. This is the market driver for the deployment of broadband Internet access.

#### And what is the Packet Clearing House?

PCH is a US-based not-for-profit research institute, originally formed in 1993. At that time, 70 percent of the Internet was located in California, but the only IX was located in DC. So 70 percent of Internet traffic originated in California and 70 percent was destined for California. Seventy percent of 70 percent is 49 percent of all Internet traffic, and this 49 percent was travelling an extra 9.000 km round-trip, completely unnecessarily

Today, about half the PCH's efforts focus on developing nations. In addition to building IXes, PCH also helps to find technological, policy and financial solutions for IXes that have encountered difficulties. PCH also engages in research initiatives like archiving topological changes to the Internet, building economic models and working to improve the scalability and robustness of ISP communications. We are supported by the same community that we work in especially by equipment manufacturers and ISPs.

#### Why the inertia to start IXes in developing countries?

Really, there is equal need for IXes throughout the world, regardless of the degree of development of any country. However, we've seen a general trend toward stagnation of Internet development in countries that don't have a competitive market environment for telecommunications services. In many developing countries, an incumbent telephone company is in a position which does not encourage Internet market growth, and an IX is a way of reinvigorating that growth. Market reforms which encourage competition can also help bring new ISPs into the mix, bringing consumer costs down and variety of services up

How has the world progressed on the Nepal Internet Exchange? NPIX participants have cooperated with remarkable efficiency. They've gone from being competitors to collaborators in the interest of Internet

### Silver lining

ny may be a shambles, industry may be struggling, but Nepal Lever Limited weathered the turbulence of the past year by achieving 25 percent growth, taking its domestic turnover to Rs 882 million. But not all is well there, exports have shrunk by more than half. The annual turnover of NLL reached Rs 1.24 billion, netting the firm after tax profit of Rs 43 million. NLL is the market leader in toothpaste (60 percent) and controls 50 percent market share in toilet soaps, 80 percent in detergents and 45 percent in fairness creams. Its shampoos, introduced two years ago, now claim 30 percent of the market.

In the meantime, NLL exports tumbled by over 50 percent, down to

Rs 355 million from Rs 837 million the previous year. Exports were hit mainly by fiscal measures in both Nepal and India, which the company says are unlikely to change over time, and will probably cause sales in India to shrink further.

The company says that Indian Countervailing Duty based on Manufacturer's Retail Price (MRP), which became effective in February 2001, and Nepali taxes on exports have cut into its margins and made certain products totally uncompetitive. NLL has already stopped exporting toothpaste, and the sale of Liril soaps in India—at one stage almost every unit sold there was made in Nepal-has also shrunk. "There may be no point retaining investments made for export," says Gurdeep Singh, co-chairman of NLL

The domestic business environment has also been far from perfect.

Besides increased costs of transportation and the difficulties of doing business in the hinterlands. NLL has still been unable to recover Rs 120 million (now down from Rs 420 million) that the government owes it as



NLL is also seeing a change of leadership. Rakesh Mohan (third from right above) replaces Sandip Ghose (standing, above) as the new deployment in an impressively short amount of time. Nepal's ISPs have a remarkably clear vision of both the economic reality they face and the bes path toward improving their situation. Today, (28 August), we turned on the IX switch for the first time, and there will be three ISPs using the IX to exchange production traffic by this Friday. Within a month, we believe all ISPs in Nepal will be participating in the IX.

#### Are IXes only meant for Internet service providers?

This was a common misconception for quite a few years, due mostly to ISPs being afraid that customers who come to an IX will want service for free or change ISPs frequently, but what we have discovered in the last few years is that IXes are an excellent place to buy and sell services. Rather then let customers change ISPs more frequently, it allows them to get additional services more easily and also lets ISPs provide services to customers with fewer local provisioning problems.

#### How can the Nepal government and regulators help?

There are actually a number of critical market reforms needed in Nepal before the Internet will really become available to the majority of the public. Foremost among these are the removal of the constraints which artificially preclude market competition to install fibre infrastructure. One important thing to remember is that the current infrastructure were installed inse, it should by all rights be equally available to all members of public.

In fact, however, it is currently being used to exert a monopolistic stranglehold on the local loop delivery of telecommunications services. Three remedies exist. First, the government could ensure that all parties have access to unbundled local loop, while permitting the actual physical facilities to remain under the NTC management. Second, the government could at public expense initiate development of new telecommunications infrastructure and the government could operate in a free and impartial



manner making it available to all service providers. Third, the government can simply allow market forces to solve the problems, by deregulating and permitting all competitors to install new infrastructure wherever it is needed. In reality, a combination of the first and third options is probably the most

#### Globally, where is the Internet headed?

I see a general trend toward mobility and prevalence of small and portable Internet devices like laptops, pagers, cell phones and personal digital assistants. The fact of the matter is that the consumers simply don't wish to be tied to a wired phone, or worry about where to plug-in. This trend towards mobility will be combined with the convergence of voice and data services as we have already seen in hand-held devices that combine e-mail, webbrowsing and telephony. ISPs will begin to look more and more like cellular telephone providers as their deployment expands to include both wireline service and micro-cellular wireless data service. A prevalence of local Internet Exchanges would guarantee that local communications will be both inexpensive and very high speed.

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Flying with the flag on Fulpati

soul, the moon signifies the Nepali mind. The blue border is the Himalayan sky and portays the immensity of the universe of which we are a part.

Oddly enough, given its uniqueness and its symbolism, the 1958 constitution totally overlooked the need to recognise the banner as the national flag.

We might not actively carry out acts of violence or disrespect, but look around any time you're out and about, and you'll see any number of limp, sad looking flags where they shouldn't be. The general post office in Sundhara is not constitutionally entitled to hoist a national flag, but ask insiders about its odd practice of flying one all the time and you get a resigned shrug and explanations of tradition". Is it tradition to fly flag that look like a hurricane just hit it?

Even government offices that can legally raise the flag do it in such a manner as to nullify any uplifting effects the sight of the national emblem is supposed to have. The important thing about the flag is that it is a deeply symbolic object, not just an identifying sticker in the long parade of nations. The other important thing about the flag is that, no matter how much of a mes the rest of the country might look like, a good flag is at the very least a sign of striving, an indication that at least we aspire to better things.

So if the flag policy, which Nepal enacted in April 1992, strictly outlines the procedures to be followed during hoisting of a

changed every Dasain and Chaite Dasain by law It makes sense and not just because they are so conveniently six months apartthese festivals are fundamentally for the worship of shakti (power), the concept symbolised by the triangles in the Nepali flags. That's even more argument for treating the flag

good idea to follow them. For

office buildings should be

of sunrise and folded before

sunset. On occasions when the

flags are required to be hoisted after

sunset, it should be hoisted under

spotlight. The same goes with the

flags on vehicles. In US the nationa

flags are folded even during cloudy

days. And the Swiss need no greater

excuse than a bright sunny day to

fly the flag from every restaurant,

Drive through Maitighar to

Putali Sadak, and there shines the

Health Ministry's flag under the

the times that flags on ministry

light of the full moon. It's a sign of

buildings look tatty and discoloured

even though the flag policy requires

that the minute a flag shows any

replaced. Ke garne? Yo Nepal ho.

bunting fabric used in other parts of

the world rather than the delicate

and/ or flimsy silks, cottons and

It might just help if Nepali flags

signs of damage, it needs to be

were made out of the strong

inn, or cheese factory in the

confederation

an integral part of Nepali national identity, unlike the national symbols of a number of other countries that were simply invented because 'everyone has one, so bring on the trite colours of valour and honesty' and let's just stack them

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According to the 1992 policy:

Members of the general public can hoist the national flag in air private homes and offices to celebrate the coronation of a king and his birthday, and to mark national unity day and democracy day

The prime minister, chief justice, speaker of the House of Representatives, chairs of the upper house and the Royal Council, and chiefs of diplomatic missions may display a flag on their official residence, vehicle and office.

A 1959 government directive allows the ministers to hoist the flag on their official vehicles while commuting to and from official

In 1992, the deputy prime minister, deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, assistan

ministers and the deputy chair of the Upper House were given permission to affix the flag to their official vehicles for official ceremonies

red and blue stripe. Necon Air took the innovative step to stick a waving Nepali flag on its fuselage, and got into trouble in the begin ning because it wasn't the "official" flag carrier.

Professor Dava Ram Shrestha. who won the Madan Puraskar in 1997 for his research on the Nepal national flag, doesn't think the situation is so dire. "Sure, there an small signs of neglect here and there, but by and large we Nepali people respect our flag.

In his book Nepal ko Rastriya Ihanda, Professor Shrestha tracks the development of the Nepali flag from when it was first used by Lichchhavi king Mandev some 1,500 years ago. King Mandev and others who followed him chose the

Newroad, Tel: 061-30130

Vedic emblem as their flag, and that is the origin of the unique double The one we use now dates from

the unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah, though the border at that time was green, rather than blue. Of course, it was much later, in the 1963 constitution, that the flag was officially declared the national emblem, though the double triangle had already been hoisted at the United Nations headquarters in New York when Nepal acquired membership in December 1955

According to Shrestha, the rimson is supposed to signify the blood shed by brave Nepalis of yore who safeguarded our independence The sun is a symbol of the Nepali

Damaged or not, flags hoisted on government buildings need to be

ight up there with Mt Everest, there is ne thing that makes Nepal stand out in he community of nations, and that is our unique national flag. While everyone else is a bland

rectangle, we have a triangle—and two of them! In many an interna-

know what to do with the Nepal flag and put it in a background white rectangle so it "fits" with the rest. Back home in Nepal, the flag is

not accorded the respect it deserves The US prohibits the burning of the flag. The UK is known for its distinctive Union Jack-patterned boxer shorts. In Nepal, well, no one really knows what to do with

anything with it. Sure, tourists in Thamel, but them for their exotic value, and have them sewn onto backpacks and caps, Santa Bahadur Tamang, a shopkeeper in Thamel, fondly remembers the 1999 SAARC football final when young Nepalis bought out his stock of flags, but

that's about it. The flag is largely ignored here, even by institutions that quebt to know that there are strict, specific know better. The singha on top of rules in Nepal on flag etiquette Singha Darbar holds a flag proudly, but the crimson is often faded to Schools, for instance are not

allowed to raise the rato ra chandra an off-pink. Sarisiddhi's Shahid Smarak surva. The Education Act does School hoists a tattered, discolallow them to hoist it if celebrating oured national flag in its front yard a national event, but the flag must every day. Principal Badri Prasad be taken down when the ceremony Khanal, like so many other people in the capital and outside, does not

Then there are those who are officially allowed to carry the flag: ministers, high officials, royal Nepali ambassadors abroad, the Nepali merchant marine has even made it a "flag of convenience" even though we are landlocked. Royal Nepal Airlines flew the flag on the







CONDITIONS APPLY: SEPTEMBER 01, 2002.



Regulating the NGO business

DHAKA - Under pressure from business and opinion leaders and public forums, the government is considering imposing

restrictions on how NGOs do business. Activists say the move

is but a politically motivated witch-hunt. A cabinet sub-commit-

tee headed by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, charged with

reduction efforts would have to come with substantial regula-

the committee include the mandatory registration of all NGOs.

tion of the sector. Rahman said regulations being considered by

fixing a maximum ceiling of interest charged by NGOs on loans,

and auditing the income, expenditure and sources of NGOs' income. Several thousand NGOs have been operating freely in

Bangladesh since 1972 without regulation, despite the repeated

statements by governments throughout the years that it would

bring financing and lending by non-profit organisations under

government's NGO Affairs Bureau and of these, about 200

received foreign grants and loans with the bureau's knowl-

desh without official registration. (IPS)

edge. Over 3,000 NGOs are believed to be operating in Bangla

close scrutiny. Nearly 1,700 NGOs are registered with the

investigating the matter, said in August that NGOs' poverty

## The end of the end of history



liberal states have always co existed alongside varieties of tyranny, Similarly, the modern world has always contained many varieties of capitalism, planned and guided economies, and a host of hybrid economic systems not easily classified

Diplomacy and international law developed to cope with the fact of diverse regimes, but in the 20th century global politics was shaped by the project of unifying the world within a single regime. Committed to Marxist ideology, the Soviet regime's long-term goal was world communism, the world a single socialist economy, administered by aniform forms of governance.

The disappearance of the MArxist project as a force in world politics has not been accompanied by an acceptance of a diversity of political systems. Francis Fukuyama said that with ommunism's fall we were at the "end of history", when western governments could attempt to unify the internaional system into a single regime based on free markets and democratic government. This project, as utopian

as Marxism once was, promises to be ven more short-lived than the

Soviet Union. There are many reasons for the collapse of the Soviet bloc, butcontrary to conventional opinioneconomic inefficiencies were not key. The Soviet bloc disintegrated because it could not cone with nationalist dissent in Poland and the Baltic states and because a single economic and political system could not meet the needs of vastly different societies and peoples. The Marxian interpretation of history is based on economic determinism: differences between societies, peoples, and forms of government narrow at similar levels of economic Unsurprisingly, this highly

Nationalism and religion have no enduring political importance, Marxists believed. In the short run, they can be used to fuel antimperialist movements. Ultimately, they are obstacles to the construction of socialism. Guided by these beliefs, the Soviet state waged an incessant war on the national and religious traditions of the peoples they governed. The USSR fell apart **Bread lines in the Soviet Union and** riots in Argentina both expose the fallacy of economic determinism.

hecause its monolithic institutions could not accommodate nations— Czechs and Uzbeks, Hungarians and Siberians, Poles and Mongolswhose histories, circumstances and pirations were radically divergent Today, the global free market

Soviet collapse is also falling apart and for similar reasons. Like Marxists, neo-liberals are economic determinists. Nothing can prevent the world from becoming one vast free market, and western governments and transnational institution can be midwives for the new world This ideology underlies institutions such as the IMF. Argentina and Indonesia have very different problems, but for the IMF the solution is the same: they must both become free-market economies. Russia at the time of communism's fall was a militarised rust-belt, but the IMF was convinced that it could be transformed into a western-style market conomy. An idealised model of Anglo-Saxon capitalism was

onstructed in the aftermath of the

ideological approach to economic policy has not succeeded. Indonesia is in ruins, while Argentina is rapidly ceasing to be a first world ountry. Russia has put the neoliberal period behind it and is now developing on a path better suited to its history and circumstances. Countries that have best weathered the economic storms of the past few years are those-like India, China

and Janan-which took the IMF model with a large grain of salt. Like the few remaining Marxists who defend central economic planning the ideologues of the IMF claim that their policies did not fail; they were not fully implemented. But in both

cases, the policies were tried-and

But if the global free market is

failed at great human cost.

unraveling, it is not because of the human costs of its policies in countries such as Argentina. Indonesia and Russia, but because it no longer suits the countries that most actively promote it. Under the pressure of a stock market downturn, the US is abandoning policies of alabal free trade in favor of more raditional policies of protectionism. Throughout its history, America has always tried to insulate its markets from foreign competition. So history has once more triumphed over ideology Mainstream politicians may still nod reverently when the global free market is invoked, but in practice the world is reverting to an older and more durable model, tacitly accepting that the world will always contain a variety of economic systems and regimes. • (Project Syndicate)

(John Grav is professor of European thought at the London School of Fannomics and author of Straw Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals Granta Books, September

## In defence of Sharia

to Nigeria's corrupt politicians.

of a woman convicted of having sex out of wedlock. Her lawvers will likely appeal her conviction to a higher Sharia court, and if necessary, to Nigeria's Supreme Court, but if the judgment of the Funtua court stands, Amin Lawal will be stoned to death the moment her daughter is weaned.

Muslim-Christian relations are tense the world over, but they are especially inflamed in Nigeria, the most populous country where Christians and Muslims exist in roughly equal numbers. The flash point for

Muslim-Christian tensions is Sharia, Muslim religious law. Since late 1999 ten of the country's 36 states have adopted Sharia as their public law. The spread of Islamic law in Nigeria has provoked a harp outery against the severe punishments it levies, including amputation for thieves and death by stoning for woman convicted of adultery.

As a Muslim lawyer who practices in a Sharia court in Kano, Niperia's second-largest city, the demonisation of Islamic law by Christians and human rights activists in Europe and North America angers me. Sharia is systematically distorted and misunderstood. But I was trained in American law and taught at an American law school, and am aware of the shortcomings in how it is applied, especially in its treatment of women.

Islamic law has long been an integral part of social life in Nigeria, and will remain so. Sharia law's severe punishments fly in the face of western legal canons. I have mixed feelings about these penalties. In theory, I accept the death penalty and even amputations, though in practice I believe implementers of Sharia understand little that much crime stems from poverty and

desperation. I believe amputation for thieves should not be carried out unless ociety's poor are better provided for.

There are good reasons the process leading to the death penalties imposed by Sharia courts has drawn rebuke. Sharia as applied in Nigeria today is insensitive to the welfare of women. Why are only women sentenced to death for adultery, while men go free? Four witnesses are needed to catch a man in the act, or he cannot be convicted. This standard of proof is so difficult to meet that men simply are not convicted. Until Sharia can handle adultery fairly, no penalties

But attention to sensational cases, while justified, obscures the reality that the

surprise non-Muslims, but some Nigerian Christians prefer to file their cases in Sharia courts because of their speed, fairness, and relative unconcern with legal technicalities. In Nigeria courts are poorly administered and move painfully slowly. Recently, a Christian car buyer drew wide attention in Nigeria when he was duped by a Muslim car seller and took his case to a Sharia court. In a few weeks, he won-and paid no legal fees.

But too often Sharia law harms Christians. In one Nigerian state, Christian bus operators are discouraged and sometimes prohibited from carrying both men and women in a single trip Christian businessmen have suffered because the ban on the commercial sale of alcohol has led to the destruction of their beverage stocks.

Why is Islamic law growing in importance? The end of Nigeria's military dictatorship and the return to civilian, elected government created countless beneficial freedoms, but freedom of expression resulted in more militant religious positions. The clash of religions is exacerbated by the indecisiveness of President Olesegun Obasanjo. Muslim politicians gain popularity by siding with Islamic conservatives while their Christian rivals score political points by omplaining about Sharia's extreme aspects. Islamic law might be justified if it targeted Nigeria's bigges problem: government corruption. Muslim politi ians know corruption is killing our country, but Sharia is not applied to the misdeeds of public officials. Only when the spotlight of Sharia shines on

overnment wrongdoing will we know that Nigeria is on the road to prosperity Sharia can also be reformed in ways that make the law more tolerant, open, and acceptable to non-Muslims.

In Islamic tradition, reform of Sharia results from an iitiiad, a creative and intellectual effort to apply Islamic law to new circumstances. It is time for iitiiad again if Muslims wish to maintain a central role for Sharia in Nigeria.

(Ali Ahmad practices Sharia in Kano, Nigeria, where he also teaches law at Bayero University. He formerly taught law at Emory

GENEVA - The European Union may charge the United States up to \$4.043 billion in additional tariffs in retaliation for the undue tax breaks the latter gives its exporters, according to the biggest trade sanction approved by the WTO since its creation in 1995. The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), the WTO's tribunal, reckons the sum is a reasonable estimate of the true value of the subsidies received by USbased companies that exported to Europe through subsidiaries located in tax havens. This regimen, a tax exemption scheme known as Foreign Trade Corporations, had already received the DSB's condemnation las year. By setting up Foreign Trade Corporations, a mostly artificial foreign subsidiary, companies have been able to exempt 15 to 30 percent of their export income from US taxes. The tax breaks granted in the United States to certain exporters, which include Boeing, General Flectric and Microsoft violate the rules of the multilateral trade system according to the precedence the DSB has set in a series of rulings over

the last two years.

The largest sanction before Friday's ruling came in response to a Canadian petition against Brazil in a dispute about subsidies to the latter's aeronautics industry. The WTO gave Canada the right to retaliate through slapping tariffs on Brazilian imports for a total of \$220 million. In the case of international banana trade, the WTO declared the EU's import regimen for the fruit illegal and said that Ecuador—the world's leading banana exporter-could retaliate for \$201.6

#### Don't blame El Niño

ENEVA - The latest cycle of the climatic phenomenon known as EI Niño, which will last until 2003, probably has nothing to do with the floods in Central Europe, nor with the severe drought in Southern Africa, but is indeed related to the heavy rainfalls in China, India and Bangladesh, say leading meteorologists. El Niño, a warm Pacific Ocean current that flows eastward at latitudes near the Equator, tends to cause meteorological shifts worldwide. A new cycle has begun, but this time will not reach the intensity of its last manifestation, in 1997-1998, says the World Meteorological Organisation (VMO). Its influence could be seen in the unusual characteristics of the summer monsoon in the Indian sub-continent, particularly the scant rainfall in the southern and central regions. In contrast, the northeast suffered excessive rains.



The advent of FI Niño-whose Spanish name refers to the haby Jesus because it tends to appear in South America near Christmashas been hinted at by unusual weather patterns since May. This prompted the WMO to advise preventive measures aimed at reducing the impacts of the massive rainfalls or severe drought that are the hallmark of FI Niño. WMO officials say the floods that have been recorded so far this year in more than 80 countries, which have affected at least 17 million people and claimed the lives of 3,000. Flooding worldwide this year has covered an area of eight million sq km, almost the size of Brazil. Material losses have reached \$30 billion. WMO meteorologists say the question should be: "Are countries making the correct long-term planning decisions?" and say that the international agency and national weather and hydrology services can help in calculating the risks of disaster. (IPS)

## Corruption perception

BERLIN - Corruption is a malady afflicting not only the developing countries, but also the developed world. It is an impediment to sustainable development, depriving the children of today of the resources they will need to survive tomorrow, says the Corruption Perceptions Index 2002 (CPI) launched last week by Transparency International (TI), the global coalition against corruption. The new index, published by TI, scrutinises 102 countries. Seventy countriesincluding many of the world's most poverty-stricken—score less than 5 out of a clean score of 10. According to the index corruption is perceived to be rampant in Indonesia, Kenya, Angola, Madagascar, Paraguay, Nigeria and Bangladesh, countries with a score of less than Countries that have secured a score of higher than 9, and evidence very low levels of perceived corruption, are predominantly rich countries, such as Finland, Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland,

Singapore and Sweden.

The CPI, first launched in 1995, is a poll of polls, reflecting the perceptions of business people and country analysts, both resident and non-resident. This year's CPI draws on 15 surveys from nine independent institutions. A rolling survey of polls taken between 2000 and 2002, the CPI includes only those countries that feature in at least three

## Holes in China's social safety net

Social security services meet only five percent of China's new demand.



WEN CHIHUA in BELING

a's welfare system has reached a crisis point after dramatic changes to the country's economy left millions out of work. Attempts to repair the damage have been too little too late social unrest

When China opened up to the rest of the world in the early 1980s it began its transition to a market economy. Reforms to state enterprises began in the late 1990s, and many workers found their skills were no longer needed in the new-look industries. The impact has been hue between 1998 and 2001, over 25.5 million people were laid off by state enterprises, says the Information Office of the State Council, China's cabinet. In April this year the government predicted unemployn will triple in the next four years.

Before structural reforms, most people worked for the state, either in a state-owned company, factory or

institute. Reforms ended the 'cradle-tograve' system that made state-owned enterprises responsible not only for their employees' life-long employme but also housing, medical expenses, pension, and even children's schooling.

Now the social security services can meet only about five per cent of the country's new demand, says Wang Zhikun, chief of the Social Relief Department at the Ministry of Civil Affairs - the department responsible for social services

The system used to target the elderly, disabled, orphans and families of 'revolutionary martyrs', mostly rural durellers "Lithan workers were guaranteed [security] through their ployment, known as the 'iron rice bowl'," says Wang Zhikun. But the reforms have taken a lot of iron out of the bowl, and many urban workers now face an uncertain future

Recent government figures put the urban unemployment rate at 3.6 per cent for end-2001, but State Council estimates show the figure to be closer to 10 per cent. The Council expects it to worsen in 2002 after China's accession

to the World Trade Organisation in December 2001, which brings with it further restructuring

from the south-western city of Chongqing, a centre for heavy industry He was laid off in 1997 after the armoury he used to work for shifted to civil products. "All my skills became

outdated "he says I i's factory gave hin a redundancy payment, but "the sum was eaten up in two years, and my wife became jobless when her textile mill was closed." To help families like Li's, the Chinese government launched a programme in 1997 to provide a basic living allowance for urban residents who lost out in the reforms. By February 2002, 13 million people depended on it for survival. "The basic living allowance is

designed to ensure that the urban noor and an unemployed family's income does not drop below the minimum living standard of a locality," says Wang Zhikun. This standard varies from city to city. In Beijing the figure is about \$34 a month, but the national average is quite steep." • (Panes)

security system has lagged far behind the country's economic and

"Having worked well under the planned economy for almost half a century, this system is confronted by a contradiction between an acute shortage of money and the growing demand for social welfare and ension services," he says. In April, deputy minister of labour Wang Dongjin warned of serious consequences when he announced that rising unemployment "could well undermine our social stability' "The government has been

tending the safety net in China'.

She says in urban areas, healthcare

among laid-off workers. Under

current health insurance reforms

employer have to make insurance

Unemployed workers, who

cannot pay their own medical

insurance contributions, face

unaffordable health bills. The

increasing costs of medical care and

education means that families with

children, the sick or elderly face

particular difficulties Failure to

invest in human resources, Cook

social costs to society. Li from Chongqing shows how true this is

lost my job. I'm afraid Lean not

afford even medicine if I get

not see a doctor ever since I

warns, will end in "long-term"

both the employee and the state

contributions

No Googling in China transferring back to society and BEIJING - China has blocked access to the popular US Internet family many of the welfare function it had previously undertaken," says search engine Google amid government calls to tighten media controls ahead of a major Communist Party congress where the Sarah Cook, a British researcher at the Institute of Development next generation of leaders is to be announced. Attempts to Studies, University of Sussex. access the site through Chinese Internet services this week were rejected, saying it couldn't be found. Users and technical currently on secondment to the Beijing office of the Ford Foundaconsultants who monitor the Internet in China said the site has tion. She has examined China's been blocked for several days. social protection system in her paper, 'After the Iron Rice Bowl,

There was no immediate explanation and representatives for Google, based in California, were not available for comment China routinely tightens controls on news and information around politically sensitive dates, and state media quoted President Jiang Zemin in August as telling propaganda officials to create a "sound atmosphere" for the meeting. Google is hugely popular among China's 45 million Internet

users because of its wide-ranging search capacity. A search in English for Jiang's name turns up links to 156,000 Web sites mentioning him. By contrast, a search on Sina.com, another portal that is popular in China, turns up just 1,600 mentions of Jiang. The Chinese-language service of American search engine Yahoo! turns up just 24 results. Nor does Google weed out material that the Chinese government blocks as subversive

China promotes the Internet for economic use and to spread the communist government's views. But it has worked hard to muzzle the Internet as a forum for free information and discus sion. Authorities apply blocks to prevent Internet users from viewing sites run by Falun Gong, human rights groups and some foreign news organizations. Police monitor chat rooms and personal e-mail and erase online content considered undesirable. Internet portals have been warned they will be held responsible for sites they host. But many users find ways to get around the blocks, often using "proxy servers" websites abroad that let users reach blocked sites. Such techniques are routinely posted online in China or exchanged in chat rooms. (API

COMMENT

two-state solution?



n 1947 Palestinian Arabs and their allies rejected a UN proposal to partition Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, just as ten years before they cted a similar partitioning proposed by the Peel Commission. More recently, at Camp David and at Taba in Egypt, Arab negotiators again rejected proposals that would have led to the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

True, sometimes Arab negotiators discuss mundane issues that prospective neighbouring states would need to resolve, such as political boundaries, security arrangements, and economic relations. American and European governments use the carrot of economic aid to encourage this development, in the way the US pays Foynt and Jordan to acquiesce to Israel's existence But unless the Arabs under stand the permanent reality of a Jewish state in Palestine, the creation of a Palestinian Arab state won't provide more than a tenuous truce.

The Zionist project of creating a Jewish state in Palestine entails a return of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland. Whether or not this historical justification for Israel's creation is convincing, it is important that the Palestinian Arabs and their allies don't buy it. Arabs equate the Zionist project to the creation of a colony. For them, the conflict between Jews and Arabs replicates the conflicts between colonial settlers and indigenous peoples.

Even if no one else buye this the lessons the Araba elean from colonia experiences become relevant. Over the years Israeli governments encouraged Arabs

Arabs need to stop equating the Zionist project with colonialism.

to participate in Israel's economy. This policy, which Israelis view as penevolent, supposes that economic integration of Arabs and Jews is possible without modifying the Zionist concept of Israel as a Jewish state. But, from the Arab perspective it reinforces their equating of Zionism with colonialism.

Arab rhetoric often takes the colonial experiences of Algeria and South Africa as models for their conflict with Zionism. In both countries, colonialism failed. Descendants of the European settlers in Algeria fled back to Europe. In South Africa, blacks achieved political dominance over the descendants of British and Afrikaner settlers, large numbers of whom remain as a tolerated minority. Arabs will have to become convinced that they can neither subjugate the Jews nor drive the Jews out of Palestine.

The negotiating formula of "land for peace" and "breakthroughs" like the Oslo accords failed to dampen the conflict because the Arabs interpret Israeli concessions as signs of weakness. The Israelis show the Arabs that they cannot destroy Israel by enduring the violent war of attrition that the Arabs are pursuing. The only way to convince the Arabs that Israel is here to stay is to nake this war of attrition very costly.

But suppose a two-state solution were achieved in the not-too-remote future. Think of Ireland, where a two-state solution has worked. Having secured an independent Irish state, Catholics in the Republic of Ireland carr to accept the existence of a settler enclave in Northern Ireland. But, the Irish story has not had a happy ending. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, whose position seems similar to that of the million Arabs who are Israeli citizens, eventually revolted against the dominant Protestants, with decades of violence resulting. (Project Syndicate)

(Herchel I Grossman is professor of social sciences and

40.0001/2ft.BAR ....



..... Where the tales are as tall as the mountains

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



## "We can also start a movement."



Jana Aastha, 28 August Excerpts of an interview with Jhalaknath Subedi, former assistant minister from Jajarkot

## On the possibility of holding elections in

The situation is so grim that the first person who steps out to vote will be targeted by the Maoists. Let me tell you what happened in the 1997 elections. Jajarkot is one of those districts where in 10 of 30 VDCs, election had to be held a year later. One of those 10 was Jhanra VDC. A day before the elections the Maoists came to the village and said, "Let's see who will vote first. We will be watching." The people went to the voting centre the next day, but none stood in the line, no one wanted

to be the first to vote so there were no elections. The situation has worsened since. .. The elections are to be held on 13 November: it is now late August. There is no way for those of us who will contest the elections to go to the district. There are no flights there and we do not have surface transport. The government has been unable to assure security, so the airport remains closed. Telecommunications have been shut down

for the past 10-11 months. The Maoists have attacked me twice, they may attack me again. How do you expect me to go there on foot? I might go if security is assured otherwise I am not interested

I am not here because it is difficult for me to live in my village. I am here because it is impossible to even go there. Tell me how I can go? People of the Baneswor Congress [Sher Bahadur Deuba's faction] have been going in and out on police helicopters, I belong to the Teku Congress [the Girija Prasad Koirala faction) and don't have access to those facilities. I have heard that the prime minister has instructed the police not to allow people from the Teku Congress to go to the districts. So how can I go back? ... It's been 17-18 months since I have been back to my district. Earlier I used to travel between here and the district, but it has also been eight or nine months since the airport closed.

I ittle has changed in the security situation even after the emergency. The emergency has been effective only in Kathmandu; maybe you as journalists have also been affected. No one cares about the emergency in the districts. The curfews are the only new changes; apart from that, no one in my district is even aware of the emergency. There we have been living through the emergency imposed by the Maoists. The Maoists let people travel to the district headquarters for only two days in a month. If there is no movement of people to and from the district headquarters, what elections will you have?

...I have been living on what I earned from selling my little ancestral property. I do not have cash to spend and have been managing by selling some gold ornaments we had. I know life cannot go on in this manner. I hope there will come a day when I can return to the district and do agriculture.

Do you think we will keep quiet if the Election Commission does not recognise us as the official Congress Party? How can we? What would happen to our party? Where can we go? How can we express dissent? Maybe a similar situation to this one led the Samyukta Jana Morcha to begin revolting in early 1996. Sher Bahadur Deuba was prime minister then, look at where we have come now because their 42 demands were not given a fair hearing then.

..We also have a large number of supporters and party workers nationwide. If we are barred from legitimately contesting elections, what options would we have left, other than launching a movement? But a movement does not have to be violent. We will join the type of movement the party decides to take up...

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

It is extremely irresponsible of the prime minister to say that the king, the army, and the police are in favour of him. The prime minister's deposit for the elections should be retained for this unconstitutional, undemocratic, and anti-public statement. Prime Minister Deuba and his group should be barred from knocking on the doors of the people.

—Subash Nemwang, central member, CPN (UML), in Dristi, 3 September



It was just a bomb explosion. I thought it was something really bad!

Rajdhani, 4 September

#### RNAC's debtors

The Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation has sent a four-page list of its debtors to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority. The letter, signed by acting RNAC chair Ramagya Chaturvedi, says that Singha Darbar owes close to Rs 5.25 million, while the palace owes RNAC over Rs 400,000. The list of debtors includes prom embassies, and organisations such as USAID and the World Bank. Meanwhile, RNAC has drawn a Rs 220 million overdraft by placing its jet as a deposit in order to service its

#### Who owes what?

Prime Minister's Office: Over Rs 5.2 million Ministry of Finance: Over Rs 12.4 million Ministry of Commerce: Rs 945,464.05 Ministry of Local Development: Rs 81,760.08 Ministry of Transport: Rs 222,595.94 Ministry of Defence: Rs 47,215 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Rs 119.292.07 Home Ministry: Rs 81,343.25 Department of Postal Services: Close to Rs 13 million Department of Civil Aviation: Re 144 344 75 Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Over Rs 2.5 million Ministry of Tourism: Over Rs 1.3 million Royal Nepal Army Air Service: Rs 205, 200 VVIP flights: Rs 313,176.05 Deputy Prime Minister's Office: Rs 13,572 Ministry of Tourism Re 361 292 34 Ministry of Health: Rs 75,440 Ministry of Water Resources: Rs 21.870

Embassies and Organisations american Embassy, Delhi: Rs 97,215.86 Canadian High Commission, Delhi: Rs 26,492.33 Chinese Embassy, Kathmandu: Rs 208,756.46 Egyptian Embassy: Rs 10.911 95 Korean Embassy: Rs 13,259.82 Pakistani Embassy: Rs 35,926.82 Russian Embassy: Rs 13,044.91 High Commission of Canada: Rs 39.052 97 Indian Embassy, Rangoon: Rs 27,453.60 K-bird Project: Re 47 566 60 Post Master General, Hong Kong: Rs 425,885.16 Postal Department, Dhaka: Rs 124,333,50 USAID: Rs 67.886 45 World Bank: Rs 69,918.04 Rastriya Banijya Bank, Kathmandu: Rs 16,971.70 Rastriya Beema Sansthan, Kathmandur Rs 11, 114 Department of Telecommunications: Rs 23,259.45 Tribhusan University Re 85 471 40 National Trading Ltd: Rs 64.036.93 US Embassy, Delhi: Rs 9,613.77 British Embassy, Kathmandu: Rs 422,304.56 Royal Mail London: Over Rs 1 4 million American Embassy. Delhi: Rs 179.344 20 Indian Embassy Rs 299 716 42 Defence Ministry, UK: Rs 59.999 55 Royal Palace: Rs 406,503,20 Nepal Food Corporation: Over Rs 6 million Nenal Rastra Bank: Rs 334.776 Nepali Congress: Rs 5,340 PATA: Rs 85, 249 36 UNDP-Rs 195,425 86 French Embassy: Rs 75,937.29 Royal Nepalese Embassy, Delhi: Rs 112,249,60

### Failure

Mulyankan, 15 August-14 September

Nepal is ruined economically. The political confusion has encouraged forces waiting to emerge again and the activities of foreign powers. The Maoists have a stranglehold over half the country, and the government has not taken initiatives that would help end the insurgency. Analysts and academics



#### Krishna Hachhethu political analyst

The budget allocation for the nalace affairs has been increased to Rs 380 million from Rs 110 million last year, a good indicator of the direction the country is taking. Second, the palace and the army are gaining in upper hand in politics, as even the prime minister has

admitted. Third, the interference of donor countries has increased as they monitor their investments, a sign that they have lost faith in Nepal.

The constitution and laws are misinterpreted and misused The constitution allows the term of parliament to be extended by a year in extraordinary circumstances. A state of emergency is atypical, but parliament was dissolved. The constitution has also oven manipulated with regard to local bodies

6-12 SEPTEMBER 2002 NEPALLTIMES

Political parties are the platform through which the public can collectively express its dissatisfaction. They are expected to represent the people's voice when democracy is in crisis, but political parties are losing strength, Civil society has turned out to be a disappointment-they engage in self-censorship, and have failed to give voice to the people's concerns. It will likely take a couple of years for the first protests to erupt even if the Panchayati system



community health expert We need to analyse what we have achieved and where we failed in the last 12 years There aren't many points on which we can be assured tha this political system is better for the public than the

multiparty democracy and the sovereignty of the people, but has no provision that guarantees the people's right to hold a referendum for self-

In the economic arena, the interim government formed following the restoration of the multiparty syster tried to reduce the royal family's budget allocation a little bit, but no other government since has tried anything like that. This fiscal year Rs 380 million has been allocated for the royal family, and an additional Rs 230 million has been earmarked for the "development" of the royal palace. That puts the budget going to the royal family at Rs 610

The state is in a massive crisis. Its anti-people characteristics are being revealed, and it is trying to protect itself. The state is not being supported by the parties that say they have taken a firm stand against reactionary forces. The government now has a choice: keep misusing power, or try to gain people's confidence through the elections



Dr Krishna Khanal political analyst I would say that the preser crisis is the by-product of our failure. This crisis will leave no space for the kind of participatory democracy we want The Maniere new soom to be in the mood to

is getting more militant, the other progressive powers are heading towards compromise We need to watch out for the kind of 'progressiveness' this conflict is engendering.

The progressive powers that had the potential to aprove things are more feeble than they have been in the past 50 years. The debates on democracy have weakened and not just because of the emergency. The mindset of the rulers, Nepali Congress or CPN-UML, has not changed after 1990. That stagnation is the root cause of the present crisis, as is the failure to make changes.

People have started calling this constitution a compromise between the king, the Nepali Congress and the left front-the prime minister says that the three wers drafted the constitution, and it cannot be amended without their agreement. The king and the Nepali Congress are there, but the left front does not exist anymore. We do not have faith in the system we created, we failed in not developing ownership for it.



#### Dr Pitamber Sharma

geographer Our biggest failure has been in not decentralising economic and administrative power, without which participatory ocracy is not possible. I took 12 years for a decentrali ation act to be enacted, and it was bypassed the day it was

enacted, a sign of how insensitive our political system is towards development issues.

In poor countries such as ours, the government's main objective should be to guide the rich and provide assistance to the poor. Instead, since the interim government was created, we adopted a market economy. Our governments have displayed more faith in a market economy than even The World Bank or the IMF. That created confusion about the role of the government in development attempts. For instance, the government totally neglected the public schools where 95 percent of children study, and concentrated on privatising the education sector, which put the underprivileged children at a disadvantage

The government failed to be accountable to the people. The local bodies can play a vital role in making the government accountable to the people, but

political parties are not committed. Regardless of their ideologies, party manifestoes ignore the idea of accountability. Civil society can contribute a lot, but we neglected the people, we failed to make commitments to empower them.

Back at Sundarijal >18

## "The ball is in the king's court."



ess of incarceration is begi The stress of incarceration is beginning to tell on BP Koirals in these pages from his diary. The fear of losing his supply of writing paper is more worying than not getting books to read. Compounded with this, BP is getting increasingly worried about his health and worries that the jailers have not sent a doctor to check him up. He discusses politics with jail mate Ganesh Man Singh and concludes that it is now up to King Birendra to make his move.

On double-clicking the more

romising 'Learn Nepali' icon, the

user is required to personalise the interface by typing a name. A very

pleasant (if uncommon) Nepali voio

hen heard followed by a loud

is dominated by administrative

features, including purchasing other

Euro Talk CDs, the prominent graphic

of a CD in the middle of the screen

labelled 'Learn Nepali' is strangely

not clickable. The user is instead

required to click a small start arrow.

nce again enter a name, and then

the same enthusiastic American voice

says "Welcome to Euro-Talk", the

irony of which is all too apparent

when starting to learn a South Asian

inguage.
The content of the CD-ROM is

housed within a subdivided roulette

'First Words', 'Countries', 'Num-

subdivisions are sensible and useful,

and navigation through the different

sections is likewise intuitive. In each

subsection, the user must choose an

approach fitting his or her needs: word

game or a more challenging one. The

rarching structure is heavily

dependent on graphics rather than

text, and success is measured by

passing tests. This approach will

appeal to younger learners. but

niversity students, researchers

part of their vocational preparation

healthcare or development profession

als who are hoping to learn Nepali as

may find the interface childish and

rustrating, Many educational CD-

ROMs offer level or aptitude switch-

ing: the lower level being visually rich

and structured around guided tours,

tests and games, while the higher leve

language use and rich content. This

concentrates more on in depth

practice, speaking practice, an easy

bers', 'Phrases' and 'Food'. The

wheel of clickable segments, including

greeting, subha din (Good Day), is

American shouting "Good Afternoon

While the top left of the home screen

Sundarijal: I am greatly disturbed since yesterday when we got the impression from the captain that writing paper wouldn't be available to us. I am anyious at the thought that we may be totally denrived of intellectual activities. Even if there are no books I could write my biography or the history of Nepal's democratic struggle in which I have very actively and at times centrally participated. Then I could jot down stray thoughts, take down notes from books (we have six second-rate books) write stories or even attempt a novel on contemporary sociopolitical developments in Nepal. If paper is not supplied to us, and if we can't contact our people for it or bring it ourselves—we had asked the officer here to get writing paper from the market from our money, when when we received that kind of information-then my life will really be extremely unbearable. It is most frustrating. I have started cutting out the blank margins from the two daily newspapers (Gorkhapatra and Rising Nepal) to save as writing material. Since I have to conserve paper, I have started writing small letters so that they may not take bigger space in the paper. I have three refills for my dot pen. I have a small hottle of ink and this nen which I am writing with I don't know how long the ink will last. I brought this pen just fortuitously when I was sorting out my things at Patna on the eve of our departure to this place. Another cause of worry is that the doctor does not visit us although we have been asking for him. I am not feeling all right with giddiness and heaviness in the head, buzzing sound and pulse in the ears and bleeding from the gose. Regular visits from a medical man would inspire confidence that at least when we are ill we will be in safe hands. Washed some clothes, didn't bathe, with this mental state I couldn't

but towards evening the day was overcast with clouds and cold wind

#### 10 February

My mental tension continues, but it is not as high as it was yesterday because the major told me that he had not understood me when I said I wanted six quires of paper. He thought I wanted six sheets. But that was that, he said, indicating by implication that the misunderstanding would be closed and 6 quires of paper would be supplied to us. I also left it at that. But GM (Ganesh Man Singh) thinks that he made that statement just to be pleasant. And that he had referred our demand for paper to a "higher authority" which had not yet sanctioned it. GM says we should conserve paper and not be misled by expectation of relaxation in the matter. Today too they didn't send us the doctor. I became nervous and thought we would be deprived of medical attention. My present worry is that I don't get sound sleep and my head is constantly heavy with a buzzing sound.

A carnenter came to renair some of our windows. They supplied a bucket and mug for GM's bathroom. Ever since our arrival in this camp, i.e. since last 40 days GM had been asking for a bucket for his bathroom. It arrived only today.

During tea we talked about Nepal's politics and the imperatives of our return to Nepal. GM is firmly convinced that we have saved nurselves our party and if the response from the other side is equally informed with statesmanship, then the country [too] by this decision to return to Nepal. Now the ball is in the king's court

TALK

# Learning Nepali the Klingon way



languages are increasingly faced with a choice of instructional materials, ranging from traditional pocket-sized Berlitz travel companion to interactive CD-ROMs. The latter have the advantage of being designed as personalisable linguistic resources that hold the learner's attention. For the most part, only commercially viable language learning courses have been made interactive (such as Spanish, German and Russian) while minority languages materials, into which category Nepali certainly falls, offer at best an audio tape of sample conversations alongside a printed

Ir was thus with some surprise that Leame across Furn Talk Interactive's Talk Now! series of CD-ROMs. offering multimedia instruction in lesser-known languages such as Assamese, Farsi, Kannada, Manx and...Nepali. I ordered the course entitled Learn Nepali: Essential words and phrases for absolute beginners' and was rather bemused by the contents.

After double-clicking the rainboy coloured Talk-Now!icon on the desktop, the user is taken to a secondary folder While the natural choice would be to click the icon labelled 'Learn Nepali', my eye was drawn instead to a folder underneath which reads, in rather small and blocky Devanågari, klingon siknuhos. This I can only interpret to mean learn Klingon', the language spoker by the race immortalised in Star Trek More surprising still, in ways that I will describe later, is that the Klingon leitmotif pervades the whole CD-ROM Clicking on the icon labelled Klingon sadly leads nowhere and the user is left with the feeling that a Devanagari-literate com programmer is having a laugh at someone's expense, in this case probably the company's (EuroTalk) After all, it is likely that neither the managerial staff of Euro Talk nor users of the CD-ROM read Devantions

type of stratification, if well imple mented, might enhance the Fum Talk CD-ROM and be less off-putting to adult learners. Two features of the Learn Nepali CD-ROM warrant special praise.

First, it is possible to study Nepali

through the medium of a language

other than English Ar any point in the

course, the user may choose to alter the 'help' language (the language of instruction) from American English (the default) to British English, Hindi Icelandic Tibetan or any of 70 others. This is a powerful facility that will significantly increase the overall user base of the package, and is a feature not readily incorporated into other language learning tools. There are some limitations, as one would expect: some languages offer voiceover tracks while others are strictly textual (for example, the written Zulu word for 'blue' is offered when listening to the pronunciation of the Nepali word nila 'blue'). Scrolling down the list. I noted that Nepali is also available, meaning that Nepali could be learned through Nepali, a somewhat unconventional way of achieving monolingual language instruction. Star Trek is ever present in the menu structure, however, as the language listed as 'Nepali' in Roman

script is written as klingon in Devanâgarî, A second useful feature is the option of a female Nepali speaker instead of, or alongside, a male one. The language course is presented by two animated guides, a Caucasian man and an equally white woman. On hearing a word, the user can op for a Nepali woman's voice instead of a Nepali man's simply by clicking on the relevant torso. The importance of this feature has less to do with sexual politics, since men's voices are just as often featured in language learning tools as men's, and rather more to do with

meech variation and lineuistic choice. Tapes which accompany instructional materials may contain role plays and vocabulary lists, but rarely can the user hear the same words or phrases being repeated by speakers of the opposite sex. Users of the Euro Talk CD-ROM stand a better chance of understanding, and of being understood, if and when they finally communicate in Nepali simply on account of having heard

different accents and idiolects from the outset While the linguistic content of this beginners' CD-ROM is acceptable, it is marred by an overarching cultural uniformity Euro Talk Nepali is an exercise in unreconstructed ethnocentrism. underpinned by the assumption that each and every culture (and thus by extension, its language) has simila patterns of social, cultural and economic interaction. Sapir and Whorf would turn in their graves i they knew what was being peddled in the name of language pedagogy. The lack of cultural runing

best illustrated with examples, and is particularly apparent in the sections First Words and Phrases The list of First Words starts out. naturally enough, with 'Yes' and 'No' but then third in the list we are offered 'telephone' (pronounced teliphon), soon thereafter 'wine' (rendered as wain) and finally near the bottom, kredit kår? (credit card) In their defence, these are all now available in Nepal (though I'm pretty sure they weren't when the CD-ROM was created), and visitor to the country may indeed be in need of wine, but including these items in a list of First Words seems a little far-fetched. Likewise, the Phrases section is indicative of this globalised approach. The learner is encouraged to repeat and commit to

memory sentences such as 'where is

नेपाली सिकनहोस

the train station' (rel steshan kahà cha?) and 'where is the beach?' (samudrā kinār karā cha?) While the latter example is of little use anywhere in the Nepali-speakin world the former may at least be of some utility in Darjeeling or Sikkim. Generally speaking, in fact, the content of the course is more suited for use in the Nepalispeaking regions of India than

anywhere in Nepal itself. My suspicion is that every CD-ROM within the Talk Now! series has an identical database structure which includes exactly the same words, phrases and examples. The result is a single product with voiceovers in different languages but marketed as 75 differen

language courses. EuroTalk Interactive's Learn Nepali CD-ROM is a mixed bag. While the interface is effective, the games and tasks engaging (if childish) and the choice of both male and female Nepali voice

course is compromised by the problems outlined above. The seamless integration and slick interactivity of the CD-ROM, combined with the lack of cultural applicability make it a triumph of rm over content.

EuroTalk interactive's Talk Now! Learn Nepali CD-ROM: Essential words and phrases for absolute beginner 2000 London ISBN 1-8662-21088-8. [System requirements Windows 95/98/NT/2000 or Mac OS 7 or above. Computer must have colour display, sound, 16 MB of free memory, CD-ROM drive and preferably a microphone], price: £24.99. Can be ordered from vww.eurotalk.co.uk

(Mark Turin is with the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge. An earlier version of this review was published in volume 28 of the IIAS Newsletter, Leiden, The Netherlands )

Teej Women fast for their husbands' longevity, wear bright red, and all day walk to Pashupatinath singing along the way. 9 September, all day, Pashupati.

 ΔΑΒΑ ΚΟ RA.INITIK RATO/ The Political Road Ahead Presentation by Professor Krishna Khanal, comments by Dinak Gyawali and Hari Roka, GAA Forum, Thamel 6 September, 4-6 PM, Contact Sangita Prasai Mahat at 414785.

Colorgraph prints by Ragini Upadhayay-Grela. 17 August-15 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, 11AM-6PM, except Saturdays. 218048

- Saturday Night Fever with Blind Faith, 8.30 PM on, The Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
- Jazz your blues away with The Jazz Commission, Fridays, 7PM on, Fusion, the bar at Dwarika's. 479488
- New music at the Nanglo Bakery Cafés Thursdays The Thunders at The Bakery Café, Teku, Fridays Strings at the Nanglo Café & Pub, Darbar Marg, Sundays The Thunders at the Bakery Café, Baneswor.

 Ladies Night at the Rox Complimentary drink for women. Teesta plays 8PM onwards. The Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234

- \* Fresh claws Fresh crabs all September, with lunch buffet, Cajun crah cakes with mesclun, baked crah with mustard and fonting and more. The Sunrise Café, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- Barbeque with live band Wednesdays and Fridays 6.30 PM - 9.30 PM, Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel. 411818
- The greenest patch Weekend lunches in Nagarkot's oldest,
- largest garden at The Fort Resort, fort@mos.com.np. 226799
- Walter's Bodega relocates opposite KC's, Thamel. Mexican food promotion including
- fajitas, enchiladas, burritos and more. Buy one entrée, get one free. Mexican Food Festival 7-15 September at Summit Hotel, 11.30 AM - 9.30 PM, Patan
- Museum Café, 11.30 AM 4.30 PM, 521810 Salmon and rosé wine Norwegian salmon dishes for dinner only. The Rox Restaurant, Hyatt
- Regency Kathmandu. 491234 Specials for the busy executives Chef's menu at discounted rates, Dwarika's Hotel,
- Rattisputali 479488
- Autumn Special English premier football with steak, and Rs 55 glasses of draft, K-too! Beer & Steakhouse 433043
- Mountain Madness Barbecue and two-for-one cocktails, Rs 250 each, Kilroy's of
- Kathmandu, 250440. Vegetarian specialties with membership discount for Nepalis and expats at the Stupa View
- Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha. 480262 Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510

- Monsoon mists Horseshoe Resort, Mude two-and-half hours from Kathmandu, Nature walks, birdwatching, drizzle walks, Nepal's best Finnish sauna. resort@horshoe.wlink.com.np
- Monsoon Madness Buy a two-night three-day package for Rs 5000 at Shangri-la Village, Pokhara, get Rs 5000 in coupons to spend at the Shangri-La in Pokhara or Kathmandu.
- Monsoon in Shivapuri For birdwatching, short hikes, writing. 20 minute drive and 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, two acres 6,000 feet on the edge of the Shivapuri 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



EDUCATION IS AN ALL TIME GAIN EDUCATE A CHILD AND THE HARVEST COMES YEAR AFTER YEAR.





Late to arrive, late to go. That is how we would characterise this year's monsoon. This one still has some comph left in it, as you can see in the satellite picture taken on Wednesday afternoon; squall lines all the way from the bay to Kashmir, with another circulation coming out of the Arabian Sea. That one will not affect us much, but expected brief but heavy localised showers in the later afternoon and night in the coming week. Mornings will be cool, but hot and humid noon before the clouds move in

#### KATHMANDU VALLEY











#### Truth, Love and a Little Malice: An Autobiography Khushwant Singh Ravi Dayal and Viking Penguin India, New Delhi, 2002 Rs 720

In a career spanning over five decades as writer, editor, journalist, lawyer, MP and diplomat, Khushwant Singh's views have always been provocative and controversial, but also perceptive and profound. In his autobiography he writes about Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the Partition, the Emergency, painter Amrita Shergil and other important people and times. And, of course, about sex.

#### Power, Politics, and the People: Studies in British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism Partha

Sarathi Gupta Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2002. Rs 1.240

Partha Sarathi Gupta was an outstanding scholar whose academic interests spanned modern British and Indian history—ranging from imperial policy to the patriotic songs of Bengali composers. This volume reflects his various interests with special reference to the army, federalism, tariff policy. Other essays deal with the spread of broadcasting, labour history, cultural history, nationalism and identity formation.

#### Leadership and Power: Ethical Explorations SK Chakraborty, Pradip

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002



#### Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India Nicholas B Dirks Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2002

Dirks argues that caste is neither an unchanged survival of ancient India nor a single system reflecting a core culture, but that caste as we know it is a relatively modern phenomenon, the product of the encounter between India and colonial British rule. Caste was not a British invention, but on account of British domination, it became a single term capable of subsuming India's diverse forms of social identity

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

#### CI ASSIFIED

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

esse's sister's very Punjabi wedding. In the best adition of Indians-in-the-UK comedy.

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#### dining room, one bathroom. First floor: master bedroom with attached bath, one bedroom, bathroom, pantry. Second floor: one bedroom with attached bath, store, lobby. Third floor; terrace and

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

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

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

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

### Bend It Like Beckham, has played to packed houses in the UK. Eighteen-year-old Jesse just wants to play football, but her parents want her to be a nice, conservative Indian girl. But when her friend Jules invites her to join the local women's football club, a new world is opened up to Jesse, and she JAINEPAL CINEMAGHAR gets to meet Joe, the team coach, whom she is mitten by. The trouble begins when an important acruiting match is scheduled the same day as

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## 6-12 SEPTEMBER 2002 NEPALITIMES 15 CULTURE

other beings, the peepal tree grows

in such a way that it doesn't choke

others plants below, in fact the

pipal sustains them."

# Love, books, and food in the Himalaya

AM, Thamel. Kim Hong-Sung and his wife Jeong Myeong Kyeong are sipping fragrant herbal tea at Picnic, the little Korean kitchen they help run with a Nepali partner. It serves an nication Art College. "Believe me,

RAMYATA LIMBU

assortment of mouthwatering Korean cuisine—bibimbap, kimchi, Korean-style sushi, and caters to a constant stream of Korean expatri ates, tourists, and Nepalis through out the day

Korea and Japan are very different

similar. But there are small, small

things that are different," she says

emphatically "Nepal and India are

much more similar in comparison.

says Kim, a writer, poet and

story about a Korean couple

photographer, who is currently

working on a novel. "It's a love

travelling in the Himalaya," says

Kim. He doesn't look particularly

happy, though. "I've rewritten it

The story could well be semi-

autobiographical. Kim and Jeong,

spent four months travelling in the

Darjeeling, Sikkim, Dharamsala and

self-confessed mountain-lovers

ndian Himalaya, in Ladakh,

Kathmandu in 1996 They fell in

love with the mountains, and even

more with each other. No surprise

that they got married in Kathmando

that they could play a role in

Korea. They help Koreans

improving the lives of Nepalis in

twice. It's partly fiction, partly

At first glance, things appear

The day's first customer has yet to arrive and the two savour a few quiet moments as they leaf through a stack of mountain magazines, mostly in Korean. Surrounded by framed pictures shot by Kim during travels in Ladakh, Sikkim and Darjeeling, the couple discusses the merits of running a Korean kitchen

heir wedding in the Shangri-La Hotel, Kathmandu

in Kathmandu. "I just enjo

cooking," says Jeong. "And it's a

small place. You get to know the

staff and the customers. There are

so many interesting stories here? And stories are just what the

writer couple love. Thirty-four

year-old Jeong, who publishes Himalava News (a Korean journal

about Nepali culture and travel),

someday write a novel based on her

experiences in the kitchen. "I need

to gather some more experience.

couple aren't just restauranteurs-

Advertisement Agency, and has

already published an essay book

The Japan Life Story about her

experience of living in Japan, where she graduated from Tokyo Commu-

(01) 521393, 543017, 547018

Fax: 977-1-536390

Jeong is a former copywriter for LG

first," says Jeong. After all, the

with her husband, is keen to

Nepali workers in Korea through articles in Himalaya News and on their webpage. A 1999 article was on the experiences of two Nepali migrant workers affected by the economic recession in Korea "The response among the Korean public was amazing. It was one of embarrassment and shame," says Kim. "There were many people who wanted to meet the two, and others even raised funds to help them." Since he first visited Nepal in

1991, trekking with two Korean alpinists in the Langtang region, Kim says the travel bug has not left him. In 1992, he travelled to Ladakh: the next year he went from China to Pakistan along the Karakoram highway; and in 1994 ho trekked around the Annapurna and revisited Langtang. In 1996 he decided to chuck his job as an overworked editor back home and set up base in Nepal, spending a year with Jeong at the Korean temple in Lumbini and then moving to Kathmandu. "The Himalaya touched my

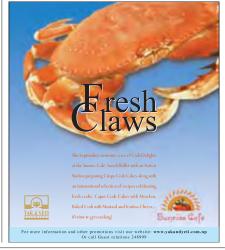
oul," says Kim a former editor of The Man and Mountain, one of Korea's popular mountain magazines Today Kim lures even mon Koreans to Nepal and other Himalayan destinations through his writings in emountain, still another Korean mountain magazine.

Nepal for Kim isn't just mountains. He is fascinated by the pipal tree. "I'm a Buddhist, I believe the pipal tree is Buddha's mind. While other trees grow in a manner that represses the growth of



Kim is the son of a North Korean refugee. His father lost his home during the Korean War, "At times, I still feel lost," he says. He has now found refuse in the mountains. The couple now spend their days writing, travelling when they can, but also cooking. Kim and Jeong have another

helped their friend Finjo Lama translate Kanak Mani Dixit's The Adventures of a Nepali Frog, a tale about the travels of Bhakta Prasad Bhyaguto from the rice fields of Kathmandu to Iomsom, "Korean readers really enjoyed it," says





16



## Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

## History repeated as farce

n response to a specific request from the state law and order restoration council and in the interest of responsible journalism, we are pleased to announce that this week's column will not go into any detailed analysis of bodily functions. In the national interest, it will also not make any gratuitous reference to the posterior region of a higher mammal, the name of which rhymes with the word "farce". And in view of the fact that many concerned parents may be reading this in the presence of minors, we will refrain from revealing any more bank balances of members of the partyless cabinet. And, finally, since many of you may be having breakfast even as we speak, all mention of under-the-table deals involving the purchase of weapons of mass desperation will nereinafter be expunged.

Having said that, we can now move right along to the rest of the news:



### Nepali women to go on hunger strike

KATHMANDU (RSS) - The All-Women's Federation of Nepal (Reactionary) has defied the re-imposition of the state of national urgency to declare a nationwide hunger strike on Monday on the occasion of Teej to

demand a ten percent service charge for household work and higher overtime pay.

The organisation has announced a series of escalating protests in the run-up to the strike, which includes wearing red saris and black armbands in the kitchen starting Friday, spiking hubby boy's morning bed tea with a strong diuretic on Saturday morning, and a menacing forward deployment of pressure cookers into the conjugal bedroom on Sunday night.

"That should do the trick," chairperson of the Hunger Strike Preparatory Committee told journos in the capital today. "We hope the menfolk take heed of the warning and agree to henceforth wash their own underwear

But a spokesman for the Department of Livestock and Animal Husbandry said there could be no negotiations until AWFON(R) agreed to an unconditional ceasefire, and issued a counter-threat: "If they won't do our undies, we'll refuse to wear them."

#### Expats glad Nepal still exists

By a Staff Reporter KATHMANDU – After being away for most of the summer, Nepal-based expatriates have started flocking back to their hardship posts, and say they can't wait

for their Christmas breaks. On returning from their annual migration, expats told waiting newspersons at the airport that they were pleasantly surprised to find that Nepal still exists. "It's quite a relief," said a visibly astonished Astrid Hintergrundsprachen as she alighted from her plane after a two-month vacation. "But do you think it's safe to drive to Jawalakhel?"

Another returnee, Bo Gunnarson, told CNN he was mentally prepared for the worst, but the fact that La' Soon had re-opened meant things were getting back to normalcy. "For a moment there, we were quite worried," Gunnarson added. "Let's hope the country doesn't totally vanish before our next posting."



1981 when Darla and wildlife

biologist Rodney Jackson

undertook the first scientific

expedition to radio-collar and study the big cat, in western

Nepal's remote Kanjiroba Himal. The idea of studying snow

leopards, one of the least-known

Darla, Rodney ... the Snow Leopards of Nepal, Darla's foreword, and outlines the

seminal account of their work etween 1981 and 1985. Armed with a research grant from the Rolex
Awards for Enterprise, Rodney and
Darfa put together a team and spent
Darfa put together a team and spent
Awards for Enterprise, Rodney and
Darfa put together a team and spent
Darfa put together a team and spent harsh winters and balmy springs in the Langu Gorge that is now in Shey Phoksumdo National Park.

They captured, collared and released five cats, imaginatively become our life's work," says writer Darla Hillard. But that changed in named Ek, Dui, Teen, Char and Panch. They had up-close and personal photographs of all five leopards.

Vanishing Tracks is still the major reference work on the species and reveals much about the elusive and reveals much about the elusive creature's life in the wild. The first livestocks some leopards sometimes fruit of Darla and Rodney's undertaking was a Nakisnol Geographic corere story on snow leopards that reached created and the control of the core of t endangered species, seemed only slightly less kooky than putting out 11 million readers. The second edition of Vanishing Tracks, published with Mandala Book

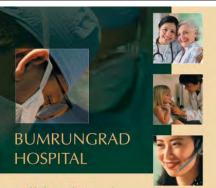
The two now run the group Snow Leopard Conservancy and conservation activities in Tibet, Ladakh, Mongolia, and in the Indian and Nepal Himalava. trained as "community wildlife stewards" for conservation to be successful, says Rodney. "The only

way to make this happen is by blending traditional knowledge with science," he adds. In order to check retributive killings by angry farmers whose livestock snow leopards sometimes prey on, the Conservancy is

Upper Mustang.
The group also helps educate Mandala Book locals in improving animal husbandry and developing alternative income-generating activities such as handicrafts cheese-making and tourism. Later this year they will begin a program in Manang to use tourism as an incentive for conservation. .

> ... and snow leopards





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