



OUR DOUBLE TRIANGLE
p8-9



ANALYSIS by **RAJENDRA DAHAL**

The two protagonists in the present crisis—the extreme right and the extreme left—want the same thing: an 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 people vote.

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, Dipendra 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 *Rajdhan*, Shah had said Tuesday that the king can

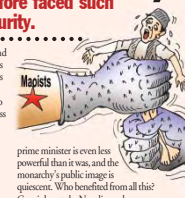
No one won, everyone lost

Nepalis have never before faced such deprivation and insecurity.

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

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 Maoists are weakened, the strength of the army has been dragged into public debate, the office of



prime minister is even less powerful than it was, and the monarchy's public image is quiescent. Who benefited from all this? Certainly not the Nepali people.

They have been the biggest losers. The economy has been battered, investments are

zero, unemployment is rife. They have lost purchasing power, markets, food supply, health services, education, and personal security. Caught between the ruthlessness of the Maoists and counter-attacks from security forces, 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 government 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

military might alone is not going to be enough to finish off the Maoists. The idea is to put 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 self-destructing. The media-led campaign against Deuba loyalist Chitambari 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 Gajendra Koirala and the king on Friday, don't be surprised if the Nepali Congress begins reunification. ♦



One year after September 11, tourism hasn't picked up.

RAMYATA LIMBU

Fears of pre-poll violence, the emergency, an international slump in air travel post-September 11 and fears of India-Pakistan tensions 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 saying 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.

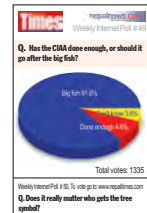
Saskia is a Dutch tourist who was all set to travel to India and Nepal this autumn. But on advice of the Dutch government, she's decided to postpone her plans to visit the region. Lina is a Swede, but she has decided to defy her government's travel alert for Nepal and is coming for a trek in October.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

Nepal 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 Nepal was voted second in the Top Country Category out of 180 countries in the *Vanderlust* Travel Awards 2001. But such distinction does not show in arrival figures.



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The Banker

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**The Banker
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Nepal**



HOT SPOT

The 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 buttered: getting a Belgian gun deal unstuck. George W. for his part, was too busy trying to carry on when daily left to go home late into smotherings 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 ago, the senior Bush 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 a 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 the 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 30 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 yard" 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 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. Malala is climbing up the valleys, and epidemics have been reported even in Kavre district. This year's erratic monsoon is probably another way of telling us that we are tampering with the equilibrium.

Johannesburg was supposed to be a historic opportunity to address the development roots of environmental problems: to see that the world 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 over-consumption to carry on with business as usual. Per capita carbon emissions level in countries like China and India may be small, but China is already the third largest source of atmospheric carbon, with 12 percent of the total. In the next 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 afforestation 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 tigers through sustainable development will be won or lost in Asia. If Asia follows the western model of economic growth the planet is doomed.

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

THE MESSENGER
Although your editorial "Bloody Well Right" (#109) tried to portray certain weak spots in the Nepali media, it failed to highlight a more

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 nation's public views, 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 government servants, unscrupulous businessmen, teachers with fake certificates and what not. The majority of teenagers already have the feeling that their motherland is not worth living in.

The man-on-the-street, who obviously has to depend on print media for all kinds of national news and views, is not bothered about develop-

STATE OF THE STATE
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 vast 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 Mueang on his way to and from Europe. There are no flights between Kathmandu to Colombo, or New Delhi to Islamabad, but our own government knows places by flying all the way to Bangkok. So it is not unusual to bump into South Asians in the cavernous 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 Corner 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.

When Sikkimese Minister Pawan Channing told this paper last year that a "ID" —suggested me to think like an Indian for a moment and ask why India must remain friendly to Nepal that is absolutely necessary. According to ID, Nepal has ceased to be the buffer that once cushioned the clash of geo-political places between Tibet and China. Beijing is wary about Tibetan activity in Nepal, and there is no reason why India should depend anyone on Nepal to protect its strategic interests in the Himalaya. ID was warning up to the point of thinking, and adding meaningfully: "In fact, Nepal magnifies problems for India."

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 anyone on the basis of "aged old ties of unity and friendship" anymore. Our relationship has to be based on something



prompting the entire population to believe that there is absolutely no hope for our country. The people are never told that we have many major allies like the United States, which 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 business 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 glorious history, our rich culture, our bravery, our hard-working farmers, and above all our tradition of "tolerance and sacrifice".

Sugat Ratna Kansakar, by email



by CK LAL

The moon is about to end, and together with it may come a renewed bout of bloodletting that the people can ill afford. The Maoists have clearly used the period to regroup and recruit. There are ample opportunities up ahead for them to exploit the multifaceted political confusion that is about.

The Royal Nepalese Army has established itself firmly in the centre-stage of Nepal policy even though till recently the soldiers had a strictly secondary role, demanded by the primacy of the royal palace. Since November, the RNA has become an active player in its own right. In addition to the fight towards maintaining 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 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 Maoist force. The army has 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 Maoists, and force it into submission. But the experience so far suggests that it is too thinly spread and has not yet mustered the required strategic 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 Nepalese 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 tending to the people and they might be coming back to the Maoists."

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's government has neither the stature nor ability

NATION
OPINION
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.



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's left is set in its own standards in the vacuum that exists.

In a country where there are a large number of grey and accidental Maoists, it has been difficult for the soldiers to draw the distinction. The bulk of the hardcore seems 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 a backlash.

The volume of the army's operations 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

scale, and last far into the future. The resulting military at that time may not 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 the country's democracy. But the army is 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 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 weight with the Maoists.

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

Chief of Army Staff next week. He faces the challenge of fighting the Maoists without sullying the image of the army.

Kapil Dahal, Gorakha
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 abroad" (#108) where he puts forward the theory that "HANSAs" (Hindu, Aryan, Nepali-speaking Indian Administrators) are the sole cause of the misery faced by our fore-earning brothers and sisters. Although the article made me 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.

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SELF-EMPOWERMENT
After reading "Trading power" (#108) by Binod Thattai, it struck me that Nepalis must 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 we must). Have we not learned enough lessons by making deals such as Kosi and others with the Indians? We have always been an independent country and let us continue to exercise our independence. We must use the surplus electric power and much more that we can generate for our own use, if

R Subba, Kuwait
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RECORRECTION
Mishra Gurung in "Another Manang" (#109) should have been identified as the former DDC chairman of Manang district.



MADHUSUDHAN GURAGAIN IN KAVRE

Sapta Man, like hundreds of thousands of Nepali farmers, has been using hydropower for centuries. The know-how to design, build, maintain and run traditional ghattas for grinding grain is probably as old as human settlements in the Himalayas. 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 efficiently.

"The improvement in efficiency and power generation is amazing," Sapta Man told us while showing us his "generation room" in Ladku village. His mill equipped with spoon-shaped metal blades in the turbine can generate up to 3 kW of power and grind as much as 15 pathis of grain in an hour—three times more efficient than his original wooden ghatta.

The traditional design is a wooden cross-flow turbine that turns a stone disc on top of a stationary 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 vibrating metal contraption called a "bird" that can regulate the flow of grain. There are an estimated 30,000 traditional water mills still in operation all over Nepal, but these numbers are decreasing as ghatta owners near highways and in the tarai turn to diesel mills.

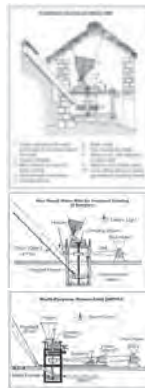
Efforts to improve on the traditional ghattas were started nearly 35 years ago by Swiss engineer Andreas Bachmann working with Nepali small-hydro pioneer, Akal Man Nakarmi. In a 1983 monograph, Bachmann and Nakarmi list the options for upgrading ghattas, depending on the head and flow. They put forward the design of a multi-purpose power unit (MPPU) kit that came in three easy-to-assemble modules and can be installed on the site of ghattas with minimum expense and expertise. MPPUs not just grind corn, but generate electricity, run threshing machines, looms and even belt-driven lathes. Nepali-

made MPPUs have been exported to Bhutan, Ladakh and Sri Lanka.

Organisations like the Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N) and others are promoting similar upgrading. CRT/N, which trained farmers like Sapta Man in upgrading ghattas, has declared Ladku an "Energy Village." All 20 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 Pasupat Lamichhane who has conducted a "gatta census" in Kavre and found that there are 415 in 63 rivers and canals in the district. So far, 70 have been upgraded with new turbines.

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



Traditional Horizontal Water Mill

This ingenious design uses the energy of falling water channelled through a hollowed out tree-trunk falling on 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 stationary. 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 running.

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 simultaneously 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 MMPU 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 Sahajog Press and New Himalayan Water Wheels by Andreas Bachmann and Akal Man Nakarmi, 1983)

by DANIEL LAK

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

I am known as Salia Bajaj in the village. My registered name is Lal 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 I enjoyed following my father here. I am now old and long for the comforts of home. This place is cold and I have no bed.

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 were made, 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 mill only this morning.

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 pathi for every muhi 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. We farm two to four terraces. You start off from one and harvesting maize but there isn't even a basketful when you get to the other end. Working on the farm is tough. It is a very hard work, but there is very little crop to harvest. Raising the water 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, 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 anybody runs them. Even Bhotas, Danwars, Chhetris and Bahuns operate them. In the old days, since Majhis lived near rivers, it seemed as



PHOTO BY DANIEL LAK

if it was only their vocation. The mills are operated by whoever sets them up in these streams and rivulets.

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 pathis a day. Otherwise we cannot even make 1-2 pathis.

This mill grinds other grain besides maize and wheat. It grinds millet, beans and soyab beans. If there are insects around, I grind them too. It cannot husk rice, though.

As far as I can remember, there were many watermills here: up there, up there, on the other side, this side near the stream, behind the village. But most have been abandoned. In our case, we just can't afford to leave. Now people earn Rs 100-150 if they do two months of other work, whereas when you stay at the mill, you get two masas 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. Yet others are still paying taxes. We are somehow bumbling and stumbling along.

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. A once they did not come for four or eight years 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 amounts we would be paying only Rs 40 if they came every year.

During my time, with great hardship, I managed this two masas' chore. I 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 that he would lose his livelihood. After I am gone, he can do as he pleases. [From Water Wisdom, Panos Institute, South Asia, 2000]

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 longer storage life."

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 them for his paddy de-husking when

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 ghattas. Others, who used to de-husking grain on the de-husking de-husking can now do it quickly and be home early.

For his part, Sapta Man has raised his family's income level, plans to invest in better hydropower-driven schemes, and is looking for opportunities. And he has also volunteered his services as a consultant to other VDCs in Kavre to advise those who want to make the move to improved ghattas on the economics of it. ♦

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 the Chinese counterpart 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 health, 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 aim at increasing the per capita health sector expenditure. Presently, Nepal's per capita health expenditure 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 (totaling about Rs 220 million), including the \$5 million it owes China Southwest for a jet lease and the debt. The payment has been over due for over a year and the airline is threatening legal action.

Ill-gotten gains

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, Chiranjibi Wagle has a lot more wealth than he's declared. Apart from what he has lost before his political star went on the ascendancy—Rs 600,000 in his bank account and 65 rupanis 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 declaration form.

HERE AND THERE

One year later

For a time, we were all Americans. Not any more.

I know, I know. We media airheads do love an anniversary. It's the easiest "peg" on which to hang a story. And a news item that looks back and tracks a well-known event is easy to prepare, far easier than an inquiry into something previously unknown. But surely at 11 September 2002 heaves into sight, we can no longer for a good long look back. It's only a year—there's anything to learn from history. Are we forever destined to repeat our mistakes? I hope not.

Twelve months of living dangerously, and reporting the unthinkable, 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 ceasefire and a few minutes. I was sitting in the tiny cockpit that passes for a kitchen at the Delhi bureau of Britain's proudest institution, as some of us are now to call the BBC from time to time—especially when a short-sighted government cuts funding to the World Service. As the BBC teared, a Scottish video editor on loan to the bureau bust through the door. He was laughing—I remember this distinctly, unaware at this early stage of what was unfolding. "All your work's gone for naught," he said in thickest Glaswegian, "Soon beeb's just from his we plane inside the World Trade Center."

I wandered—none too urgently, I admit—out to the newscast 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 implications 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 on television and watched the dreadful images of "Nine Eleven." We heard the endless speculation of chaotic commentators (myself soon to join their ranks) and were shown disgusting casual like the infamous video of one or two Palestinians celebrating America's pain, presented by infamy—at the time—as the Muslim world's reaction to events.

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



Hindus, Christians, Chinese—felt very mixed emotions at seeing the Superpower humbled so. Everyone was horrified, shocked, filled with fear. Yet any number of times, even in the aftermath of the ghastly attacks, I saw people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, the phrases "serve them right" or "now they know what we 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. Muslim Arab, Chinese, Vietnamese and Black—all—properly—extended the hand of friendship to America. Dismissing 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 Bin-Laden-buster bombs, high tech laser guidance systems and vast invasion fleets. 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 insane definition.

We can agonise for decades—and we will—over why they felt alienated, what they were fighting 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 clearly fitting fact remains, however you prefer to see it: we are not al-Qaeda or the hijackers of 11 September. They will strike again. Count on it.

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In the September Himal

The Great Game of Tibet

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An Asian news network?

ON NEW STREETS NOW!

One year after September 11, the story is still the same

from ➔ xi

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 Maoists 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 mountain-ering rules, lowering of visa fees and the addition of the Chinese market will ensure a swift recovery once a tourism turnaround takes place. The problems, 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 teens on the newly opened peaks, we've had many enquiries," Ganesh Raj Karki at the Tourism Department's Climbing Section told us.

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 Nepal alive in the market, we've got to remind people that we're still in the running, that we've started a recovery process."

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 international tourism in 2004 in the hope of boosting the local economy. It things work out, 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. ♦

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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 Nepal 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 eligible to apply.
 - Applicants must present a fully-developed research proposal, three letters of references, 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.

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

Poll vault

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 of places.

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 influences voters who haven't made up their minds. From the conflicting statements of top bureaucrats of the

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 traveling an extra 9,000 km round-trip, completely unnecessary.

Today, about half the PCH's efforts focus on developing ratings. 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 in 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 mitigating that growth. Market reforms which encourage competition can also help bring new ISPs into the mix, bringing consumer costs down and services up.

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

BIZ NEWS
Silver lining
The economy 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 124 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 657 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 Nepal 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 "duty drawback."

by PUSKAR BHUSAL



our all-party commitment to save the system, they 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 next parliament could serve for a two-year transitional 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, trend analysis suggests, this would be the time the lower house would be ripe for dissolution.

The overriding consideration of beginning the elections on Karik 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 possible 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 Nepal democracy.

Where he really excelled was in trying to get European Union ministers 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. ♦

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ECONOMY

INTERVIEW

What makes the Internet work? Ask Bill Woodcock, one of those who work behind the scenes to make this global brain tick. Woodcock has been involved with the Packet Clearing House, a non-profit institute providing research and operational support for the Internet with routing policy, multi-service transport and economic modeling. He is currently in Kathmandu, helping establish the first Internet Exchange Point for Nepal. Gaurab Raj Upadhyaya spoke to him about the technical aspects of information technology development in Nepal.

Gaurab Upadhyaya: In layman's terms, what is an Internet Exchange? 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 (NPX) 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?
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NLL is also seeing a change of leadership. Rakesh Mohan (third from right above) replaces Sandip Ghosh (standing above) as the new managing director.

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 best 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 than 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 at public expense, it should be at 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 variables 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

man 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 efficient solution.

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, web browsing 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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The end of the end of history



Throughout modern times liberal states have always coexisted 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 have been the tools 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 doctrine, the Soviet regime's long-term goal was world communism, the world's single socialist economy, administered by uniform forms of government.

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 communism's fall we were at the "end of history," when western governments could not find a new enemy to justify their existence. The end of history is a single regime based on free markets and democratic government. This project, as unspan

Bread lines in the Soviet Union and riots in Argentina both expose the fallacy of economic determinism.

because its monolithic institutions could not accommodate nations—Czechs and Ukrainians, Hungarians and Serbians, Poles and Mongols—whose histories, circumstances and aspirations were radically divergent.

Today, the global free market constructed in the aftermath of the 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 institutions can be misdeeds 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 militarized state, but the IMF was convinced that it could be transformed into a western-style market economy. An idealized model of Anglo-Saxon capitalism was promoted everywhere.

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

Tariff squabbles

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 US-based 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 last 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 Electric and Microsoft, violate the rules of the multilateral trade system, according to the procedure the DSB has set in a series of rulings over the last two years.

The latest 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 regime for the fruit illegal and said that Ecuador—the world's leading banana exporter—could retaliate for \$201.6 million. (IPS)

Don't blame El Niño

GENEVA - The latest cycle of the climatic phenomenon known as El Niño, which will last until 2003, probably has nothing to do with the floods in Central Europe, nor with the severe droughts in Africa, but is indeed related to the heavy rainfalls in China, India and Bangladesh, says leading meteorologist 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 the time will reach the intensity of its last manifestation, in 1997-1998, says the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). 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 northern suffered excessive rains.

When China opened up to the rest of the world in the early 1980s it began its transition to a market economy. Reform and state enterprises began in the late 1990s, and many workers found their skills were no longer needed in the new-work industries. The impact has been huge: 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 unemployment will triple in the next four years.

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

Holes in China's social safety net

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



WEN CHIAOMAO and ZHANG CHUNLI in BEIJING - A worker's welfare system has reached a crisis point after dramatic changes in the country's economy left millions out of work. Attempts to repair the damage have been too little too late, and ministers are concerned about social unrest.

When China opened up to the rest of the world in the early 1980s it began its transition to a market economy. Reform and state enterprises began in the late 1990s, and many workers found their skills were no longer needed in the new-work industries. The impact has been huge: 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 unemployment will triple in the next four years.

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

institution. Reform ended the cradle-to-grave system that made state-owned enterprises responsible not only for their employees' life-long employment, but also housing, medical expenses, pension, and even children's schooling.

Now the social security services can meet only about five percent 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 with revolutionary martyrs' monthly rations. "Urban workers were guaranteed [security] through their employment, 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. Beijing's figure is about \$34 a month, but the national average is

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

Li Jigang is a 48-year-old engineer from the south-western city of Chongqing, a center for heavy industry that has suffered massive job cuts. He was laid off in 1997 after the army he used to work for shifted to civil production. "All my skills became outdated," he says. Li's factory gave him 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 poor 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. Beijing's figure is about \$34 a month, but the national average is

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

Regulating the NGO business

DHIRA - Under pressure from business and public forces, 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-committee headed by Finance Minister M. Sait Rahman, charged with investigating the matter, said in August that NGOs' poverty reduction efforts would have to come with substantial regulation of the sector. Rahman said regulations being considered by the committee include the mandatory registration of all NGOs, 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 close scrutiny. Nearly 1,700 NGOs are registered with the government's NGO Affairs Bureau and of these, about 200 received foreign grants and loans with the bureau's knowledge. Over 3,000 NGOs are believed to be operating in Bangladesh without official registration. (IPS)

No Googling in China

BEIJING - China has blocked access to the popular US Internet search engine Google amid government calls to tighten media controls ahead of a major Communist Party congress where the next generation of leaders is to be announced. Attempts to access the site through Chinese Internet services this week were rejected, saying it couldn't be found. Users and technical consultants who monitor the Internet in China said the site has been blocked for several days.

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 166,000 results 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 send 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 discussion. 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. (AP)

In defence of Sharia



At work was an Islamic court at Funtua, in northern Nigeria, rejected the appeal of a woman convicted of having sex out of wedlock. Her lawyers 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 Law will be stoned to death the moment her daughter is wedded.

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 the country's 36 states have adopted Sharia as their public law. The spread of Islamic law in Nigeria provoked a sharp outcry among the Nigerian population that levies, including amputation for thieves and death by stoning for women convicted of adultery.

As Muslim lawyers who practice in a Sharia court in Kano, Nigeria's second-largest city, the demonstration 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 Sharia law and taught at an American law school, and an aware of the shortcomings in how it is applied, especially in its treatment of women.

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

bulk of Sharia cases involve family matters and ordinary commercial law. It may surprise non-Muslims, but some Nigerian Christians prefer to file their cases in Sharia courts because of their speed, fairness, and relative uncost with legal technicalities. In Nigeria courts are poorly administered and move painfully slowly. Recently, a Christian car buyer drove 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 businesses have been harassed 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 considerable beneficial freedoms, but freedom of expression resulted in more militant religious positions. The clash of religions is exacerbated by the indecisiveness and irresolution of Nigerian leadership. Muslim politicians gain popularity by siding with Islamic conservatives while their Christian rivals score political points by complaining about Sharia's extreme aspects. Islamic law might be justified if it targeted Nigeria's biggest problem: government corruption. Muslim politicians know corruption is killing our country, but Sharia is not applied to the misdeeds of public officials. Only when the spotlight of Sharia falls on government 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 ijmal, a creative and intellectual effort to apply Islamic law to new circumstances. It is a time to jihad again if Muslims wish to maintain a central role for Sharia in Nigeria. (Project Syncretic)

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

Corruption perception

The advent of El Niño—whose Spanish name refers to the baby Jesus because it tends to appear in South America near Christmas—has 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 El 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

In 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 rejected a similar partitioning proposed by the Peel Commission. More recently, at Camp David in 1979, 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. And Egyptian government officials have been accused of accepting bribes to encourage the development, in the way the US says Egypt and Jordan to acquiesce to Israel's existence. But unless the Arabs stand the permanent reality of a Jewish state in Palestine, the creation of a Palestinian Arab state won't provide more than a temporary fix.

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 state. For them, the civilisation between Jews and Arabs replaces the conflicts between colonialists and indigenous peoples.

Even if no one else buys this, the lesson the Arabs glean from colonial experiences become relevant. Over the years Israeli governments encouraged Arabs

COMMENT

by HERSCHEL GROSSMAN



A two-state solution?

Arabs need to stop equating the Zionist project with colonialism.

to participate in Israel's economy. This policy, which Israelis view as benevolent, 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, and 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 supplant the Jews nor drive the Jews out of Palestine.

The existing formula of "land for peace" and "peace for land" is like the Oslo accords failed to dampen the conflict because the Arabs interpret land concessions as signs of weakness. The Israelis show that they cannot desert 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 make 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 came to accept the existence of a smaller enclave in Northern Ireland. The Irish state, which had 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 resolved the conflict with Protestant Protestants, with decades of violence resulting. (Project Syncretic)

(Herschel I Grossman is professor of social sciences and economics at Bryn Mawr University.)

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by HERSCHEL GROSSMAN



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ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL

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DISCUSSION

AABA KO RAJNITIK BATO The Political Road Ahead Presentation by Professor Krishna Kharel, comments by Dipak, Gyaawali and Hari Roka. GAA Forum, Thamel 6 September, 4-6 PM. Contact Sangita Prasad Mahat at 414785.

EXHIBITION

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

MUSIC

- 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 Sundays at the Nanglo Café & Pub, Darbar Marg, Sundays The Thunders at The Bakery Café, Baneshwor.

DRINK

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

FOOD

- Fresh claws** Fresh crabs all September, with lunch buffet, Cajun crab cakes with mesclun, baked crab with mustard and fontina and more. The Sunrise Café, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- Barbecue 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 rose 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, Battiputali. 479488
- Autumn Special** English premier football with steak, and Rs 55 glasses of draft, K-to! Beer & Steakhouse. 433043
- Mountain Madness** Barbecue and two-for-one cocktails, Rs 25 each, Kilroy's of Kathmandu. 250440
- Vegetarian specialties** with membership discount for Nepalis and expats at the Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha. 480822
- Authentic Thai Food** Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510

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- Monsoon Madness** Buy a two-night three-day package for Rs 5000 at Shangi-La Village, Pokhara, get Rs 5000 in coupons to spend at the Shangi-La in Pokhara or Kathmandu. 412999
- Monsoon in Shivapuri** For birdwatching, short hikes, writing, 20 minute drive and 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, with 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
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NEPALI WEATHER
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by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Late to arrive, late to go. That is how we would characterise this year's monsoon. This one still has some oomph 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

Fr	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
27-19	26-19	26-18	26-18	27-16

BOOKWORM

Truth, Love and a Little Malice: An Autobiography Khushwant Singh
 Ravi Duggal 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 Sherghil 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
 Sanku 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, education, social policy. Other essays deal with the spread of broadcasting, labour history, cultural history, nationalism and identity formation.

Leadership and Power: Ethical Expectations SK Chakravorty, Prady
 Bhattacharya, eds
 Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2002
 Rs 952

The essays in this volume examine the increasing abuse of power in all spheres of life. They focus on the manner in which people have used power to manage the individual, social and environmental aspects of life. The theme of power is explored in a philosophical and spiritual vein, but also from a corporate viewpoint of better human resource management to aid students of management and philosophy, practising managers and HRD professionals.

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 and organisation.

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

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Bend it Like Beckham

Acclaimed director Gurinder Chadha's third film, 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 gets to meet Joe, the team coach, whom she is smitten by. The trouble begins when an important recruiting match is scheduled the same day as Jesse's sister's very Punjabi wedding. In the best of British sis-in-the-UK comedy.

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Love, books, and food in the Himalaya

In Thamel, a Korean couple makes a literary and gastronomic connection between their home country and Nepal.

RAMYATA LIMBU

7 AM, Thamel, Kim Hong Sung and his wife Jeong Myeong Kyeeong are sipping fragrant herbal tea at Picnic, the little Korean kitchen they help run with a Nepal partner. It serves an assortment of mouthwatering Korean cuisine—bibimbap, kimchi, Korean-style sushi, and catters to a constant stream of Korean expatriates, tourists, and Nepalis throughout the day.

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 Dapjeeling, the couple discusses the merits of running a Korean kitchen in Kathmandu.

"Believe me, Korea and Japan are very different. At first glance, things appear 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 photographer, who is currently working on a novel. "It's a love story about a Korean couple travelling in the Himalaya," says Kim. He doesn't look particularly happy, though. "I've rewritten it twice. It's partly fiction, partly fact."

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

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

other beings, the pipal tree grows in such a way that it doesn't choke other plants below, in fact the pipal sustains them."

Kim and Jeong have another literary connection to Nepal: they helped their friend Finjo Lama translate Kanak Mani Dasi's The Adventures of a Nepali Frog, a tale about the travels of Bhakra Prasad Bhyangman from the rice fields of Kathmandu to Jonson. "Korean readers really enjoyed it," says Jeong. ♦

Fresh Claws

This September, swim into a sea of Crab Delights at the Sunrise Café, lunch buffet with an Action Station preparing Crabs Crab Cakes along with an international selection of recipes celebrating fresh crabs. Capon Crab Cakes with Mesclun. Baked Crab with Mustard and Fontina Cheese... it's time to get cracking!

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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

History repeated as farce

In 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 hereinafter 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

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 jormas 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 AWFONR 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 newpersons at the airport that they were pleasantly surprised to find that Nepal still exists. "It's quite a relief," said a visibly astonished Aesid Hinteregrundsprachen 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 Gunnanson, 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," Gunnanson added. "Let's hope the country doesn't totally vanish before our next posting."

NEPALI SOCIETY



Darla, Rodney ...

the Snow Leopards of Nepal, Darla's seminal account of their work between 1981 and 1985. Armed with a research grant from the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, Rodney and Darla put together a team and spent harsh winters and balmy springs in the Langu Gorge that is now in Shey Phoksundo National Park.

They captured, collared and released five cats, imaginatively 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 creature's life in the wild. The first fruit of Darla and Rodney's undertaking was a National Geographic cover story on snow leopards that reached 11 million readers. The second edition of Vanishing Tracks, published with Mandala Book Point, includes an updated bibliography and

foreword, and outlines the developments in snow leopard conservation.

The two now run the group Snow Leopard Conservancy and are engaged in grassroots conservation activities in Tibet, Ladakh, Mongolia, and in the Indian and Nepal Himalaya.

Local people need to be 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 helping locals build predator-proof corals and pens in places like Upper Mustang.

The group also helps educate 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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